

I AM RUNNING

A Dramatic Monologue by Katie Black

I am running. So fast, I don't have time to think. Just run. Away from it all. Away from the man's pale face, the flashing lights, the wail of sirens. Forget it all. Right, left, right, left. Breathe. That's all that matters, all there is. I turn a corner. Plough through some dried up leaves. There are leaves everywhere. They crunch under my feet. I like that sound. Crunch, crunch, right, left, right, left, breathe. Concentrate on the routine. The rhythm. Always the rhythm. The beat of life, irregular, regular, doesn't matter. You have to follow it. Keep the time. Time, what time is it? Early I think. No, don't think, can't think. Concentrate. The sky is grey today. Grey with wiry clouds floating miserably along. Why is it miserable, the sky? It should be happy; happy it is up there. Not here. Everything that happens down here, all the madness, all the chaos. The sky is separate. A different world in the sky, so it is. I always wanted to be a pilot. But keep running Bud.

Past the traffic now. All those horns. There's a different symphony every day, the symphony of the roads. Toot, toot, crunch, crunch, right, left, right, left, breathe. One after another. And the colours, so many colours. Red one way, yellow the other. Blurs and streaks, painted on the tarmac. And people stare. Their heads turn as I pass. And their faces, their faces are – no, don't look. Can't look. Concentrate.

I fly past the traffic, into open countryside. Green grass, the smell of hay, fruit and dust fills my nose. The air is getting fresher now. It's cold, crisp. It floods my mouth, my throat. It flows into my lungs, for a visit I think. Hello, goodbye. It's gone. In, out, toot, toot, crunch, crunch, right, left, right, left, breathe. Like a tune. A good rhythm. Keep to the rhythm. Keep running Bud. I can run from anything, I can hide. Hide from my thoughts. What would she say if she could see me now? Would she be proud? Would she -? No. Don't think about *her*. Not now. Keep going, keep in line, and don't stray Bud.

Past fields now. Fields with cows and sheep and trees. I used to go on walks with her. And we wouldn't look at the cows and sheep and trees. We'd be too busy talking. No, no, *no*. Too much thinking. Not enough speed. *Faster Bud*. Heartbeat is getting quicker. And I don't feel tired. I don't feel anything. I just run, that's all. I am weightless, these arms, these legs, this head, they are empty. Just air. And I'm sure I am floating, not running. Because running doesn't feel like this. Smooth, sleek, I feel in control. The feeling flows through me, invigorates me. I feel powerful, and for a moment, I'm no longer myself.

Powerful, strong. I'm master of my emotions. They can't affect me. I am new, fresh. I'm going to get away. Leave all of it behind. (*Pause*) And then I remember, I am not. The feeling floods away, leaving me in the afterglow of its glory. And I feel myself falling, and all of the doors are opening. The locks have come away, and everything is out now. I am on my knees, and the tears are cold on my cheeks. The truth has caught me. I can't run away anymore. I'm in the spotlight. I've lost the game and I can't hide now. I'm *not* in control. I *can't* hold it in. It's staring me in the face. And I realize nothing will change it. Nothing *can* change it.

How could she leave me? Why did she leave me? On my own. Because nobody else cares. Nobody could care like her. Or ever will again. She's gone. It's a fact. And I can't hide from it anymore. But *why*? Didn't she have me? Her little Bud. Me and her, against the world. Except now it's not. Now she's left me to face it alone. *Liar*. How could she *lie* like that? Lie to *me*. Me of all people! Well I'll show her. I'm not her little Bud anymore. I'm fine without her, just fine! Can you hear me Mam? I'm just fine! I don't need her. I never did. I'm wiping away my tears. I'm starting again. I'm leaving all this crap behind.

Pause

But can I? Can I walk away? I'm trying to leave, but something's holding on. And I realize, I can't let go. I can't. Because I always did need her. And whatever she did, whatever amount of hurt she's caused me that will never change. I need to go back. Back to reality, back to the truth. Back to the man's pale face, the flashing lights, the wail of sirens. Remember it all. However much it hurts. I have to be strong. I'm turning back now. I'm going home. I am running.

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