



Years 11-12 Category Winner

LUCY GLUSKIE – ST MARY'S COLLEGE

i wish long sleeves didn't exist.

Healing.

(noun.) the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again (Oxford Languages, 2023).

What matters to me is healing. Healing from the things we are too afraid to speak about. I didn't imagine my story would unfold the way it did, but after three years of silence and denial, I am finally ready for the pen and paper to hear me.

Friday 7th August 2020. Cambridge Road Surgery. Approximately 9:00am.

Sitting distressed and apprehensively in the waiting room, confined by cloudy, tea-green walls with the occasional discoloured patch where the paint has flaked off.

Across from where I am hidden in the corner and sitting cross legged on a green tufted couch, there is a table. Strewn along the top is a thick pile of outdated magazines, crowded with fake models and exaggerated news about celebrities of whom I'd never heard. Occasionally I lift my head to glance out the window beside me, to the greyscale outside world swarming with melancholy.

Feeling a touch of sonder, I watch the cars drive by, struggling to comprehend how I got here. Although the skies are clear, there is a storm cloud above my head, constantly raining. Why am I here?

The colour drained out of every room I entered, filling it with darkness and leaving no moon. The darkness hurt. It carved scars onto my delicate skin. In the beginning I was a flower, stretching up to the sky and looking up to the sun. I grew to wither alone in the shadows of the garden bed.

My name is called, and along with my mother, we scurry into the last room of the doctor's surgery. Chronic depression can be associated with memory loss, and even though I will never be able to forget this day, there are still parts that are yet to resurrect.

The doctor speaks harshly, penetrating my eardrums with every word. The doctor and my mother look at the parts of my body that had succumbed to the wars of my illness. Mum is taken outside of the room by the doctor. She returns, crying enough tears to fill buckets.

Friday 7th August 2020. Royal Hobart Hospital: Emergency Department. Approximately 12:00pm.

No one can ever really identify how depression feels. You are constantly falling like the stars, you're completely alone. The only thing you feel is the pain. You can only comfort yourself after you hurt your body more than the world has hurt you.

1...2...3...4...

White to red.

The numbness hugs you as a soft blanket.

For three hours, I was in another substandard waiting room, no fake magazines and no colourless cars speeding by.

We were taken to a soft, isolated room, the first on the right when you walked down the corridor. Nurses and doctors rushed in and out for my medical assessment. They would ask me questions. They'd receive no reply.

Alarms set off around my body, I was being invaded. Veins popping as I grasped the cuff of my sleeves, refusing to exhibit the artwork I'd created on my wrists. Eventually, the battle ceased. I'd not spoken a word all-day therefore I was permitted to leave as they could not accurately determine if I was safe or not.

Now, almost three years on, I wish long sleeves didn't exist. I wish the 14-year-old girl was confident and didn't feel like she had to bury herself underneath her sleeves. This now 17-year-old girl has the courage to recover from the secrets kept hidden behind her bedroom door and is no longer afraid of healing.