

ROSIE. All those cities. All those beautiful cities. All that history. All through Europe. And all I could think about was coming home.

BOB. It's not such a bad place.

ROSIE. I tried, Dad.

BOB. To do what, love?

ROSIE. To grow up.

Autumn

Pip

It's early in the morning. The light is still new. Leaves drift from trees. Fallen rose petals form a carpet of bruised colour across the lawn.

PIP is sitting in the garden.

PIP. This garden is the world. Everything that matters happened here.

I kissed my first boy in that shed. I was nine. He was my cousin, Tom. Down from Port Augusta. I don't know if it counts if it was your cousin. But it was a kiss, nonetheless. He kissed me and then he put his hand down my pants. I don't know what he expected but I think he got a shock because he pulled it straight back out again. But I liked it. I got so excited that I bit his face. He started to cry and ran to his mother and I was sent to my room. And I don't know if it was because I bit him or because I liked having his hand down my pants. Somehow, I think Mum knew. I think she knew exactly why a girl bites a boy in the face. But then she always knew the things you didn't want her to know.

She caught us, me and Penny McCrea and Stella Bouzakis with a bottle of sweet wine. We were in Year 9 and we snuck off from school at lunchtime. Penny had stolen it from her parents' drinks cabinet. We came back here and made a party of it, smoking those long coloured cocktail cigarettes as well. Thinking we were totally it. And suddenly Mum's standing at the back door. She was meant to be at work. She never came home for lunch. Never. But that day, when we're wagging school and drinking sweet wine in the backyard she decides to come home. Stella got such a scare she started to vomit. Mum stuck her face in the compost pit and said 'Vomit there, you silly girl'. I was grounded for the rest of Year 9 and never drank sweet wine again.

This garden is the world.

Family cricket and totem tennis tournaments. Hey Presto! and cartwheels across the lawn. Fashion parades and sleepovers. Sunday barbecues. Eighteenth birthday parties. Twenty-firsts. Engagements. And even a wedding. Mine. It all happened here and more.

Once I saw her, Mum, bawling her eyes out and banging her head against the trunk of that tree. I was twelve. I had never seen her cry. Not once. Not even when her own mother died. And everything I thought was certain about the world changed. I went back inside and turned the television on. I was scared. What makes a woman cry like that? A mother. My mother. I didn't understand and I didn't have the courage to ask her. Now, that I am a woman, married with children of my own I don't need to, I know exactly why a woman bashes her head against the trunk of a tree.

She hums a few bars from a Leonard Cohen song: 'Famous Blue Raincoat.' She sings the first two lines of the song.

She becomes quiet.

This garden was the world.

FRAN is watching. She is dressed for work... as always.
ROSIE joins her having just risen from bed.

ROSIE (*seeing PIP*). What's wrong?

FRAN. Get a blanket... The quilt from her bed. The one that she knows. And Rosie... wake your dad.

ROSIE moves off as FRAN moves outside to join PIP.

You're up with the birds.

PIP. I've been for a jog.

FRAN. What's going on?

PIP. Can't I visit and sit for a moment in the garden where I grew up.

FRAN. Is that what you call it now, when you come? A visit? A visit is something a relative you don't know very well does once a year. Something you've just got to get through. This

is different. This is you, coming home, which you do three or four times a week. The thing is when you come you don't sit. You come. You do what needs to be done and then you go. That's the way it is. So now I find you sitting and I'm pretty sure something is wrong.

BOB emerges from the house doing up his dressing gown.

BOB. What's going on?

FRAN. Pip is visiting.

BOB. What's wrong?

FRAN. There you go... Why don't you make some coffee, Bob?

BOB. Well, I would if I knew how to work that machine.

FRAN. Rosie will show you.

BOB. You want milk, Pip?

PIP. Black thanks, Dad.

BOB. Visiting?

BOB goes back inside.

FRAN. Is this about Steve?

PIP. I'm leaving him.

FRAN. Does he know yet?

PIP. He will soon.

FRAN. You might want to drop the kids over. Give yourselves some room to talk.

PIP. You're not surprised?

FRAN. No. I could see this coming. The writing's been on the wall for some time.

PIP. What did it say, Mum? This writing.

FRAN. It said 'I'm not happy'. In big black letters.

PIP. Don't.

FRAN. What?

PIP. Make out like you know more about my life than I do.