

Their little bodies lined the window sill, the poor little bugs had all died.

On the window sill where I keep my plants - I got an infestation of fruit flies earlier in the year and hadn't managed to get rid of them, so the area was always full of small black dots that only flew up into the air when I tried to water my peace lily - they'd all died overnight, and my housemates were happy to see them dead.

Everywhere I looked that day I saw them. In the little bits of space where buildings join walkways, on the cig bin. Dead butterflies and regular flies and maggots and mosquitoes. It was an unusually sunny day, so at lunch I sat on the grass outside the school and stroked the ground. I ran my hand over the earth and I thought about all the dead ants that I couldn't see. Probably a lot of dead bugs in the ground. I tried to get them out, and I started digging at the earth with the fork I'd used to eat my pasta, but very quickly a security guard came up and told me I couldn't be doing that.

After lunch one of my afternoon students was very sad. I asked what was up, taking them aside as all the other students got into their line and moved to their next lesson, and the sad looking student said they were sad because both of their pet cats were very sick and had to go to the vets. They said it was very sudden, they were barely grown up cats, they said, they're kittens, we're kittens together they said, but now they're both sick all of a sudden, and they said they were worried because the other week they'd let one of the cats lick the top of their can of fanta fruit twist and it had a bit of fanta pooled in the divot at the top of the can, so when the kitten went to lick the lid they definitely drank the fanta, and they made this face as they did and looked a bit distressed, and what if the fanta had poisoned them. I said I didn't think it had and if it was going to poison them it would have happened straight away. I said it wasn't their fault, and I said that change happens in life and sometimes its good change and sometimes it's bad change, and it's not any one in particular's fault when things change for the worse. I didn't want to tell them it was going to be okay. You can't promise that. And they didn't seem all that inspired by anything I said but I hadn't thought they would be when I'd delivered my monologue. So I gave them a sticker.

The next day I woke up and all the birds were sick. They'd looked a bit peaky the night before but I guess their health had deteriorated in the night, I can't describe it, what sick birds look like and I'm not sure what part of their body language was indicating unwellness. It wasn't in their face like it would be with people. And there was lots of bird shit everywhere like every bird in the whole of London had got diarrhoea. This concerned me, but I wasn't sure if it was something I was imagining or something everyone had noticed and was prancing out about in private or in a public arena I didn't participate in, like the radio. It was spring and I'd started to notice the birds singing in previous weeks. They'd sung very loudly, which was actually a *thing*; like a *science thing*, my friend told me about it. She said "birds in the city sing louder to compete with noise pollution and it's actually really bad for them, for their voices". But anyway on the day after all the bugs had died they had stopped singing.

As I was waiting for the bus I stared at the ground. It was a bright day, sunny, intense. More light in the air, maybe too much light, and a lot of people seemed to be looking down. It was a small bus stop with lots of people at it, and the bus was always 15 minutes late and there

was always someone very angry, sometimes it was me but not today. I stared at my feet and found myself running the tips of my shoes over an actual fucking layer, thick layer, of bird shit. I knew it was gross to paw through the shit but my shoes already were a bit messed up, as were everyone else's. And it was something I wanted to explore. A way of uncovering something about the ground. Honestly I was a bit tempted to touch it, just to see, see what was below and what it was, and try to understand what was happening by feeling out the world with my finger tips.

The bus arrived and I walked up the isle, which was also a bit fucked with all the animal shit. People's faces ranged from neutral to angry. The older women who'd ride the bus to Lewisham mostly seemed quite aware of the ground and also quite disgusted, the wheels of their little trolleys in bright floral patterns dragging chaotic tracks through the sludge. But, yeah, generally people seemed to not take much notice. I tried to listen to the conversations around me, and it was mainly the kids who rode the bus into school with a parent or guardian who seemed to be discussing the situation. "Why is there bird shit everywhere", "Don't use that kind of language" "sorry mum... why is there bird poo everywhere" "I don't know." "Is there something wrong" "I don't know".

The next day I woke up, and all the birds seemed to have died. And I could see it in the sky, the colours were changing. The sky was too full, much much too saturated with light - which didn't even seem to come from the sun, it came from the west, from the horizon. The pavements had dried and cracked and reformed, the animal shit on them had undergone some transition, and it seemed to glitter. Bird bodies lay every few metres on the ground. I hadn't thought that many birds existed. Some were parakeets, their beautiful radiant vibrant luminous green shining from the dirt covered ground.

They radiated like the world. I tried to walk to the bus stop but had to turn around, my eyes had begun to white out, I think I was experiencing snow blindness without the snow. Something poured down, the atmosphere filled with a new colour, a pounding colour.

And I sat by the windowsill with my back to the outside, curtains almost all the way drawn closed. I phoned work to say I wasn't coming in today. No one at work answered. I checked my emails. The girl, the crying girl with the kittens, she had emailed to say that the kittens had died. She said she hadn't stopped crying, she had missed school yesterday, could she have the homework.

I imagined her crying over these two beautiful kittens. One ginger and one brown, I imagined, solid colours, no markings, big orange eyes.

Light was shining through a window behind her, blues and red and greens, a bit like stained glass generated from the sheer intensity of the light, the way its strength bounced off green leaves and red flowers. More and more light flooded in, breaking in through other windows; through the windows on the opposite side of the room first, through upstairs windows, then through the chimney. The light tore through the house, forcing, contracting, expanding the door, coming in through the gap between the door and the frame. It opened the letter box, coming through like a pressure hose, spraying vortexes of white into the greying carpet. It found its way through the air bubbles in the bricks and mortar, and once it had found a way in it wore the stone down, it tunnelled from the outside to the inside.

The girl and her cats were now entombed in light. Their skin was so luminous details couldn't be made out, they existed as beings of energy. The tears had evaporated, the fur burnt off. And still the light came in. Now colours came back to the world, oranges and reds, heat, so much heat and light it made a sound, a buzzing metallic clenching which built and built to a roar.

The house was burnt away, and so were the neighbours houses, the street, the cars parked on the road and the trees parked in the ground. The dead birds on the street were gone, all lost to the light. All lost up until my house, which was also gone. The curtains ripped away. Now it was sky and colour and sound, and nothing separated us anymore. The air screamed.