

# **A COTTON WOOL WORLD**

Dedicated to  
A person I never knew



# Cotton Wool World

Anna Westwood

## One

Eve, That's me. Named after the first woman God placed on this earth. Not that I could even begin to compare myself, how could I.

Anyway, it's getting late and I need to have my quiet time. Open my eyes Lord, I want to see Jesus...

...Fuck.

Fuck. Why can't my recurring dreams be tinged with a touch more excitement? Always that God-bothering shit. It's like being brainwashed in your sleep...as opposed to when you're awake like a lot of people I know.

Yes, Eve, that's me. Named after the first woman god placed on this earth. Bollocks. Well, I suppose I should be grateful. I could have been wandering around with a name like Ezrazekial. Infact I should be very grateful indeed. Thank fuck, my new god.

I wouldn't call my parents cruel. They're just stupid. They on the other hand would call me the stupid one but as I often try to explain, I'm not the one who believes a heavenly body lives beyond the stars waiting to escort folk to the party of a lifetime. I just hope that Jesus is aware of the fact that my mother would be more than disappointed if he didn't serve pink champagne and Marks and Spencer's hake goujons.

Frankly, the grim-reaper sounds more appealing. Than the goujons.

It'd be more fun if I got to dream about orgies but knowing my luck everyone would be ugly and fat and there'd be a distinct smell of cheese in the air.

Still, at twenty-six, I wish my imagination would do me a little more justice sometimes.

The other recurring nightmare I have is of a plane crash. Luckily, for me not for the poor bastards on the plane, I'm not a passenger. Mind you, having said that I wouldn't be surprised if tonight I'm strapped firmly into seat 9a. No, I'm stood directly beneath the monstrosity as it veers out of control and crashes just to my left. My second piece of luck in this whole aeronautical experience is that there's always something to hide behind to shelter myself from the debris. Perhaps tonight it won't be there in which case I'm fucked.

I don't know why these dreams keep pestering me, it's not as if I'm a writer that keeps a notepad beside my bed in the hope that my subconscious mind will create the talent lacking in my real life.

If Freud was still alive, he'd probably tell me that subconsciously I wanted to kill my father and dress my mother as a dog but I arrived at a sane conclusion about this matter a long time ago. Freud was a sick fucker. Either that or I'm in denial.

In your dreams you can be whomever you want to be. I've always wondered about this. Thoughts along the lines of, that's comforting, at night I can be beautiful, successful and funny and then every morning I wake up the same boring cunt I was the day before. What a great ego boost that must be.

Well, I suppose I'd better start this damn story somewhere.

I'm a writer. No, correction, I must have dreamt that. What I meant to say was I'd like to be a writer. That's what I meant to say. What I really should say is that I'm sick of having a shit life and wondering if I can sell my cow for magic beans that will pay the council tax. Only one flaw in my plan. I don't have a cow. And if I did it'd probably die on the way to the market. And I don't know where the market is. Oh, forget it, it was a shit idea anyway.

I quite like cows. Up close they're quite beautiful. The way they scratch their necks on fence posts is a sight worth seeing. Who says they're not intelligent. And they can't half do an impressive shit. If I could do that, I'd never have to work again. I'd be in fucking agony.

Writing, it's something I've always loved doing. Describing flowers in the spring, the breeze rippling through the trees, the way swans journey through their lives with only one partner. The way my first boyfriend dumped me after fingering me in the park. How I married a complete twat who thought anal sex was at its best when it came as a complete surprise. Writing is what gives me the will to carry on day after day. I've written all sorts of stories. They live on you know. On my bookcase to be precise. Next to my boyfriend's copy of Babyface.

No guessing what he dreams about then. Sadly for him, he too has to wake up next to the same boring cunt he went to bed with.

Boring. I think that's possibly the most insulting thing you could say about a person. Wouldn't you rather be a complete bastard than a boring fucker? How's the new girlfriend? Fantastic in bed but boring as fuck. I'd rather be shit in bed and be a fucking loony who makes people laugh telling arse jokes. In fact, I'd rather have a face like an arse than be boring. I have got a face like an arse but I figured it's okay. Most men like arses. Most men are arses. We don't live in a perfect world. If we did, we'd all be able to flick shit at each other like hippos.

I sometimes wonder if I write stories just to get away from it all. To lose myself inside a tiny world that I myself have created, rather like a raving lunatic.

Perhaps I am a raving lunatic, who's to say. As the theory goes, the diagnosed lunatics might be the sane ones, it might be everyone else that's fucking nuts.

Sometimes it seems that way. Why else was 3-2-1 commissioned?

Writing is like dreaming because you are in control of the story, the characters and the emotions they go through. Slight difference. When I dream, Jesus always seems to be the all-powerful one but when I sit down and write, I'm more than capable of having him give Judas a very pleasurable hand job whilst dressed as a Zeigfreid folly.

## **Two**

I want a cigarette. Or at least I did want one. It's a very convincing idea. Putting the smoking area in one tiny room at the far end of the airport where you have to climb three flights of stairs to get to the damn thing. I'm stood here now, in this tiny room, crammed full of people. I can hardly see them through the smoky haze. I feel like I've had ten already. It's a bad habit. I'm not proud. I've a long flight ahead. Well, I'm here now, I'll smoke the fucking thing whether I enjoy it or not.

## **Three**

George's eyes sprang open. The light was fading. She must have dozed off again. She had no idea what time it was, or what day, for that matter. She was lying, sprawled out, on the grass. She yawned loudly and looked around. The Wood was completely bare. She began to panic. She nervously searched for the tree

stump which she had remembered leaning against before sleep had overcome her. It was getting darker and she did not want to be alone here at night. It no longer felt so safe. What if the Mumtwips found her? She willed the light to remain, if only for a short while longer, whilst she found her bearings. She stood up, her joints were stiff. She tried walking to loosen them out. She had only gone a few steps when she felt a queer sensation in her right big toe. This painful sensation rapidly traveled through her right foot and up her right leg, causing her to hop around on her one remaining good leg, clutching her foot with her hand. She cursed under her breath. She looked to see what she had banged into but there was nothing to be seen. Whilst hopping around in a dither, with a very sore foot, she hopped into something else, which also wasn't there, causing her left toes to swell and then, to top it all off, she fell head first into an invisible bush. Things weren't going too well.

Story of my fucking life.

## **Four**

Today is my birthday. Whoopi fucking do. A nice reminder each year that I still haven't done anything useful with my life. That's the problem with life. There are too many fucking tangents.

## Five

‘Eve, I’m so sorry but there goes your bonus’.

‘Oh come off it, I’m only two minutes late!’

‘Company policy, I didn’t make the rules. Now plug yourself in before you let the entire team down. It’s three minutes past’.

There are five pixie like faces trying desperately not to look me in the eye. They never do. It’s like being on the tube. It’s an unspoken rule in here. Except for me. I look at whomever I like. Sometimes I even listen too. It scares the shit out of them when you do that. All it takes is a subtle reach for the pack of polo’s you left slightly over the invisible line which separates your desk from everyone else’s. You see them cower in fear and lower their voices. That’s when you glance up and make eye contact. Most of them turn away on the off-chance you can lip-read. It’s funny as hell. When you go for a piss it’s like sneaking behind enemy lines as you pass all the desks. It’s also somewhat of a hazard though because it’s a real struggle to find your way back in the sea of mundanity. I know where I sit now. Mind you, if it wasn’t for Gladys’ photo of her two slaggy daughters stuck on her computer to remind her she does actually have a life, I’d be in trouble.

‘Sorry Eve’, whispered Michelle the timid. ‘£50 would have bought you a lovely new outfit’.

‘I was thinking more along the lines of crack cocaine’.

‘Oh you are funny, I’m going to spend mine on a Kenwood mixer so that I can make...Hello, Information, how can I be of assistance today?’

It’s all bullshit isn’t it. I don’t know why I bother. I’m sure there a device in this phone headset that actually warps the brain.

‘Eve, what’s this?’

‘I thought team leaders were supposed to be on the ball?’

‘That’s enough of your cheek. You know you’re not allowed to do crosswords even if you do hide them underneath your information file. If I catch you again, I’ll raise your targets’.

I wish the target was her fucking head. It doesn’t matter, I’ve got a word-search under the keypad... ‘Hello, information?’...

‘Hello, I was wondering, there’s a mini-roundabout in my village, my husband says I need to go around it to my left but I’ve been going straight over it for years. I am right, aren’t I?’...

No, you’re a stupid bitch.

‘No, I’m afraid you’re husband is correct’

..... ‘Oh, I really wanted to be right this time’

You’re also a pathetic waste of space. Go and whack one off and cheer yourself up.

‘Thank you for taking the time to call’.

## Six

Airport lounges are one of the worst places in the world. Especially when you grab a quick nap whilst waiting for your delayed flight. You find a quiet area which is completely deserted and then wake up twenty minutes later face to face with a six year old child staring at the funny woman with dribble on her chin.

They’re almost as bad as waiting for your luggage at the other end. I’ve often thought about grabbing someone else’s case off the carousel just to see if its contents are more interesting than mine.

## Seven

I don't believe in God. Frankly, I don't get why people do. What a bastard. Why would people want to be the equivalent of slaves for all eternity. It's hard enough getting some people to do the washing up.

No, I suppose my parents are alright. As long as you don't mention Atheism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholics, Orgasms, Breasts, Cigarettes, Drugs, Loose dog hairs on the carpet, Farting, Shagging, Indian food, the attractive Chinese boy next door, Doc martin boots, Short hair on girls, Anorexia and Proper jobs.

Anorexia, there's a good one. Well, next time when I'm shopping with my mother, I'll think twice about picking up a tub of cottage cheese. At first I was offended. I've never been less than ten stone in my entire adult life. I wanted to ask her if she was taking the piss but I think she would have buried me alive with the contents of her Sainsburys shopping trolley. I'm convinced she's got a family of illegal immigrants living with her. Five thousand of them.

Parents, no one teaches you. But what can I say, after all, I am only made out of one of Adam's ribs. Just think, the original Eve must have been completely deformed and it must have been a struggle just to draw breath. Especially after all that shagging anyway.

I wonder if there's a dog heaven.....where all the subservient dogs get to lick the top dog's arsehole.....

...Thoughts....funny how they come isn't it?

Humans and dogs. Lately I've been noticing the similarities. Unfortunately they seem to be eating, sleeping, pissing, shitting, vomiting and sniffing each others mucky bits.

Sometimes my dog sits and looks at me like I'm a fool. I like to think she's clever but she eats shit and I'm a firm believer there's nothing clever about that. She doesn't even get paid. In fact, she often watches me, draped across her bed like a Greek goddess, her eyes studying my odd face. My face is not exceptionally odd, it's just that so many things puzzle me that soon I'll have forgotten what I used to look like when I lived in dull ignorance. It's a sad look. My mother still wears it.

Marriage. I compare my experience to being in a coma. When I woke up I remembered how fucking good it was to be alive again. Dead but yet alive, a strange concept...seeing as it's how most people live their entire lives. What a waste. Ah, but Eve, after our toil on Earth, we'll be going to a better place. Bollocks. My dog's got more sense and as I've said, she eats shit. I suppose it's better than talking it.

Council Flats. Fucking awful.

I 'live in sin'. Ironic really, to have evolved such an intelligent brain and to waste it on shallow humdrum toss, surely that's the biggest sin of all...

How did I manage to make wedding vows and not piss myself laughing from the ridiculousness of it all?

People who get on the scales every morning should be shot...

...put them out of their misery..

## **Eight**

Harry the Hormone. A Children's short story by Eve Fuckwit (I haven't quite decided on that one but it's got a certain ring to it)

Once upon a time there was a hormone. Its name was Harry. It was a little fucker. Every few weeks it decided to fuck about with its surroundings. Graffiti, needles, raves...the fucking lot. Then one day its owner, a slightly neurotic young woman decided she'd had enough of Harry's antics and went on the pill. Harry suffered from suppression for a long time. He even went to the doctors and was put on tablets that made him want to vomit and call all his loved ones complete twats for no reason whatsoever. But Harry was strong. He saved up all his energy believing that one day he would once again be a free spirit. Years passed and there was no sign of little Harry until one morning he awoke with a feeling of spring. He was no longer trapped within his torturous existence. He was free at last to live his dreams. A year passed and Harry was happy back up to his old tricks, although this time he made sure he made the most of them, not knowing when his time would eventually come. Unfortunately for Harry, the naïve young woman had read a few books in the time that Harry had been away and had discovered a new lifeline. It was called Progesterone. True, the poor woman had to live her life with a moustache and teenage acne but at least it got rid of the little fucker.

It's a good solid lesson to learn and it's also a great way of getting rid of a dull husband.

Funny isn't it how they think it's okay to grow hair all over the fucking shop and scratch their arses with the same hand they caress your face with and then when you decide that facial hair's the thing for you, want to leave you for the slag with the slapped arse down the road.

No, I may sound like a bitter old whore who's never had a decent relationship in my entire life but it's not true. I've been living with a freak of a man for a whole year now. The freakiest thing about him is that he doesn't seem to notice that I'm a fucking idiot. Or perhaps he does and that's what he likes, I don't know. We moved in together after seeing each other for three months. Six months down the line I was in hospital after a routine check up discovered I had a tumor growing inside me. I think a child would have been nicer but fuck it, you just have to put up with it. Even now, he's still somewhat intrigued by me and stays just to see what daft things I'll say and do as life passes us by. It's like Shirley Valentine. I have a great big scar and I think he thinks it's all part of me and my experiences of life. Albeit his name's not Costas and he doesn't own a fishing boat on a small idyllic Greek Island but he's more of a person than I could ever hope to be. Anyway, this is too serious, let's discuss why no-one has stood up in the middle of an Andrew Lloyd Webber musical and shouted 'Whose responsible for this steaming pile of shit?'

## Nine

Boxing. That's a fucking awful sport. Sport. Ridiculous isn't it? Hey, punch that guy's lights out and we'll give you a fucking medal. And then, to make matters worse, they tell kids off when they poke each other in the eyes and kick each other in the nads to steal each others Pokemon cards. Is it any fucking wonder? At least the kids get something useful out of it.

## Ten

The God botherers were here the other day. Saturday bloody morning. I was just enjoying a cup of tea and a nutritious fag when a couple knocked on the front door. I opened it to have a garish magazine thrust in my face. 'How was the Universe created' it said on the front, surrounded by a picture of stars and planets. I really wished my partner had been at home so he could have explained the concept of nuclear particle fusion or whatever it is....I'm not sure of the ins and out's of it but it's a damn sight more credible that 'God made it'..... 'Mum, what's that big crap in the middle of that field'... 'God made it' ..... 'Why've I got piles hanging out of my arse?' .. 'God made them'. I could go on but I think you get the point. I sent them away and watched them go in nextdoor for a cup of tea. The looks on their faces, it was as if they'd just secured a hard sell, little do they know the guy next-door's a fucking moron. Good, intrusive little shits. They came round the next week too. 'Have you got a copy of our magazine, it's good family

reading, lots of interesting articles'.... My reply was this, 'Is it Christian Literature?'... 'Yes'.. 'You were here last week, I didn't want one'. 'Do you want one now?' What did they expect me to say? That in the space of a week I'd changed my whole fucking system of values. 'No, Fuck off'. Actually I didn't say that. I wished I had though and I think they knew I was thinking it which was good enough for me. Go back to church and sing hymns and eat each other's homemade bourbon biscuits. Leave the rest of us to shrivel up and die, at least we'll probably have a bit of fun doing it. I know, I know, I'm being a bit cruel...but they fucking drove me to it.....all I wanted was a cup of tea and a fucking cigarette.

### **Eleven**

Cruelty is unethical, you say, before I kill you.

### **Twelve**

Last time I traveled, the airline lost my luggage. I'm half hoping they loose it again. My life didn't end when it didn't spin round the carousel. They returned it eventually, it had been on a journey all of its own. I'll never know where it went. I think it's quite fun. The not knowing. Another flight, next to someone else's or sat in lost luggage with the other abandoned cases. I liked going into work the following day in old clothes and no make up. It felt really refreshing. Liberating in a way. Yet when it returned, I felt

compelled to go back to the old way. I wish someone would take it all away again and let me be myself.

The business lounge is nice but I don't belong here. I belong there, with everyone else. I'm no better. It's like life, the more money you have, the more entitled you are to separate yourself from the lower classes. It must be so easy to get used to, the polite service, the free drinks, snacks, papers but what are you giving up for it? Morality? Ethics? Maybe nothing. Maybe it's just me. I feel out of place. Society doesn't want me in here. I ask too many questions. I see too much.

I am queuing for the gate. I am one of the last. I never really saw the need of pushing people out of the way and thrusting boarding cards into the steward's face. I'll still be on the same plane when it leaves.

I can't make up my mind whether or not I'm glad I'm going. Funny that.

There's a stewardess with costume make-up on further up, handing out newspapers and a copies of a celebrity packed magazine. I may prematurely make use of the sick-bag. Mind you, isn't that the trend? It might help me get my arse into the seat.

My hand luggage consists of a decent book, a can of cheap hairspray and my wallet yet still I can't manage to squeeze it into the overhead locker next to some fat bastard's flight picnic.

I have a strong urge to get off. I'm amazed at the fact that I'm actually sat here and how composed I am. I can't get off. Not only my belt is keeping me in this seat.

## Thirteen

Television. Odd really. Sixty different channels to choose from and I watch Lee Majors in The Fall Guy. I remember I used to fancy his sidekick, Howie. Looking at him now he's a dweeb (for want of a better word). God my tastes have changed. I used to love watching clichéd crap such as The Love Boat but now I can't watch it for more than five minutes without wanting to throw a used tampon at the telly and pretend they've all been shot in the head. That's a lie actually, I still enjoy it. Sad isn't it. The theme tune's the best.. 'Love, life's sweetest reward, let it float, it floats back to you'. Oh if only that wasn't a pile of old horseshit.

I cry a lot. I don't know why.

## Fourteen

Lying in a hospital bed. It's the needles I don't like, things stuck into me pumping me full of chemicals. A drip. A catheter. It's degrading really, even though I know it's a necessity. I have a tumor. Tumor. The word itself grows in your mind. It's growing now, inside me. I can't feel it but I know it's there, waiting for the chance to expand, like a fat kid's bubble gum. I detest it. We've only had a mutual relationship for four days and already I detest it. Mind you, it's not the shortest relationship I've ever had. That lasted a day (his name was Colin and he looked like Eric Clapton). I want to kill it and any acquaintances it might have made on the way. Die fucker. I'm not hosting a party.

## **Fifteen**

All I ever do is waste time. I don't enjoy it, I just can't seem to help myself. I do the most ridiculous of things for no reason or else I sit and reason about the ridiculous things I could be doing if I could be arsed to.

The dogs often have a more productive day. I sit and think about all the things I want from life. I want all the good things whereas my partner dreams of a child made out of scones.

A girl made out of scones is tasty,  
Yet crumbles easily,  
Weak and brittle.

I want a girl made out of toffee,  
Hard and indestructible,  
Appealing, long lasting  
And able to break teeth.

Yes, I know it's crap but I never said I was a fucking poet.

## **Sixteen**

I am bemused by a lot of people. People who behave in odd ways. I know I'm one of them but nevertheless why some people behave the way they do often astounds me. For example, the other day I was criticized for not eating meat. I was informed by a seventeen year old that I was ruining Britain's economy and that I didn't realize that if everyone followed suit we would be over-run by cows who

would take over the earth. Well, her fears were short-live because a week later, foot and mouth disease arrived and the government decided to slaughter the majority of cows in the U.K. I mean, who puts these arguments into peoples' heads? How in God's name do people come to ridiculous conclusions? What I hate the most is people who hear an idea and then take it on as their own with no capability of being able to explain the logic behind their argument because they basically don't understand it. A bit like religion. I recently had a conversation with my mother about how the sun was a star that was still growing and how in billions of years it would be so big that that it would engulf the earth and therefore all life here would end...She told me to take such silly ideas out of my head.

## Seventeen

My partner had an odd dream last night about our back garden. He looked out of the back window and saw that we had a pond. He wandered outside towards two fishermen and asked them if there were any goldfish in the pond. The fishermen replied 'what pond' and my partner looked down and the pond wasn't infact a pond but a putting green and the fishermen weren't fishermen but artists. He was somewhat confused and looked back at the house. Coming out of the back door was a cat dressed as Humphrey Bogart. Figure that one out.

I had a dream last night too. Mine was about the Sound of Music and focused around Christopher Plummer playing a scene wearing a huge false nose.

I've concluded that I'm not satisfied with the size of my penis.

### **Eighteen**

I seem to have a great ability at choosing shit friends. I get by with a little help from my friends.....with a bit of luck, everybody responsible for making covers of that record will be in an accident leaving them deaf, mute and unable to ever make another shit song. I'm at work, listening to the radio, wondering how certain, talent-less fuck's get to where they are.

I don't mind it too much today. I quite enjoy making tea and soup. At least people appreciate it and I get to sit here and scribble when it's quiet, watching the little doormouse that sometimes visits. I even fed it today but I'm keeping that quiet....might not go down all that well. Aren't butterflies fantastic? Doreen was admiring one the other day when a bird flew up and ate it. Poor sod. Sorry for the interruption but Britney fucking Spears, what an egotistical jumped up whore.

### **Nineteen**

Eve is sat in the garden writing a story. As she is sat there, the ivy that clings to the stone wall wraps around her until she is completely unrecognizable.

A story.

Once upon a time there was a boy. This little boy grew up in isolation. He spent all his days wondering what the world was like. One day he was set free from his prison and walked out into the sunshine. He opened his eyes and took a good look around. His little mind was not ready for what he saw and so he walked back into the darkness and slept, never to wake again.

## Twenty

We're waiting at the end of the runway, that in-between place, ready to take our slot. It's somewhat eerie. People are twitchy and there are one or two nervous coughs. Whether that is because we're about to take-off or whether they are uncomfortable in this limbo I am unsure. I don't feel anything.

A woman behind me is unwrapping what I imagine to be a boiled sweet. I feel she is not making ample use of her opposable thumbs.

I look out of the window at the airport building. It is near enough for me to see people staring out of the enormous glass viewing windows but far enough away so I cannot see the expression on their faces. A few of them know me. Well enough to know they couldn't stop me. Sitting here now, I wonder if they didn't try hard enough. Some would say it isn't too late to change my mind. These are the people whose glass is always half full. Unfortunately mine was always half empty and I know I shall never return.

## Twenty-one

I had a phone call this morning. The voice on the other end told me I didn't have cancer. I didn't feel any different. Don't get me wrong. I was relieved but I hardly underwent a radical change. What did fuck me off was my mother, ten minutes later. 'Praise the Lord, Eve, you have a wonderful father up there'. Fuck off.

My friends behaviour was interesting to watch in the hospital. It's weird how trivial people's conversations become and how bored you actually get of them. Plus the flowers that they all brought made me sneeze. Fucking cheers.

So Jesus has now blessed me with a cut the length of the M6 right above the line where my pubic hair used to be as now all that remains is designer stubble which can't make up its mind in which direction it wants to grow. It's an odd looking scar. I keep thinking it's going to split open and a small child will clamber out and call me mummy.

I would like a child. I'd like to bring it up without forcing values down its throat like soggy vegetables. To uncover the mockery of convention and expectation. To encourage a child to think in whatever terms it wants and form its own opinions. I cannot let go of some things as I have been socially conditioned all my life and feel trapped inside this notion of what others expect of me. It's all a pile of shit. A stubborn turd up conventions arse, only moving when a larger, more weighty turd gives me a stoolish push towards the light.

## Twenty-two

The big bang. Now this is weird. I recently read a book which stated that you can't ask what caused the first particle to exist because before the big bang there was no time, space, energy or matter therefore nothing can cause anything. Nothing exists so there's no point asking the question. I don't know about you but that fucks with my head. How can something that doesn't exist, create the universe? Does that mean that the universe doesn't exist because that from which it evolved never existed? And if the universe doesn't exist then it seems to follow that the Earth doesn't exist, trees do not exist...in fact, my conclusion leads me to believe that I also do not exist and neither does Carol Smilie. Which at least is one pleasant aspect of this whole phenomenon.

It may have occurred to you that I am not too familiar with the science of quantum physics. It's no wonder people believe in God. It's not that this picture of creation is more credible, it's just a lot fucking easier to get your head around. In actual fact though, it's the scientists I believe, rather than the twelve pissheads who tagged along after realizing that if they stuck with the wacky bloke they'd get free wine and the occasional fish supper.

### **Twenty-three**

I had another dream last night. I was putting the dogs in the back of the car when a man knocked on my window, telling me that my little car, worth about £200, was valuable. Apparently it had once belonged to a member of S-Club7. He pushed me into the passenger seat, hopped in and drove off. Here the dream turned quite unnerving. I couldn't get out and told him to stop the car. He didn't so I wound down the window and yelled for help. He then wound down his window and started yelling for help. The next thing I knew, we crashed through a shop window. There was a wedding taking place inside the shop. My door suddenly opened and a large woman offered me some cake. The strange man walked around the car and, quite happily, we started dancing.

On a different note, I told me brother about the hormone problems I'd been suffering. He said it wasn't a problem, he'd just start calling me Geoff.

### **Twenty-four**

Most books I read these days are just old plots rehashed to disguise themselves as a new idea. People don't like truly new ideas much. Are there really any new ideas anyway? I'm not so sure. Can a story be a story without a plot. I don't see why not. Ideas can be interesting no matter how they're pieced together. I think its quite fun when they're not. I sit thinking about writing all day and it takes me til nine to actually sit myself infront of the computer and

actually do something. I wouldn't say I'm lazy, I just sometimes get frightened that I've got nothing of interest to say. As you can probably tell. I wonder who would actually want to read what I have to write. Should I really give a shit?

I used to glance over at some of the books on my bookcase and it inspired me to keep on going anyway. I can't believe some of that uninspiring turdy rubbish has ever been published. Who has sat in an office and thought, wow, that's great, let's publish it? I know I'm being naive and the marketing value of a book far outweighs its content but it still stuns me.

## **Twenty-five**

We spent a Sunday by the canal, my friend and I. There was a carnival on. It was a very low key affair but we weren't too bothered. We enjoyed a couple of bottles of wine between us whilst lazing in the sun. Her daughters spent the entire day telling her how much they hated her and wanted her dead but apart from that the day was quite blissful. I was experiencing a nice bout of pre-menstrual-tension so the wine went down a little bit too easily. We decided on the way home to call in on a chap in the village who was hosting a barbeque. Needless to say, we got carried away and the afternoon ended in a huge water fight, leaving his house covered in about two inches of tap water. We scared his girlfriend away as she couldn't bear the thought of a drop of water spoiling her make-up. I felt a bit guilty actually but he didn't mind at all. In fact he said she was a miserable fucker anyway. Poor chap will shag anything.

## **Twenty-six**

Taxiing down the runway seems to take forever. The gentle pull of the aircraft lulling us into a safe place before the nose lifts and we all fear we are not traveling fast enough. To those watching it is only a few seconds but time seems slower inside. As the wheels finally leave the ground I smile and I blink a reluctant tear back into my eye.

## **Twenty-seven**

It's a beautiful day today. The sun is shining and there's a lovely breeze catching my hair, making it look even more ridiculous than it usually does. Why then, I ask myself, does every single person around me look fucking miserable? Admittedly, I'm in the middle of scumsville doing what shopping I can with the pittance of change I have in my pockets but even so, wake up! At least their hair's not curling out in fashionable 80's wings. I am again baffled. What are all these people so miserable about? They can't all be going through some unspoken torture. Or maybe they are. Maybe they are all wondering what on earth their lives are all about, what useful things have they spent all those years on, what small thing they could possibly do to make a difference to someone else's life, to the environment, to the betterment of the human species.

Call me what you like but something tells me they're probably more likely to be thinking of what they're going to have for their tea and how long they've got left on their car.

The people in this world never cease to amaze me. Mainly by their stupidity but often by their unwillingness to view the world around them as a gift. Why are a lot of people not content unless they have problems? No matter how satisfied, healthy or rich, they always find things to complain about, no matter how trivial. Also, the competitiveness I see on a daily basis makes me think people have forgotten about individuality. Why struggle and struggle to be just the same as everybody else? Where's the fun in it?

## **Twenty-eight**

Who am I?

It's an odd question and not a particularly easy one. I know my name, my family background and so on but who am I when I strip away all of these things?

I'm lying in bed alone tonight. It's all rather tranquil. I should sleep but my mind is ticking along with the bedside clock. I've got thinking about death again. I try not to admit it but I'm so scared of it. Not just my own death but the death of those around me. What's the point? I remember both of my grandfathers with such love and fondness but who will remember them when our memories are gone? Who will know the love they gave, the joy, the way they were always so selfless? No-one. It will be forgotten. It makes me feel so very sad.

## **Twenty-nine**

I've just sat and talked bollocks to an absolute fuckwit. This guy apparently knows all there is to know about fucking anything. Let me describe him. He's a little turd of a man with undeveloped morals coming out of his bum. None of his arguments hold anything resembling even an ounce of validity. When I questioned any of his comments, he cut me off by repeating the same words only much louder. Fucking moron. His main topic of conversation centred around his belief that there was such a thing as a higher being for the sole reason that he had cheated death on numerous occasions. The funniest thing was that, as if to prove a point, he then full off his bar stool and cut his head open on a nearby table. Yeah right. Captain fucking Invisible.

## **Thirty**

It seems to me that it is rare for people to actually look at the quality in their own lives and when they do there is often a shallowness, which I find quite sinister.

What do people associate with quality of life. Work? Relationships? Health?

Work. It would be my guess that very few people in the world are actually doing what they want to be doing in terms of work. Considering most people spend most of their lives at work it seems an awful waste. For some though it is the only option.

Financially people are very insecure and with good reason. The cost of living is so high that most people, both male and female find it necessary to commit themselves to a mind-numbing job just so they can enjoy their lives outside of the working constraint. I could have chosen this option and in many ways I still have to sacrifice my quality of life to do just that. Few people will take the risk of struggling to find something in life which will benefit them, not financially but qualitatively.

This risk is what I see myself going through as I have reached a point in my life where I have re-evaluated what I find meaningful. I have been witness to the fact that life is short, unfortunately, I learned this from someone who thought it far too long.

I do not feel able to drag myself back into a world of working 40 hours a week in a meaningless job that makes me feel miserable for all the other hours left in the week. Nothing to look forward to but holidays and the days you can get away with telling all sorts of lies just to get a single day away from it all.

Is it hopeless? Longing to be free of constrictions and desperation. Desperation in terms of knowing exactly what I want to do and not having the time to do it. The only plausible thing I can see myself doing in my lifetime without losing quality. So I struggle. One day maybe someone will read the things I have written and find some level of meaning which might be shared with others. Maybe not. Maybe it's a selfish thing. One of the few things I actually get pleasure from doing.

Funny isn't it, how some people accept things without question. How people sell themselves short. Sure, some people have a great deal of money but I wonder what degree of emptiness they feel. Maybe not now but when they one day look back on their lives and

have little else to show but a large bank balance. I wouldn't trade my ideals and my creativity for that. Where I go from here I'm not sure. However, I shall keep the idea of quality high in my list of priorities as if I lose all sense of it, as I once did, I would change as a person. I have seen people who have gone through this transition and it is horrible to see. People who have lost all notion of what truly matters and spend their time wrapped up in the trivial mundanity of life. My fear is of it happening to me.

### **Thirty-one**

I've been hurting for a long time really, now I come to think of it. I'd really like to start a conversation with the guy sat next to me. Just to ask him what he's thinking about. I won't, not because I'm shy but because I know the answer will probably disappoint me. I'm hard to please. I sneak a quick look at him, I'd say he was about forty, traveling on business maybe but not important enough to fly business class, perfectly shaven. He's asleep. He looks rather peaceful I think, pitiful, ignorant, naïve... I just can't seem to stop myself. I wonder if he's traveling away from someone or something or traveling home. If I asked him, would he tell me? If he turned the question around, would I tell him? Do I know myself? Of course I do. I close my eyes and drift into the haze.

## **Thirty-two**

I turned vegetarian. It all happened when I was watching the new-born lambs bouncing around the fields which I saw out of every window in the cottage. I love watching lambs as they get bigger. They remind me of my dogs when they were pups. Jump cut to my mother saying how delicious and juicy the leg of lamb they had the night before was.

I realised then what a hypocrite I had become. If I felt that way about lamb then surely I would feel the same way if chickens and cows roamed around my home too. Thus was my conclusion.

The dogs are downstairs humping each another again.

## **Thirty-three**

I've got a list of painful moments in my life that I want to write about. Mainly in the hope that I can learn to come to terms with them by actually looking into them whereas in the past, I've skimmed over them as if they never happened. I think I may learn something about myself and it also might help me as a writer, to use these moments to get a real understanding of character and how to write real people with real fears.

My only reservation is that I know I will probably spend most of the day in tears but I guess sometimes that's what you have to do to get to the root of things. I'll probably also smoke far much more than I should but if I can get all this out of my system it will be worth it and perhaps then I can go on to write

something of some meaning about a set of real characters in this surrealistic society in which we all live.

### **Thirty-four**

Quiz shows. Who in their fucking right mind would want to go on a quiz show?

I was in the supermarket this morning. I was spurred in that direction because we haven't had any bread in the house for three days, well, not counting the bits with white furry mould spreading over it like athletes foot. A woman barged into me with her fully laden shopping trolley (either a large family or a couple of fat fuckers) whilst engrossed in her shopping list, ticking off items with a red biro. She then leaned over me and grabbed a box of economy eggs off the shelf which clearly stated 'caged hens' on it. I looked in her trolley and saw buried gourmet pizzas and fresh spinach and ricotta pasta. Why for fucks sake then, did she not pick up the free-range eggs next to them and spend a whole 30p more? Somebody should put her in a fucking cage.

I am quite a bitter person. I didn't quite realise it until I started writing things down. It's odd when you realise something like that about yourself. Makes you feel a little uncomfortable.

### **Thirty-five**

Why do people always expect so much from you?

### **Thirty-six**

Celebrity. This I find an odd phenomenon. Actors, singers and models in particular phase me. To succeed in a certain line of work is commendable but what gives some people the right to declare themselves better than the 'ordinary' man? To succeed simply because you are beautiful is a thing which leaves a bitter taste in my mouth. Not to get me wrong, there are a lot of talented people out there who put a lot of work into their art, for example, I can watch a film and have my breath taken away by the director's imagination, an actor's strength of character...the list is endless. Yet seeing a run-of-the-mill, I would perhaps even say downright talentless singer on the front of a magazine pulling a face like a slapped arse telling people how to be like them really gets my goat. Fucking jumped up pricks.

Why do adverts insist on showing women's abdomens with just a glimpse of the bottom of her tits and the curve of her buttocks? Not just adverts for soap anymore either, but breakfast cereal and yogurt. Why is it never a man's bollocks? I get so sick of advertisers putting forward their images of what is beautiful, the standards you must try and conform to to be accepted by the people that really matter. Fuck off you patronising bastards. You make me fucking sick to the stomach. No wonder I meet more and more

anorexics in my day to day life. People who won't ever eat a biscuit with their coffee. People who eat dry bread rolls for lunch as they can't bear to put anything remotely calorific into their mouths for fear their boyfriend will run off with someone who weighs half a pound less. There are so many probing questions about life we still haven't been able to answer, so many problems throughout the world that we choose to ignore, we have the capacity to explore and explain like never before...so what the fuck is everyone doing?

### **Thirty-seven**

Voluntary redundancy. Well. I'd freely like to declare myself redundant. Redundant. No longer of use. A waste of space. Yes. Thank you so much. Makes me feel a hell of a lot better.

I really do think most companies are run by monkeys. Only they go out for tapas not bananas.

At work today, I told one of the girls she was about as funny as Windsor Davies. She looked at me blankly and asked who the fuck Windsor Davies was. I guess he must live with me in my world, along with Dustin Gee and Bernie Winters.

### **Thirty-eight**

I know too many fucking stupid people. It truly scares me.

### **Thirty-nine**

I can't sleep. I have too many things whirring round the inside of my head. I sometimes feel my head expanding, getting bigger and bigger until it eventually explodes. I sometimes experience a kind of madness where thoughts get faster and faster until I want to scream. This is how I feel now. Everything's too surreal. I can hear the clank of the trolley a few rows in front. I know that soon a steward will appear with a robotic smile and ask me if I'd like any drinks. I'll offer a favourable reply and wait until I am passed a can, a plastic glass and a small unappetising packet of savoury cheesy bits.

'Would you like anything to drink, Madam?'

I stare at her for a moment.

'No, thank you,' I reply, surprising even myself.

She continues down the aisle.

I realize I am thirsty.

### **Forty**

Tracksuit bottoms. Is there any item of clothing that can make a woman look less appealing? Every few months I bow to temptation and put some on to

lounge about in and then catch myself looking at the equivalent of a well-fed buffalo in the mirror. Fucking hideous.

I wish I could draw. My drawing resembles that of a four year old with broken fingers. I always liked the idea of being an artist although I never got much further than potato prints. I was even shit at that. Ended up covered in paint and what must have looked like after-birth on the paper in front of me.

I was on the train some time back, falling asleep, when something caught my eye. Nothing spectacular but it made me stare. The train had stopped momentarily and I looked out of the window at a large supermarket. On the ground floor was a woman, sat at a table in the café, struggling with a bottle of tomato ketchup. If I noticed nothing else it was the fact she looked so fucking desperate.

### **Forty-one**

Life is like a great big pie. One with poo in it.

I went on a training course once. Introduction to Management. What really amused me was that it took me five attempts to get through the front door of the place.

When my partner was in the bathroom that night, he shouted through to me and said whilst I was at the next day's training, could they add another session, on how to put the toilet roll on the toilet roll holder. Fucking funny bastard.

## **Forty-two**

I recently visited a web site where you can access information about the people you were at school with. People post up their information so that you can have a nosy and see what they've been up to. It's funny how curiosity gets the better of you and you end up searching for every single person you ever met at school, especially those whose guts you fucking hated just in the hope that they're having a shit life. It amazed me that the majority of people I knew are now working in IT (note they never refer to it as information technology as it sounds a bit too sad). Others said they were working in a crap job so that they could save up to do what they really wanted i.e. go traveling or set up their own business. I don't think one of them said anything near 'I'm really happy with what I do'. I'm not criticizing as I know I'm the same but it's a depressing realization.

## **Forty-three**

Why do I spend my days off staring into space? If I write so much as one paragraph I feel quite chuffed. I really do pity myself.

## **Forty-four**

I no longer want to get up in the mornings and go to work. I find it all so pointless. I'll re-phrase that. I never really want to get up and go to work but I do it

so that I can afford to live. However, today I woke up with a feeling that if I continue doing this same thing day after day after day after day, I will eventually go insane. I'm not just saying that to be funny either. I think I truly mean it.

I'm wasting my life away. Each day my time just slips softly by and each day I feel worse about myself. I have a tendency to get depressed. To stare out of the window and cry. I'm generally happy with my life, it's the work ethic which depresses me. The fact that I can't earn a living doing something that I enjoy, which is writing. I really feel the need to do something for myself and spend what time I have expressing myself in a way which makes me feel more comfortable with myself as a human being.

I guess a lot of people would call me selfish. I know I'm not alone working in a shitty job for little more than minimum wage and maybe I should be grateful for the life I have but surely each person needs to reach an equilibrium within themselves where they can actually justify getting out of bed every day. This is my problem.

Coming to terms with myself.

### **Forty-five**

I can see lights below us as we hurtle through the dark. I've no idea where we are. I've just woken up and can't seem to find the energy to reach forward to the back of the chair in front to pull out the in-flight magazine and look at the crappy little map at the front which gives little indication of the actual geography of the world. It all looks so distant. If the body of the plane just vanished I would float down, smiling as the

lights grew bigger. A few seconds after that I'd be dead but I'm comforted by the thought. Maybe I would fall into trees, cushioning the blow and tumble onto soft ground where some kind old lady would find me outside her cottage and take me in for some hot broth. I look down through the window of the plane and smile at the twinklings of life.

### **Forty-six**

I've been in my latest job for nearly a year now. This frightens me. Before that, three weeks was an age. I don't like 'proper jobs', you get stuck inside them and the days start passing too quickly and before you know it you're looking forward to your own death. Maybe I should publish my work myself on the back of electricity bills so that I can end the hell. I'm really not surprised that so many people suffer from mental anguish. Society can have that effect.

### **Forty-seven**

I got sacked today. Well honestly, it was only a matter of time. Dismissed. Breach of contract. I was nice. It surprised me. I really wished I'd told the old sow to stick it up her bum. I've never been sacked before. It's a very exhilarating experience. I must say I enjoyed every minute of it. So. Another new job. I don't know what number I'm up to. I don't really give a fuck. Not giving a fuck is far better.

I've got no real career path if my writing doesn't get published. I think that's why I continue to fuff my way through life. I'll probably be heading for a nervous breakdown when I re-asses my life in ten years time but I wont let that interfere. Stupidity really. Yet I won't condemn myself to a life of drivel just yet.

### **Forty-eight**

If you leave the earth and travel in a straight line into space, you will eventually come back to where you started and hit yourself on the back of your own head. At least that's one theory. The other is that you keep going and going into infinity. Apparently it all depends on whether space is curved or perfectly straight. We haven't found out yet. Space may be astronomically smaller than we imagine. Stars we see could be distant reflections of ourselves, our own planet, reflected back to us by light distortion. Or, space could be expanding at an ever increasing rate so that eventually all the mass will prove far too much for it and it will all collapse back in on itself in something similar to the reversal of the big bang, crushing everything into a particle smaller than an atom before ceasing to exist at all. Fucks with your head doesn't it.

## Forty-nine

I look at the menu. I have a choice. It doesn't matter. At the end of the day it all tastes like shit anyway. Rehydrated shit. Chicken Kiev and roast potatoes. Good combination. Beef Curry. No, you just wouldn't would you. Vegetarian cannelloni. I haven't eaten meat for two years now however I have an urge to order the beef just so as I can sit and look at it and wonder what use all those grizzly bits had for the poor old cow that had its throat slit. The trolley approaches. Unfortunately the smell proceeds it. 'Cannelloni, please', I say pleasantly. 'Oh, I'm sorry, we've none of those left....hang on..... Shirley? Have you got any veggie left?...No, I haven't Emma...plenty of beef though..' 'No. I'm afraid we're all out. Chicken Kiev or beef curry?' I pause.

## Fifty

I think empathy is a quality. I also believe it is a quality many people seem to be lacking. As a human being I am conscious of others people's perceptions of me. How I am perceived is important to me. My life is based around a vast number of images of myself and that is how I assess what sort of a person I am. There are people for whom these images are warped. I mean, I'm sure my own perceptions are distorted but not to a degree where I think I am much different than the reality proves. For some, other people's perceptions of

them aren't an issue. They either just don't care or their minds do not have the capacity to see things from another's viewpoint. For example, I wouldn't like to be perceived as someone who talks to someone else as though they were a piece of shit, no matter what they'd done. I could be horrified, baffled, angry, frustrated, hurt..... but I still wouldn't want to be an individual who was capable of talking to another human being, made up of all the same particles that I and everyone else are made, as though they had no value at all. I think sometimes that can be one of the most hurtful things you can experience. And no, I didn't have an unhappy childhood.

### **Fifty-one**

Samuel Bagpile lives in a small village in a remote place. He is very old. He is a good man with bad habits but has never done anyone any harm. Someone somewhere has felt sorry for him and has decided to give him another chance. Re-incarnation. However, the somebody who has decided to do this for Mr Bagpile, is a blundering fool.

Samuel has an out of body experience and goes down the tunnel towards the light and finds it not all as he expected it to be. Does Samuel continue to exist in both dimensions? Do the dimensions cross each other and is Samuel aware that he may bump into himself? Will he recognize himself? Is he the only one in this situation?

A journey of discovery for Samuel Bagpile. At the end of his journey, if he gets there, he may find his true self, which may be an assimilation of the other characters in the story.....

...possibly. Or possibly that would just be a shit story idea.

The End.

### **Fifty-two**

It's blowing a gale. The elements at their most magnificent make me glad I'm indoors. I might light a fire but that usually results in near asphyxiation. I'm writing but I don't know what about. It just makes me feel better.

My partner's driving around in this weather. It's marginally better than being driven insane which is what he'd be if he was stuck in with me in this mood. I took the dogs out earlier and my hair was in my face as I irresponsibly opened the gate and nearly sent them both under the wheels of nextdoor's car. I've had a bad week with dogs. Yesterday I nearly stood on one, no, I actually did stand on one. A ratty little thing in the park which ran under my foot. I've just wormed my two and they're currently looking at me as if I was Satan. If I believed in Satan that is. It's probably more apt to say they were looking at me as if I were Jeremy Beadle. I hate that man. I wish someone would go round to his house and for a really funny 'prank', stick a film camera up his ....

### **Fifty-three**

I'm remembering one night I went out for a meal with my 'colleagues'. God I was bored. Fucking bored.

Infact I nearly walked into the kitchens and stuck my head in the chef's oven. If it wasn't gardening, children's sporting activities, pensions or paintwork then it simply wasn't worth talking about. I am sorry. I have a shallow head.

Why are some people such tight-fisted bastards? I am the poorest person amongst the people I know yet still find myself arguing with folk who feel it more than justified to leave a two pound tip after going out with a group of people for a meal that cost £200 and was the nicest selection of food you've ever eaten. I imagine that it's about as insulting to the restaurant as pulling down your kecks and doing a great big mess on the table. Thank you so much for the delightful meal, I've left a shit on the table for your trouble. Don't forget to split it with the chef.

There's a line in a film I recently saw. It goes something like this -  
Do you like what you're eating? Yes, I do. Tastes like veal... Well, it's actually sea snake. Urgh! (cue spit out food in disgrace).  
I find that odd. The character cannot believe he's been served up sea snake as opposed to a succulent infant mammal.  
How does society justify itself?

### **Fifty-four**

If Harry Potter was your son, you'd have no alternative but to beat him to death with a stick.

I want to write a novel. Something bizarre. I have no idea how I'm going to do it. At the moment I'm just writing as I'm thinking. Most of it's nonsense but in a funny way I'd actually like to write a book that made no sense at all. People would come up with all sorts of metaphorical explanations and interpretations I never intended.

I'm rooting around my old room. I've just found a pad. One of many I used to and still do, scribble old rubbish in. This particular pad has details of a job I used to do in it. It brings back memories of when I worked for a farming magazine, selling advertising space for people wanting to sell shitty tractors. In all honesty, I was shitty at the job. Couldn't find the pleasure in it. I guess I ask too much.

I hate a lot of people. I didn't think I did until I sat down and really thought about it. People really fuck me off.

Smoking. That's an odd one. I've smoked on and off for years. It's off at the moment. It's a cruel addiction. The first thing I did when I was told I didn't have cancer was light a cigarette.  
I am quite aware that I am a twat.

I received a letter in the post from the university I left a couple of years ago, demanding I paid the £126.70 which I apparently owed them. First I'd heard of it. Yet probably true. Why wait two years? I was there doing a post-graduate study course which I left because I couldn't afford to continue. I was a little concerned. Mainly because I haven't got £126.70. That was of course until I reached the end of the letter. It kindly informed me that if I hadn't contacted the university within the next seven days...wait for

it...it may result in the invalidation of my student card and the revocation of my library privileges. After that, it, along with my sad memories, went headfirst into the bin to sit alongside the dog sick I cleared up earlier.

I don't know if I'll ever make a writer. I've been trying for half an hour to align my paragraphs and they're still all over the fucking place.

### **Fifty-five**

.....

### **Fifty-six**

Couldn't think of anything useful to say in Chapter Fifty-five. I was thinking of writing about the time I watched someone commit suicide but I changed my mind.

### **Fifty-seven**

I know someone who looks like she is sucking a lemon. Permanently. It's quite frightening. It's

obviously taken years to perfect. Actually, it's a cross between that and the look of a person who's just smelt dribbly dog shit.

I like things that don't make sense. My head is probably one of them.

I used to attend a Christian youth camp. Yes, I realize that it seems highly unlikely. Unfortunately it happens to be true. I sat and sang songs whilst others played guitars. Ate back to front dinners where we had desert first and basically bothered god. I met all sorts of misfits there far more screwed up than other people I knew. A friend I made there, I'll call him Jason, wanted to train to be a priest. He was fourteen. Of course there was the odd snog and a few rude sniggers if someone said 'sod' but we were more or less well-behaved. We were good children. Apart from the fact we didn't have a clue what we were shouting and waiving our arms in the air about. It was what everyone else did.

I don't feel proud. The opposite really. I hadn't much of a personality. I had little confidence. I wasn't capable of believing I had an opinion. Not surprising really, having to sing, 'as the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you...'. Not quite what a fourteen year old should be yearning for methinks. It's all too cult like for my liking. Yet it was encouraged. Breaking down into tears, saying you wanted your sins forgiven, promising to be good, never to swear again.....Bollocks to that. Stick it up your arse and whistle.

If you don't like it, pray for me.

No don't infact. I couldn't give a toss.

## **Fifty-eight**

I wonder how they're all doing up in first class. I'm only thinking about this because I have cramp in my neck. You would have thought somebody by now could have invented a comfortable plane seat. I know that more leg room would result in less business but who thought up the ingenious idea that people enjoy sleeping with their head dug into their chin. Maybe I'm over the average height they designed them for. It's either that or try to turn yourself a fraction to the side and wake up with your head on the shoulder of the hairiest man in the world sat next to you.

I open my eyes and squint as my neighbour has his reading light on. I look at my watch and try and focus.

I must have been asleep all of ten minutes.

I wonder if I've been missed yet.

I slouch and rest my head against the cold window.

## **Fifty-nine**

The first time I had sex was a real disappointment. I'd waited. I had a childish idea that I wanted to wait for the right person. Funny really, to wait all that time and then meet a right pillock who spoilt the entire thing. He was a hairdresser. Alarm bells should have rung really. It only happened once. He dumped me straight afterwards. I don't think he could actually look me in the eyes. He was terrible in bed. I'm not saying that because I'm bitter. He truly was fucking dreadful. To get fucked for the first time and then wonder what all the pissing fuss was about is a real shame. He has a hairdressers near where I live now. He's a fat twat

with a poky premises you wouldn't want to step foot in. I think it's quite fitting. Unlike his trousers.

Why do some people try and live through their children? It's awful to watch. People who, if you took conversation about their kids out of the equation, would have absolutely nothing to say.

I wonder why I work so fucking hard sometimes.

Every time you switch the news on people are dumping all over each other. There's not much point reasoning it out, the human race is a waste of time. We may have learnt to build civilizations but we have little idea of equality. People still starve to death whilst others sit in McDonalds stuffing Big Macs down their faces. Young girls are forced into prostitution by their families whilst young girls elsewhere throw tantrums because they haven't been bought the latest fashion item. Materialism is so destructive. We no longer know what we want. We are told what we want.

I know I am occasionally guilty of wanting money. Not a lot of money, just enough for it not to be a struggle and just to lose the feeling of knowing I owe everyone I know. Yet money can't solve everyone's fears. For some it can be as destructive as the lack of it, if not more so.

Why are there so many people on television offering to lend you money? So they can rip you off that's why. Mankind isn't that generous. Oh I'm being too harsh. Why, you only have to sign your house away or pay back twice as much as you borrow. I think I'd rather stay poor.

Bad hair. Do some people have no idea at all? Obviously not. The current trend is to look like you've been rolling around in muck all day. Wash your hair, blow dry it, then cover it in gel, run your fingers through it whilst tipped upside down until it's all tangled and hey presto, it looks like you've not washed it for three weeks and then fallen in a prickly bush.

### **Sixty**

I wonder how I'll feel when I eventually get there. It may take some adjusting to.

### **Sixty-one**

I've never really been in control of my emotions. It doesn't take a lot to swing me from one mood to another. I can be happy yet still get very depressed. I can have friends yet still get very lonely. I'm not sure why I've evolved this way. I know deep down I'm a fairly insecure person. I've always known this. I've always felt the need to apologize for myself.

Circles are no better than squares. Only different.

My back aches. I feel like lying down and letting people walk all over me. People often do. It doesn't take away the pain.

I wish I could make my own clothes. At least then I'd be in with a good chance of something actually fitting me. What I hate most in shops is when you try on a top which falls with ease over your head but then refuses to come off so you end up with it stuck over your head. You nearly strangle yourself in a bid not to rip the fucking thing.

Or dresses that fit perfectly at the top but are either eight sizes too big or small at the bottom. Why am I a size ten in some shops and a size eighteen in others (no exaggeration). What idiot came up with that? I don't go into a shoe shop and say 'Well, I think I'm a size seven but could you also bring me a three just in case?'

I shouldn't have to take five items of the same damn thing into the changing room with me. Even then, nothing usually fits. I often feel guilty for having boobs as some clothes designers think you just simply shouldn't have them. Next year they'll be fashionable again. What sort of a crazy world do we live in? I don't like the fashion at the moment. Only because I don't want to look like a used up prostitute. I don't begrudge those that do although they might as well walk the streets covered in sperm.

I did have a funny experience in a changing room once. It was in a charity shop. I was trying on a truly hideous outfit for a bad taste night when my friend's little girl threw open the flimsy changing room curtain leaving me flashing the worst bra I own at the few old codgers in the shop. I did feel embarrassed I must admit but couldn't stop myself falling into hysterics looking at the state of myself, half dressed in a

revolting purple number. My friend was nearly on the floor, creased over whilst holding a sickly brown plaid skirt and cardigan. The moment was only topped when a few minutes later an old bloke entered the shop and asked the woman behind the counter if she'd had any men's underpants lately.  
I kid you not.

Why do some people argue for the pure sake of it? Even when they don't have a single point to make. Just to argue. Just to upset someone. There are more people like this walking upon the earth than I realized. Warped people who can't stand the fact you may in fact actually have a point you'd like to offer. It kills them. It truly does. That's why they drown you out. To stop themselves drowning in their own obscurity.

## **Sixty-two**

My stomach's in knots. It's my ovaries in a desperate bid to work properly. If I bleed twice as painfully than is absolutely necessary might it kick start my reproductive system? Of course not, that would be silly. It does hurt a lot but sometimes it's comforting to know I'm alive. Bull.

I remember being sat at my desk, in a truly bland office, wondering if this was all there was. I'm sure most people at some point ask themselves that same question. Probably not as many ask it everyday. Sat here now, I'm still asking. Maybe someday I'll know. More than likely I won't. It's not a meaning of life I'm seeking, nor is it faith in one religion or another, to me that clouds the issue. What I seek is more to do

with something not being wasted or regretted. How I achieve this I'm not sure. I've not made such a success of it so far yet I've lived for nearly thirty years. I'm not talking about relationships with others, for these I am very grateful. I guess it's about my relationship with myself. Io sono. The question is too hard for me to answer. I worry it may always be so.

As a society we hide things. If we don't understand it or it's too painful, hide it, pretend it doesn't exist. Only it does exist and what's more, it lurks. We know it's lurking. We can feel it yet still we force ourselves to say it does not exist. Deny. Deny. Deny. Crap. It's no wonder we're all so fucked up.

### **Sixty-three**

Another job. In this one I'm lucky enough to be sent to hot places. My first day consisted of being sent to Mauritius. I remember being quite nervous traveling down to Heathrow on my own, wondering how the other people on the trip would interpret my odd head. I guess I was lucky. I was found amusing which is a nice alternative to being thought an egotistical buffoon. We spent the first night sat up til god knows what time, drinking copious amounts of local gin and telling each other our deepest secrets, which is always more fun when you're bladdered. We had so much fun that later in the week we accosted the waiter and tried to get him to take his most fetching vest off, much to his horror and then insisted on requesting his presence each time we rang room service. I think he's in therapy now.

I guess the nice thing was that I felt accepted by a group of people who knew nothing about me. I wish my life was more like that.

### **Sixty-four**

My tone is morose today. Everything has a kind of shittiness about it. Mind you, this is partly caused by the fact that I was up until 5am this morning throwing up. Such a nice feeling.

Whilst I was hung with my head over the toilet looking as feminine as usual I wondered how a man could ever love me. Then I figured that's why I don't date shallow fuckers...or men that piss on the toilet seat.

I've not been outside at all today. I've been sat in this cocoon looking like death itself. Cocoon, now there was a good film. If only we could all be beamed into a space ship and live forever, the world would be a better place.

I drink too much. Only the other week I got up in the middle of the pub and did a Tina Turner impression. Everyone fell about pissing their sides, especially seeing as they couldn't tell who the fuck I was supposed to be. I should stay in more.

Not so long ago we lay in bed singing songs to each other.

## Sixty-five

I'm staring at the competition page in the newspaper as I have been for the last ten minutes or so. I have a pen in my hand and three clues in the crossword have been filled in. I just want to pass the time.

'Excuse me?' I turn my head. The man next to me is smiling. 'Do you want some help?'

Not really is what I want to say. Instead I smile back and pass the paper over.

'You off on holiday?' he asks politely.

I don't really feel in the mood for conversation. 'Not exactly', I reply, noticing the bags under his eyes.

'Me either', he says and I hope that's as far as this conversation's going. 'I did have a week booked off but then this thing came up and I'm the only one who can deal with it. I work with computers...I'll not bore you with the details.'

He's not a physically attractive man but he seems pleasant enough. Pleasant enough for me not to be rude by telling him to shut up.

I smile again and look back at the paper I've just given him. 'See how you go with that', I say kindly, 'My brain's a bit tired'.

'Know the feeling', he laughs and looks at the paper with interest. The chat was over.

## Sixty-six

I've just read a book about fast food restaurants. Fucking incredible. Did you know that most fast food burgers had faeces in them because the production line went so fast, they didn't have time to clean the shit off the food as the other carcasses swung over

them. How fucking disgusting is that. I wish I'd have known at the time I unwittingly used the eat them. What would you like Madam? Well, let me see, fillet of shit please...and would you like your fries with piss or without? No, I'm lying about the piss but the fries did used to contain beef, good news for all the vegetarians out there. It's incredible how little we know about stuff like that but it's the way corporations want it to be. We are controlled to such a degree but few of us even notice it. We no longer have choices but we believe we have all the choice in the world. I really believed when I was thirteen that writing a letter to the Norwegian government would make them stop the mass use of tuna nets in the ocean that kept killing dolphins as they got trapped in them. It's naive. Sure, if everyone did it, it may have a slight effect but my two hours, sat with pen and dictionary did fuck all. I still do it, now and again if I feel strongly about something but it does little more than ease my conscience. It's a sad fact. If we all stood up and refused to eat the over processed garbage that fast food restaurants serve us, that we wouldn't go near if we knew both how it was made and what exactly goes into it, the whole industry would have to change. I wouldn't have a problem with food made on the premises, with chefs that had actually been trained, with a company that didn't insist on tracking housing developments from space just to see how much profit they would make from a certain social class of people. I wouldn't have a problem at all. I just wish more people would give a fuck.

## **Sixty-seven**

Tortoises are lovely.

Routine. I despise it. Can there be anything worse than living your life exactly the same week in week out? Same way to work, same conversations, same drink from the bar, same sandwich filling, same television programmes, same walk every Sunday, same clothes, same hairstyle, same breakfast cereal, same Christmas list, same order from the chip shop, same sexual position, same holidays, same shopping centre, same sanitary towels, same cigarette brand, same washing powder, same telephone chatter, same bunch of flowers, same music, same opinions, same questions, same replies.  
Same nonsense.

It's secure. It's 'coping'. It's really quite frightening.

## **Sixty-eight**

Why do some girls feel the need to walk around with their tits out? I guess they think it makes them look sexy. Well I suppose to some guys it does look incredibly sexy but are they the men you want to trust with your secrets? Girls who complain that they can never find a man who loves them for what they are, that the only men they find sleep with their friends. It doesn't take much to figure out really. Put your tits

away, it would solve many of your problems. Men will love your mind if you strip away your insecurities. It just takes a bit of courage.

People sometimes tell me I should go to the gym. I want to tell a lot of them to go to a good bookshop and do something useful with their time.

I'm proud of my body despite what everyone else thinks. It's alive. It's imperfect. I've got scars. I've got bumps. I've got a history. I'll never look like a model and I don't think I'd want to. I used to hate myself beyond belief. When I was thin I hated myself more than ever before because no matter how I looked, it was never good enough. It took me a long time to distance myself from that way of thinking.

Okay, I wouldn't want to be obese because that would mean putting myself at serious risk but it doesn't bother me I'll never be a small size again. I could be if I tried but the fact is I don't want to try. I'll put on a bikini and stand next to whoever is there and if people don't like the way I look I couldn't give a flying fuck because they're not the people that matter.

## **Sixty-nine**

I accidentally locked myself out of my hotel room whilst on a work trip. I'd gone out onto the terrace to watch the ceremonial lantern lighting in the hotel grounds. Nothing too embarrassing about that apart from the fact that I'd just stepped out of the bath and had nothing on but a hotel toweling bath robe. I was dripping wet from head to foot and had to dodge through the hotel gardens to reception. All the guests

were pouring out of their rooms to various bars in their best evening gear. This was a classy five-star hotel and I think I made the reception staff's night stand there dripping all over the floor, with my wet hair hanging over my eyes.

No matter what I do, I just can't seem to do anything responsibly.

Coupons. They're a fucking disgrace as well.

## Seventy

Sat looking out of the window. I'm in an office. I should be typing but I can't stop looking. Across the concrete divide, I see reflections of myself through the opposing glass. They all look like me. Different hairstyles, different clothes, same person. We're like ants. Below me, outdoors, they smoke, waltzing in and out, it would make great time lapse photography, in and out, in and out, every day until they die.

Cheerful, isn't it. A man reading his paper, sat on the smokers bench, alone. What is he thinking. Is he pondering over the morning's work, wondering if he'll get a sale this afternoon, or is he just trying to lose himself in the lines, looking at black and white, living in grey. A companion now. She has her neatly packed, low calorie, low fat, non-descript sandwich that will make men want her, need her, love her.

I don't mind it here. At least here I can still see the sky, the clouds. They are dark today but still enticing. They wait. They want me to look.

It's a hive of activity below. I feel like I'm spying. I'm not, they could see me if they would only look up. Why do people never look up.

My nails look nice today. Can someone kill me?

I see my reflection in the glass, or is it another me on the other side, a version of myself that haunts me, that never goes away. The girl in the glass is free, sat there in the open air, no one even notices she's there. Except me. I know. She also knows. She is laughing at me.

It's grey. The sky no longer looks full of clouds, it's as if the sky itself has darkened, the whole atmosphere changed, forever altered.

Targets, numbers. What does it all mean? Does any of it matter? There they sit on the wall, taunting, teasing, goading. I want to walk over and wipe the board clean. Write on it 'Life is beautiful, don't waste it'. There's more life in the tree outside my window.

I don't know why but I've got a strong urge to write SALE in great big letters across the office window in tip -ex.

### **Seventy-one**

I am woken from my thoughts by a sinking feeling in my stomach. We are experiencing turbulence, a voice will say any second. Please stay in your seats and notice that the please fasten your seatbelt sign is lit. My seatbelt is fastened. I don't know why, I guess I feel safer. I'm not particularly scared of flying. It's fairly bumpy. A pathetic woman behind me keeps ramming her knees into the back of my chair and

commenting to her partner that she can't stand turbulence. I can't stand being punched in the coccyx's every two seconds but that doesn't seem to bother her too much. When the cabin sign above me flicks off I think I'll put my seat back, something I never usually do as it's most uncomfortable for the person behind.

I feel a bit queasy but before too long it eases off and we're gliding smoothly again. I hear a sound and glance above before hitting a button on the side of my armrest and lean back with all the power I can muster. The woman behind me lets out an audible gasp, false and at the same time, well-practiced. I hope she had a gin and tonic on the fold down table.

## Seventy-two

Babies. Haven't made my mind up about those yet. Sometimes I cry because I don't think my body will help me out with this one but other times it's quite a relief. I'm sure I'll choose the option that hurts most. I know I'll truly want a child in a few years and it's a selfish thing. Perhaps the fact I can't have one will be justified.

Trains. They're shit.

The last time I was on a train, I was delayed for fucking ages, had to sit next to the woman with the biggest bag in the world, pinning me against the window so I couldn't move for three hours. Have a seat reserved just so I can travel backwards and feel sick for the rest of the day. To add insult to injury I read in the paper that train fares are going up. Fucking idiots.

I was in a nightclub a few weeks ago. I fetched a fair price and once bidding had stopped, a nice farmer herded me out with a stick.

Every now and then I am offered Cocaine. I don't know why. Maybe I'm boring company. Personally, I can think of a million better ways to enjoy myself than sniffing powder up my nose hoping I don't get a nose bleed and die but there you go. It's a real shame when you can't justify your life isn't it. I'm not a prude. I drink too much and can fuck in most imaginative ways. That's enjoyable enough for me. Except when you can't remember anything and are struggling to walk.

My boss is on holiday this week, which is fortunate. I might get quite a bit of writing done. I don't feel bad, the phone hasn't rung for forty-eight minutes and I've nothing else to do. I might as well do something and apart from banging my head repeatedly on the desk until the numbness goes away, I can't think of anything.

Don't you just love communal fitting rooms.

People who think they're it. They should realise they are not 'it' but are infact, a waste of space.

I have a friend who is completely dominated. She decided a while back that she was gay and then a short time ago, decided she wasn't. Only her girlfriend disagreed and now has her completely under the thumb. She isn't happy but is too kind to say anything more. I can't quite figure that one out. Mind you, it would be the same if it were a man. Yet if it were a man other people would say something to her, as it is,

they don't even mention it as if it's not their business. Mainly they are too scared to say anything in case they are considered discriminatory. Odd isn't it. Of course I said something, you'd be disappointed if I didn't. I told her to stop being an old doormat and enjoy her life on her own fucking terms.

Department store coffee shops. Charge the earth for what you full well know is tinned tomato soup. Fucking cheats.

I sometimes want to change my name to Hilda. Just so people will be surprised when they meet me. I met a guy in his early twenties the other day, named Percy. I was drunk and told him it was very unfortunate. I feel bad about that. Yet honest.

Ties are silly aren't they.

If I locked myself in the stationary cupboard, I wonder how long it would be before anyone missed me? I'd probably only be found when someone ran out of pritt-stick.

I really can't understand how some people can be such scrubbers.

### **Seventy-three**

Dream analysis again. I was sat on a plane ready to taxi down the runway but when I looked out of the window, we were taxiing down a country lane. We kept twisting and turning around the tight bends, occasionally bumping down the odd ditch. Next thing I knew we veered off the road and onto a railway track. We bumped across the rails and the plane split

into carriages which fell quite smoothly into a tiny, and I mean tiny, stream about six feet below. Next thing I knew I was stood on the banks, helping people find their luggage which was drifting off with the trickle of water. I stepped back into the plane and got my luggage from out of the netting in front of the seat where you usually find the in-flight magazine. Then I found myself wandering across the tarmac at the airport towards the terminal with the pilot swaggering along beside me talking nonsense. He said not to worry and that the plane would be tweaked a bit and we'd be taking off in about 40 minutes. Immediately I was stood in a house. I wandered across the hall and into a room where I found a man decorating a bedroom. He told me to look at the yellow flowery douvet cover. He didn't like it. I said it was okay. I told him I was going to be late to meet my family if I didn't get on the plane again in 40 minutes. I said I didn't want to get on a plane that had been in a stream with a pilot who was pissed. Then I woke up. I'm fucking insane.

### **Seventy-four**

People let you down don't they. I told someone a secret once which was so important to me it needed to be kept. Three weeks later, they got pissed and nothing was sacred. It's a feeling worse than many others because it is beyond your control. You feel betrayed, disillusioned. Hurt. The sad thing is, they didn't mean to do it and apologized beyond compare. What do you do? You nod, you say it's okay but deep down, something about your whole self changes.

My body's here but my mind's somewhere else. I wish I could just fade to invisibility. Then I could float round, listen to conversations and know what people really think of me. It's the not knowing that eats away at me like termites. I don't feel like this all the time, infact, not very often. Just now and again. But it's enough. Just the thought that people might not have an opinion about me at all, that they don't really give a shit. It's insecurity that drives this ache within me. It's so fucking shallow, I hate myself.

I feel happy again. It's an odd swing I play on.

People should smile more. Otherwise it's so fucking depressing. Moaning old farts really fuck me off. They shouldn't. But they do.

The telephone keeps ringing. It's never for me. If by some miraculous chance it is for me, it's always something crappy beyond belief. I need a fucking break.

I know someone in their twenties who's had a nervous breakdown. I've also seen someone in their twenties throw themselves off the top of a car park. Why don't more people question the society we live in and the pressure that people feel they are under every second of every day? Stood over that frail body on the ground in front of me, I didn't cry. I was told I was in shock but that's the weird thing. Really it was no surprise. I didn't know anything about him, not even his name but he reminded me of everyone I know. I wish I knew him. In some ways I feel I understand him more than most. It was a long time ago but when I lie in the dark, I often think of him.

### **Seventy-five**

I wonder if I should buy the headphones being thrust in of my face. They cost nearly as much as a cinema ticket. I haven't heard of the film they're showing, it's either a b-list or I've been a bit wrapped up in things over the past few months.

'No thanks', I decline. I don't think I'd be able to pay much attention to it anyhow.

Crossword man already has his headphones on and is eagerly flicking all the buttons on his arm-rest. He looks like a man easily pleased.

### **Seventy-six**

Money. Money. Money. The echo is ringing in my head. We haven't got enough to get through. I don't know what we'll do. I just keep thinking it will get better. It has to.

My hormones are raging again. I'm so miserable I could cry and cry for hours. I wish I was lying outside in the rain.

Cold, meaningful rain,  
Enhancing the green,  
Touching,  
It caresses,  
Reminiscent of tears.

Where are you? I am asked this question a lot. Often I don't know. Sometimes I just so long to be not here.

### **Seventy-seven**

Hangovers. They really strip you bear don't they. You are at your most unpleasant. You've never looked or felt so god damn awful. And you are blessed with the worst imaginable breath which people coil back from in horror. It's most attractive, especially considering the night before you thought you were the most beautiful woman to walk the earth.

I am inconsiderate. I know I am. I take people for granted which is truly despicable.

Only now am I finding friends whom not only do I really value but whom I'm pretty sure actually like me which makes a real change. Friends who don't whisper about you behind you back, spread your secrets, generally dump on you. No, I lied. They don't exist. Even your closest friend lets themselves go now and again.

£60 short of the rent again. I shouldn't be surprised, it's not like it's any different from usual. Then why do I still indulge in a double-take when I'm staring at my balance on the cash-machine. Bollocks. It just really pisses me right off.

I've cancelled my holiday. It was only a cheapie but one I'd been looking forward to for a long time. It was a choice between going or letting the dogs starve. Well, no, another lie. I can't even afford to feed the

dogs this month. That's why I go without lunch. Sad isn't it, that I'm reduced to this. My colleague opposite is talking of buying a new mobile phone because her year old one looks a little out of date and I'm wondering where the change can come from to buy cotton to hem up my trousers which are falling down rather trampishly over my boots. I have twenty pounds on my second credit card to last me the next thirteen days. I don't actually have a penny of real money, the last bundle of coppers I could find in the house went towards the £1-50 I owed somebody. I'll start writing cheques next week in the hope that no-one will bank them for a day or two and then the whole fucking thing starts all over again. Happy days. I need a holiday. I could also do with a packet of crisps but unless the supermarket will take 34p on a credit card I'm bugged.

No-one wants my work. Publishers won't even read it. Agents are no longer taking on new authors. Online publishers demand a fee which you know if you pay you will never see again. I might as well just use the pages to clear up dog muck. We live in a world where people expect you to know your place and any attempt to move from it will be highly discouraged. Talent is never seen as such unless it is marketable. Risks are something no-one needs to take anymore. We have enough writers, albeit they just copy each others ideas and churn out the same nauseating banality.

I'm so tired. I want to sleep. Sleep and not dream. I won't. I never will.

I was insulted recently. His idea of proximity was slightly misjudged. Funny isn't it, you always say insult me to my face not behind my back but it's far more hurtful. I wasn't supposed to hear but there's

something that makes you listen when you hear your own name in the air. There's no feeling quite like being insulted, especially if the person insulting you is saying it to people you consider friends, and worse, they find it amusing.

### **Seventy-eight**

This is a strange journey I am on. Mainly because I don't truly know where it is taking me. I think about it as though it is controlling me, leading me yet it may be I who am consciously making each turn. I haven't quite decided which it is yet. When I arrive I may be disappointed and may go somewhere else. I never have been any good at making decisions. Even the wrong ones.

Sometimes I'd like someone to tell me. Only I know it is just so I can have someone to blame other than myself.

Journey's always scared me before. I worry. It is not a pleasant trait. I like security. Or so I thought. Now I don't know. The unknown is quite appealing in an odd kind of way. I'm still worried. But not particularly scared.

I just want to distance myself from everything.

I don't like mirrors. They make me see the worst in myself.

## **Seventy-nine**

The film is in full swing. I'm glad I didn't pay for the headphones. It's like watching animated wood. The script probably isn't much better so I'm relieved.

## **Eighty**

They wouldn't let me have my holidays at work so I pulled a sickie. My excuse was far too ridiculous and far too obvious for them to think I could possibly be lying. I toyed with being inventive but then thought fuck it and rang in with a cold. I always thought repetitive burning diarrhea or thick, clotting menstrual bleeding were good for the no questions asked excuse but I really don't give one.

I've not cried for a while. I've become rather harsh. I can't tell yet whether or not this is a good change. I've been a pussy for ages.

## **Eighty-one**

Can there be anything ruder than sitting in your friends home during a housewarming party, eating the fantastic food they have engineered and drinking

countless cans of lager out of the magic self-filling fridge and ignoring everyone whilst texting someone on your mobile phone? I have found myself standing in a room where I counted at least eight people doing this. The party wasn't boring by any means but people don't seem to be able to function properly anymore without typing letters into their ultra-modern, newly upgraded phone. I'd call them Neanderthals but I have respect for Neanderthals.

### **Eighty-two**

I've brought very little with me, considering. I wondered exactly what to bring. I couldn't bring it all with me. It was a matter of choice. I can't remember what I've left now even though it's only been a few hours. Never mind. I'm sure it won't matter. I didn't realize how much people traveling abroad actually carried until I stood in a queue with them all struggling to lug their cases forward with their knees. Geoff Capes would be proud of some of them. How much stuff can you use in the space of a week? Mind you, half of it is probably the bacon and teabags British people usually take abroad with them in case foreign countries don't actually have any food or god forbid, any PG Tips.

### **Eighty-three**

I'm not sure if I love someone or not. For most people, this wouldn't be too much of a problem. In many cases, it would probably be an exhilarating

experience. Falling in love. The trouble is I've been in love with this person for years. I don't know why or when I started to feel different. I only know that one day I noticed I wasn't sure how I felt any more. We hadn't had a row or fallen out. We hadn't been through a bad patch. It just sort of happened. I can't really get my head around how I'm feeling so trying to explain it to that other person is the hardest thing of all. I don't want to leave. At least I don't think I do. Yet I don't know how much longer I will be able to stay if my feelings stay in this state of limbo. My life would be very lonely without you.

### **Eighty-four**

I worked in a cinema for a while. It wasn't a taxing job and consisted mainly of watching films all day. Thinking about it I don't know why I quit. Yes I do. They wanted me to work through the night at the opening of the new Star Wars film dressed as an Ewok. I'm five foot eight. Kind of defeats the object. Anyway, before I quit I had a great time. One morning a couple of my colleagues and I rolled into work early on a Saturday morning. We'd been out the night before after finishing late and rounded the evening off by going back to someone's house for a couple more drinks. I went to sleep. For twenty minutes. I was woken up by somebody saying 'quick, we'll be late' and thrusting an orange juice at me. I gulped it down. Nice orange juice. Would have been better without the vodka in it. My supervisor wasn't best pleased but considering I was seeing him at the time he knew it was in his best interest's to turn a blind eye. He tended to do that quite a lot. However,

sliding down the bannister shouting whoopi kind of gave me away. I was going to get sacked. I knew it. But for some obscure reason, my boss approached me with a bunch of leaflets and said 'can't have you lot in here in this state, go and stand outside Asda and hand these out. Come back when you're sober'. Top fucking boss but not being the type of people to take advantage, we sat in the Asda café and had breakfast.

### **Eighty-five**

People who interfere should be interfered with.

Why don't women want to be women? In body and in mind. Everywhere I look I see women trying to deny the fact that they are women. Desperate to be seen as girls they try and postpone womanhood as long as possible as if it's a disease. Women longing for a flatter chest, narrower hips. Women walking around in hipster trousers and crop tops with bangles round their wrists. Bunches in their hair and childish hair accessories. Reading magazines which tell them what the celebrities are up to, which parties they've been to and what fashion disasters they have made. It seems to be something society is advocating. The control factor. Women who talk in childish voices and refuse to discuss anything that is actually relevant. They believe themselves to be modern and equal but it is not the case. Women are still considered the more vulnerable sex. The ones who need looking after. I think the truth is, most women wouldn't want this to change. On surface level, yes. They can get as drunk as men and swear to their hearts content but when it comes to the fundamentals, where do they stand?.

## **Eighty-six**

I still feel cramped. Ah well. I'm usually fairly at home with long legs but now I begrudge them. No I don't, I begrudge the money grabbing bastards that have wedged me in here so that they can fit an extra row in. I shouldn't complain really. I should be grateful I'm actually flying through thin air. What would people have made of this a few years ago? I feel like I've been sat here for a hundred years. Time. I never really have been able to figure that one out.

## **Eighty-seven**

Trivial music. Not to confuse the issue, I don't mean peaceful or even simple music but music that is just pure drivel. Lyrics that could have been written by my dogs and a rap interval that sounds like someone is suffering a mental episode. It's a great con, how such dreadful artists can actually convince people that they are actually any good. Mind you, marketing helps. Even so, why would you listen to a babble of nonsensical, trivial garbage and come to the conclusion that these people are contributing something useful to the world. Fuck off.

Women who speak in pre-pubescent voices and sing ridiculous love songs. Desperate.

Why people don't talk about anything that actually matters.

Day to day life. What does it all mean? I haven't got a fucking clue. The frightening thing is I believe it means absolutely nothing.

Do you sometimes get so bogged down in the mundanity of life that you want to scream? I know I do. Watching everyone around me acting like robots, engaging in moronic repetitive conversations. I sometimes feel so isolated and alone and often the more people are around, the worse the feeling gets. It feels like Invasion of the Body Snatchers but more invasion of the mind snatchers. I'm reminded of bad zombie movies. Am I so different? Surely not. Other people must think about things a bit more deeply than they let on. I'm afraid it's a small minority. It sometimes makes me cry.

### **Eighty-eight**

Sheep. Peaceful creatures. Wandering around a pasture, eating grass all day, stopping and looking around once in a while and then spotting a nice piece of grass to dine on. It seems a happy life for them. Until someone takes it away from them.

## Eighty-nine

I can see my bloodshot eyes staring back at me in this light which is too bright. Too honest. I find peace in this tiny, enclosed space although I know I can only stay in here a minute. People are waiting. People are always waiting. For something. For someone to say to them 'go ahead'. Without the words the waiting continues. There's something about the washrooms on an aircraft. Sterile yet only if you go in them early on in the flight. Later, the sinks are splashed with water and tiny wisps of bathroom tissue dance along the floor.

The light's not very flattering in here. Mind you, this is just what I might look like at 30,000 feet or so. I don't know why I'm worried. I'm not trying to impress anyone. I made that decision some time ago. It's much nicer not having to pretend.

I'm getting to know this face. It's taken a long time. I don't particularly like it but I know it, which is intriguing. Three sheets of tissue and my hands are nearly dry. I touch my eyes with the moisture that's left. It's cold but it doesn't help. My tears were too deep. My clothes are creased but beyond salvaging. A couple of blank faces greet me as I exit and I wonder if this is how I look to them. A blank face. I suddenly have an urge to find a felt-tip pen, run back in to the toilet and emerge as a clown.

## Ninety

The twat's restaurant survival guide:

1. Insult all the waiters by racist banter i.e. hey Punjab, can we have some more drinks?
2. Tell all the waitresses that they've got fantastic breasts.
3. Order something really inappropriate i.e. egg fried rice in an Indian restaurant or chop and chips in a pizzeria.
4. Pretend you know what's in every dish on the menu and then order something you don't like and spend the rest of the evening saying things like 'I think they overcooked the sauce a bit', leaving the meal untouched.
5. Tell the waiter at the table you want to order the best champagne in the place, nip to the gents and whilst passing the bar change the order to the cheapest without telling anyone.
6. Say hello to everyone who walks through the door as if you're really popular when really you don't know a soul.
7. Try and get a discount off the bill by telling the staff they need his repeat business.
8. Try and flog the head waiter some dodgy fags you've just smuggled into the country.
9. Embarrass all your female guests by telling them you're in love with them.
10. Embarrass your wife by telling her in public that her tits are sagging.
11. Order red and white wine and when one runs out start drinking the other before the next bottle arrives
12. Insist in having a double brandy in your coffee.
13. Flash a load of notes every time you have to go into your pocket when you owe everyone money.

14. Tell disgusting and bigoted jokes loud enough for the entire restaurant to hear.
15. Drink some more
16. Drive home.

### **Ninety-one**

I can't concentrate on this next film that's showing. Not just because it's a dreadful film but because my mind's not here. I don't know where it is. The chap next to me keeps flicking between channels impatiently. He's got something on his mind too. You can tell. He's fidgety. I want to take his hand. No words. Not in any sexual or suggestive way but just to let him know I know he's thinking. I won't. It would be too complicated. Taken the wrong way. Our species would be better if could just drop all barriers and hold each others hand for a while.

Watching the slight judder of the wing. If I was ten inches to my right I would fall away and get lost to the clouds. The wing looks old, it has developed its own markings. Looking at the screws holding it in place, it all looks so fragile. Yet I feel safe. The constant whirr of the engines is comforting. The sound of the wind against this alien body. I wish I could reach out and touch it. If I fell out of the sky now, I wonder where I would land. It's an odd recurring thought.

## **Ninety-two**

I stopped falling. I fell through a roof and found myself sitting at a worn but homely wooden table. I was surrounded by a small group of people. A family. They had a Latvian look about them. It was cold. Someone passed me a hat. I put it on. No one spoke. I looked up to the hole in the roof. Above it I could see the first stars appearing. I looked back to the table. There was a bowl of soup in front of me. It smelt good. I turned my head and looked at the small boy sitting next to me. He smiled at me and offered me his bread. We all laughed long into the night, sat at the table, drinking and laughing. We didn't speak. We could not understand one another through language. Late on, as the children were nodding off to sleep with their heads on my shoulders, I knew I had to leave. I floated back up towards the roof, through to the chill night air. I took off my hat and threw it down towards the small opening, now quickly fading, so that I could feel the breeze. I was back where I belonged but sad in a way. It was a nice place. I had wanted to stay.

## **Ninety-three**

My favourite state of drunkenness is when you claim to be perfectly sober. You've been out all day and have run out of fingers to count how many drinks you've had, have talked nonsense to everyone you know, including those people you hate so much you wouldn't usually even say hello to and had a real struggle just to get yourself the few yards home

without falling into a hedge.....and still, once through the door, you vehemently believe that you are sober as a judge and if anyone says otherwise, you come up with a wealth of excuses, such as, well I had some chips so that soaked it all up, or, I didn't mix my drinks so I'm absolutely fine, I wasn't really in the mood for drinking anyway so I took it easy.....soon followed by, I knew the door was there, I was just testing you, it wasn't me who couldn't get in, it's this key of mine, it never bloody works, have we got any sausages in the freezer, I could eat my own head, I can't get my trousers off, this bloody button's been going for ages, I meant to drop all this change on the floor just so I could see how much money I've got left...or my personal favourite, re-emphasizing your comments, even going so far as to say, I know you don't believe me but I feel like I haven't touched a drop, I'm as sober as a child, getting in bed, rolling over, off the side of the bed and falling headfirst into the pot plant.

### **Ninety-four**

Why is there red tape everywhere you turn? Simple. So that you can always be controlled to some extent. Just trying to get a reduced rate flight when working in travel for a while is like trying to piss in the wind. You have to have worked here x long, you have to get it cleared with eighteen different people, most of whom, no matter how long you've worked there, will even give a flying fuck what your name is, then you have to contact someone through someone else and provide them with a form that you can't understand after studying it for three hours and if you eventually

get your head round all the fucking nonsense you sit there for two weeks, checking your emails on a minutely basis only to realize that no fuckers read your useless form, no one's going to read it and if by some chance they do pull it out of the bin next to the fax machine and can be arsed reading it, you may get a short reply. Sorry, this isn't applicable. Go and take a fucking running jump.

Abductions. Some people are truly screwed up. I don't know whether society and its confines are responsible but things like that make you sick to the stomach. You suddenly become afraid to be a free person, afraid to walk alone in the evening, afraid of peaceful places, afraid for your friends children. Afraid of the unthinkable but knowing all the possibles. Rape. Murder. Even if you lock yourself away in your own home, it doesn't mean you're immune, it just depends who's watching you.

My ovaries are throbbing again. Aching. My body yelling at me again. I can feel my personality changing as I am sitting here. Hardening. I do become someone else. Someone I don't recognize. Someone from my past. Vulnerable.

I look at the hands typing. Are they mine? I don't want them to belong to me.

## **Ninety-five**

I have just been interrupted by the air steward serving breakfast but it was a wasted interruption considering

she had no vegetarian breakfast. You would think in this day and age a reputable airline would cater for people who prefer not to eat pigs ass. It's so frustrating from time to time. I keep my mouth shut. I could have really fancied a croissant. I think I'll go back to looking at the wing.

Everyone's eating. I'm hungry. The poxy bread roll I was offered didn't seem at all appetizing. This is a world where people don't like you to have too many choices.

A new day is beginning. I can see the sky lightening out of the cabin window. The view is restricted but for most of us shouldn't be too much of a difference. I turn my head a little further back and see the blackness still behind us. There is someone back there who still doesn't know I am gone. It may be some time before they notice.

### **Ninety-six**

I really do drink too much. I was on holiday with a man. I spent the evening in a comatosed state after drinking too much local brandy. We then met some folk who'd bought a house in the Cypriot hills. We were invited for drinks on their outdoor terrace which I'm sure was lovely. I drank until I couldn't see and my partner drank until he couldn't speak with even an ounce of intelligence. I gave up first and decided it was time to leave the party. Our hosts, full of concern for the weird girl, who looked at this stage of the evening like something of a liability, decided that my partner should stay and finish his tale, the one which he was making up as he went along, and their sixteen year old son would walk me home. No, the story isn't

going that way at all. Anyhow, the one thing I was to keep in my clouded mind all the five minutes back, was to remember to give the key to the sixteen year old after I'd let myself in and he would bring it back for my partner so he could get in later.

I made it back without being sick which I considered something of an achievement, ignored the poor, bewildered sixteen year old boy, who was looking at me in disillusionment. This wasn't how women were portrayed in magazines. Surely after a few drinks we were supposed to look sexy and alluring, not uncoordinated and cross-eyed. As he attempted to say goodnight, I fell in through my door and shut it in his face. A few minutes later when the floor stopped moving as much and I managed to get myself somewhat vertical, I was still clasping the key. Never mind, I'll just stay up. I decided that staying up would be much more comfortable if I put my baggy sleeping t-shirt on. This completed, after falling over twice trying to get my pants off, I decided waiting in bed would be better for me. No problem. I could stay awake and read.

I was woken quite rudely by a knock on the door. It was a slow knock and each one felt like it was on the side of my head. I grumbled and turned to tell my sleeping companion that someone was knocking on the door. Then I made the mistake of opening my eyes, for of course my companion wasn't there. He'd been curled up on the cold marble entrance, in the brisk mountain air for the previous five hours.

## Ninety-seven

Would you punch someone who didn't give you the remote control? Roll around on the floor using every wrestling technique you could think of?

I know a man that can.

Why are kids crisps so damn nice? I know the answer to that and it's quite sick but it doesn't stop me eating eight packets at once when I've got a hangover. I go round to my friend's house just so I can nick her kid's food. It's all so fucking shameful.

I often wonder what early humans would think of us. Not just early humans, but medieval knights, Roman prostitutes, Victorian housemaids. I often wonder what they would make of our world as it is now. I wonder what I would say if they were sat in the passenger seat of my car. Imagine being an early human and seeing a car, a medieval knight looking up at an aeroplane, a Roman prostitute watching women in trousers working in previously male only environments, a Victorian housemaid watching a dvd on a plasma screen. I'm not kidding. I'm totally fascinated by this. They would probably commit suicide within a week. At first, it might seem attractive and new, glorious and uplifting but after a while, it would sink in that deep down the world is just the same. Human nature hasn't changed, only its guises. We appear civilized but as most of us know, appearances mean little when the essence remains unchanged.

I hosted a murder mystery night once. The theme was Hollywood. You know the idea, everyone has a part

delivered to them a week before and has to come as their character, act in character and drink as much as possible. Amongst the chaos, we had a dried up old actor, a leading member of the mafia, Robin Hood, a pirate and a cowboy, complete with guns and spears. Well I hadn't laughed so much in fucking ages. We made death punch which made most of us keel over although we weren't the victim. Any drink we didn't like that came through the door went in it. It was quite palatable but absolutely lethal.

Most people forgot who they were after an hour and I collapsed in a drunken heap on my windowsill and stayed there asleep for two hours whilst everyone took photographs of me. I still think about the man who had the task of putting Captain Hook to bed that night.

I walk around with cards with my name on. It's supposed to be a privilege but if truth be known, it's only a reminder that most people you meet don't give a crap and need a card to remember who you are and what you do. It's only natural, you can't remember everyone you meet but when your card sits in a pile amongst countless others on a dusty desk, you can't help but feel insignificant and delete-able.

The truth is we are all insignificant. None of it actually matters in any way. No matter how much we think we are advancing, we will all die and unless we develop the technology to leave this planet, then our race will eventually be engulfed by the sun. If a meteor doesn't get us first. I actually believe we ourselves will be the cause of our own destruction, if not deliberately by war then stupidly with no ozone layer, no forests, global warming and pollution. Take your pick. Our race will not be a constant in time. It will have an end. Somewhere. I don't know if the human race should develop the technology to inhabit

other planets, other solar systems. Just imagine how much damage we could do.

### **Ninety-eight**

I re-visited a conservation zoo recently. Not for a holiday. I felt the urge to return even though last time I went I was very nearly physically sick after watching a chimp do a big dump in its hand and then shovel it into its mouth for a nourishing meal. I was very close to hurling just thinking about it. At least evolution has benefited us in some ways. I can't really imagine that sort of behaviour around a dinner table. I love animals. This particular zoo has a bat cave and honestly, you could spend hours in there. Well, those people that aren't touched by that female pathetic-ness we are so accustomed to. After being in there for a while, your eyes become accustomed to the dark and you start to make out shapes hanging from the trees. I'm talking about fruit-bats here and they are the cutest animal. If you sit down, they fly right past your head. You don't notice at first but they're all around you, dodging you using their sonar awareness. It's fabulous. It's a peaceful experience and leaves you feeling exhilarated. I took my friends kids in there. They were afraid at first but after I'd told them about the bats and that they were completely harmless, they lost their inhibitions and boldly walked in. I couldn't get them out, they loved it so much. Yet, if I'd have walked in with them nervously, shrieking every time I saw a shadow, like a few people we saw, I'm sure the kids would be terrified for life. Funny, isn't it, you don't understand how many of your unfounded fears

rub off on your children. Goes back to what I was saying about a lot of people being fucked up. Like follows like. Unless you reach a state of awareness where you don't allow it to happen any more.

The orangutans simply looked at me with a bored expression. If they did have the power of speech I'm sure all they would ask for is their freedom. Yet we can't do that. The species that try to preserve their race is the same species that try to extinguish it. These animals can never be truly free. They are like escaped convicts, always being hunted. Always running.

Running. I hate running. Only because I can't do it. I've got odd legs which humiliate me every time I need to run. They're long and lean but unfortunately I have the most useless knees. Two operations on foreign bodies located there. Foreign bodies. I love that. Only small operations but enough to mean that I have a great excuse for not doing any strenuous exercise. Even if I didn't have any problems in the leg department, I'd still find an excuse. I fucking hate exercise, unless it's walking. I still have vivid memories of trying to improve the way I look so other people would accept me. The vision of my mirror image, in cycling shorts, t-shirt, badly fitting sport's bra and a face as red as a tomato, leaping around in a gawkish fashion on a running machine will never leave me.

I still run away a lot though. Just not for fun. No physical exertion necessary.

## **Ninety-nine**

I wonder who designed the overhead cabin signs? There's one with a plumped out stick figure holding a tray above its head with a cup on it. I gather it's supposed to be pressed if you need assistance from the crew. I think if you actually pressed it and asked for a cup of tea you wouldn't be popular. Besides, stewards don't carry trays above their heads. Even if they did it would be most stupid. People don't realize the danger of hot liquids.

## **One hundred**

I collapsed in an airport once. I remember it well. It was midday and the flight was delayed. I'd run out of water and out of any money to buy any more with. I was walking across the lounge to go to the ladies room and the next thing I knew I was flat out on the floor with an overweight lager lout hovering over me asking me if I was alright. I was confused, the last time I had a fat man hovering over was my friend's uncle who fell ontop of me as I was sleeping on his lounge floor at 5am in the morning as the last few stragglers of a party were going to bed. He tried to get out of his chair after too much whisky and misjudged it badly. I awoke in shock to find his red face half an inch from mine. It was a source of valuable amusement to everyone else who seemed to be ignoring the fact that I couldn't actually breathe. I wouldn't normally have been bothered by the event apart from the fact that I hated the fucker who had spent the evening complaining about everything and

generally being a racist bastard. Anyway, back to the story. I was alright, turned out I was seriously dehydrated. Funny, I thought I'd drunk enough that week to sink a ship. Unfortunately it was all alcoholic which defeats the object. I got back to my seat and all my monkey brained boyfriend....no I'll re-phrase as monkeys do actually possess a high level of intelligence.... my pigeon brained boyfriend, had to say was 'What took you so fucking long?' It was the last holiday we spent together. Personally at that point in time, even the swollen bellied lager lout was looking an attractive companion.

What really got me about my ex husband was that deep down he despised me. He didn't mean to. I even think he thought he loved me. He couldn't see that he hated all women.

I wonder how much of my life I spend staring into nothingness. I'm staring but I'm not looking. I don't want to look. I want to fix my eyes on one particular spot and drift away. I do it regularly. I don't think it's morbid, just an escape for a couple of moments. It usually makes me feel worse actually, like I've nodded off for a couple of minutes, it takes me a while to snap myself out of it and the real world becomes visible again.

### **One hundred and one**

It's a while since I've fallen into a bush. I miss it.

## One hundred and two

I went to see Phantom of the Opera with a wonderful man once. It wasn't the right relationship and it didn't last but it was happy. It was happy because we knew it wasn't permanent and we made the most of it. He was my toy boy for a while. Selfish again really, on my part. I think we were both a bit lonely and we just fell into something. No regrets. I don't think I have any regrets about anything. No, that's not true.

Can people please stop talking about money when I can't pay the rent. Sat in an office where the main topic of conversation is how much money everyone's got, when you are fighting off the tears because you know full well it's only a week or so before you have your gas cut off and the landlord's knocking on the door saying he can't understand it but he can't seem to locate your rent check. People moaning that they have no money but what they really mean is they can't afford a new widescreen telly or they can only just afford that new car they've seen and god forbid, there will only be a little bit left over after the weekly clothing shop.

People don't mean it. They just don't think. That's just the trouble. People should think. It would do them good.

Family outings. One day I dressed as a slag, got hopelessly drunk and talked nonsense to everyone, unintentionally making myself out to be a thick bitch. The sad thing was, I think my family preferred me. I don't know why I did it, I guess it was a sort of experiment. If I lived in America I would be a prime candidate for therapy. One fucked up person listening

to another fucked up person. Definitely the way to cure society's ills.

I've got eye strain. I'm concentrating but on what I can't be sure. I'm working but my mind is ahead of me. What I'm doing later. What else in my head I need to write down. How much longer I can get free food out of people. My head hurts. I want to find a dark place and sleep. Maybe if I went outside and screamed, the thoughts would go away. Unfortunately we can't all do that. Imagine the noise if we did. Could be fun.

### **One hundred and three**

In my dream, we never land, we just go on flying through the air until the landscape below us becomes unfamiliar. Night falls, day breaks and we just fly. Gone is the man sitting next to me. Gone is the shell of the man-made flying machine. All I can feel is the clean, cold air.

It's a nice dream, only it's not mine.

I can't sleep. I keep looking around the cabin. Everyone seems to be sleeping but maybe they're all like me, pretending.

### **One hundred and four**

You know when someone's got a dodgy eye. Which one do you look at? I'm not being discriminatory but

it's a hazardous question. How do you know which one is actually looking at you? You try so hard not to think about it. You deliberately look everywhere else apart from their eyes, just glancing up once in a while, just long enough not to be perceived as disinterested but not too long to be rude. And by doing this, you miss the question and have to ask them to repeat themselves, starting the whole cycle over again. Life's difficult.

Scams. Isn't that an awful word? People that get involved in scams. Cheat people. I can't fucking stand false people. Not just those who con you but those who have a different personality according to who they're talking to. Those people who say they consider you a good mate, then tell everyone else that they fucking hate you. These are the people who are so insecure they need everyone's acceptance, no matter what it takes. Sad really.

### **One hundred and five**

A lot of things are of great beauty. Things which if you look at them for long enough make you smile inside without really knowing why. Flowers, huge tree roots as they twist over and under the ground, the eyes of curious animals to name a few. I could go on, once you start thinking about it there are so many. The view of a small boat on an ocean as you fly overhead, standing and staring upwards at a meteor shower, coming into a room with an open fire after being out in the rain, collapsing into bed after a hectic day, hearing an old friends voice, being told for the first time that someone loves you.

People see beauty differently. It would be a great shame if we didn't. Our perceptions vary. Admittedly, a lot of what we see as beautiful is only that which we've been led to believe is beautiful. But when it goes beyond that, the emotions true beauty stirs up are astronomical. And true beauty is subjective. That's the nice thing about it.

### **One hundred and six**

I was in a pub when a friend bit into a cheese and onion toastie, yelled and then declared it to be as hot as the centre of the sun. It really tickled me. I like it when people express themselves in a totally abstract way. It makes everything far more interesting.

I was also in a pub once when someone told me I needed to get a life. I wish I'd have said he needed to stop drinking to excess, insulting everyone, trying to cop off with everyone's wife whilst beating up his own, smuggling hardcore porn into the country and ripping off his mates. I didn't. Sometimes there comes a point where you just don't need to.

I like pubs. They're a surreal environment. Really they are. You never quite know what to expect, even from those you know the most. It's like a whole new world to be explored.

### **One hundred and seven**

I always feel like walking out of my job, whatever it is. Just getting my bag and walking out of the front door. Not saying a word. It would be so liberating. Walking down the flights of meticulously clean stairs, through the lobby, past the miserable receptionist and out into the big wide world. I always have a strong urge to do it but I'm held back. By reason. I need money to live. But why should I slave away for a company I'm lost in, which doesn't care if I live or die. I want to walk. The odd thing is that I know that soon, I'm going to.

### **One hundred and eight**

Do I want a brandy? I can't decide. I waiver for too long and the offer is gone. I want to shout for her to come back with her tray. I would like a nightcap. I don't think it will help me sleep but it might take some of these bizarre thoughts away. She turns back. I lean forward. The guy next to me is still asleep. He's lucky. His face definitely looks more pleasant this way. Less troubled. The steward sees me and whispers. I look at the dark liquid in the plastic glass and shake my head. I don't know why. I guess my head likes these thoughts. They keep each other company, there's no getting away from them. Yet isn't this what I'm trying to do. Escape. Escape from what. I don't really know. I guess I've known that all along. Sure, I can escape to some degree from the society I despise but I can't escape what goes on in

my own mind. I wouldn't want to anyway, now I think about it. It's what makes me.

My life is speeding up. It's like being sat on a train watching the scenery go by. I'll arrive at the last stop soon and the journey will all be over.

I'm in a cheerful mood.

I wonder how I would react if we flew through some sort of Bermuda Triangle. Not that I believe it exists but imagine if it did. The key to my interest would be if I survived the transition and wasn't simply melted or evaporated. To pass through a dimension. To behold a parallel universe. Imagine. Imagine how it would change the way you viewed the world, the universe, time itself. \*Note, remember this thought, might make a good kids book.

### **One hundred and nine**

I know I keep re-iterating this but I'll say it again. I'm so sick of what I do for a living.

I feel I'm paling into the background again. Not really here. It's as if I could walk across the room and no-one would see me. I feel invisible.

Signing letters. Do I care? Do I even read them when they're put in front of me to sign. No I don't. I could be signing a letter that says 'Fuck off you pig, I hate you' and I wouldn't know any different. Why? Why don't I read what I'm putting my name to? Because I don't give a shit, that's why.

I had one of the ‘flick the page over’ calendars on my desk. I had the severe urge to work backwards. That would fuck with people’s heads wouldn’t it? I thought it could be fun.

### **One hundred and ten**

Another thing that pisses me off with friends. Why are they so thick sometimes? One time, we had good friends round for the evening and played them a cd we had discovered which we had loved immediately. It goes without saying that the lyrics are something my mother wouldn’t approve of, in fact, I think her head would blow up but never mind that. A month later when we saw our mates again, they reveled in the fact that they’d not only bought the cd but had managed to get tickets to see the band in concert. When we asked if they’d thought to ring us to see if we wanted to go they seemed surprised and the old ‘oh, we didn’t think’, came out. Cheers. When we tried, all the tickets had gone. Thanks a bunch. You didn’t even know who the fuckers were til you came round. I love these people to bits really. However, I did want to slap them.

People who dismiss my writing. Many people will if I ever get anything published. Many people already do and they’ve never even read a single line. Judgement. It’s no wonder people rarely experiment with their creativity. They aren’t encouraged to. People laugh at me when I talk about writing as if it’s all one big joke. They’re not being deliberately catty. Well, no, that’s

not true. Some of them are being deliberate. Some say that I'm too young to write, others say I haven't experienced life enough, some say I should write a book based on their lives, it would be far more interesting. I don't have much support, save a few close friends. I wouldn't mind people telling me my stuff was crap, a real fucking disgrace, if they actually knew anything about it, if they actually bothered to be just a little bit interested. Well. Fuck 'em.

### **One hundred and eleven**

I've given up trying to read. I've been holding the book back for hours as something to look forward too. I wouldn't care but it's fucking rubbish. Do you find, when delayed at an airport, you have a sudden urge to run into the bookstore and buy the crappiest book in there? You could be a true intellectual but sometimes the urge still grabs you. A few hours later you are sitting on the plane, feel a touch bored and pick up your plastic bag, now containing a pile of shit including a bottle of water, magazines you'd never normally be seen dead reading, a miniature battery operated fan which will stop working before you even step foot off the plane, two adapter plugs because the explanations were so complicated you couldn't figure out which one you needed for where you are going and some warm wine gums, and out comes the trashy novel which is approximately 60 pages thick and cost you a measly £8.99. You've usually read the damn thing or before you've taxied down the runway and the only thing it inspires you to do is look at the inhouse drinks list and work out how many alcoholic beverages you can squeeze out of the change in your

pocket. I saved my disgraceful excuse for a book until this particular moment in the journey. False hope. I should have spent my money on something better. Tamazapan.

### **One hundred and twelve**

Regret. It's right up their with suppression. If you're not happy, change something. Don't wallow in misery all your life. I think some people enjoy being miserable. I truly do. Why would you? Some people enjoy being victims. Playing the hard done by. Whenever you ask them how they are they tell you what a bad day they've had, how poorly they've felt, how they're so tired, how they had an argument with their partner. They're never happy. They complain about the weather, the cost of things, anything you can think of, they'll have a negative attitude to. You can tell with some people that they've got a negative lodged in their throat, ready to materialize before you've even said anything. These people need to get on a positive thinking course or something. I know everyone can be miserable from time to time but please have a reason for being so and not just for the sake of it. No-one's looking at you thinking you're a martyr. They're looking at you and thinking, what a miserable fucking bitch, I wish she'd fucking smile, it wouldn't crack her face. It might.... But I'd say the statistics make it highly unlikely. Anyway, I try to believe you should try not to regret your life. Part of it is trying to be aware of what you're doing with your life as you are doing it. It's

hard and sometimes you don't want to look but you should. If you are living with regret, put it behind you. Change your life completely if you have to. Start again. Don't end up a bitter old fool.

### **One hundred and thirteen**

I interrupted a meeting at work as I picked up an emergency phone call for one of the managers. I didn't want to interrupt the trading discussion but it was urgent. Well, I knocked, walked in and everyone turned round and glared at me as if I'd run into the room stark naked, covered from head to foot in dog shit.

Crying at work. Never do it. It's hugely embarrassing. Especially if you are hormonal and just burst out sobbing for absolutely no reason whatsoever. You try and pull yourself together and it gets worse. Mix in a hot flush so your face is bright red and the humiliation is near complete. Everyone in the office is staring at you like you're a fucking weirdo. Yes, I've done it. I scare people with it. Honestly. It puts the shits up folk.

An address. If you name your house does it make it a better place to live? Some of the names I pass written in fancy writing on wood outside the entrance. The Elms, Briarwood, Swan View, Windermere House (that one was in London?), The Birches, Edelweiss.... God I could go on for years. What's that all about? We live in a shit-hole but let's pretend.

Do you know a lot of people who look ready to have either a heart-attack or a nervous breakdown? I do. Many people. In fact, when I think about it, almost everyone I know with a few exceptions. And these exceptions only exist because they're either half mental, continual dope smokers or simply couldn't give a shit.

I can't see outside for the rain on the windows. Without the artificial lights in here, I wouldn't be able to see. The artificial light which fools our body, which has taken us far out of the natural environment. We no longer know when to sleep or wake. Our bodies are confused and twitchy. Thousands of years ago, people would run for shelter. I just sit here. I've no need to move. Infact, catheters will probably soon be invested in by businesses so that they can get that extra few minutes work out of everyone. Increased productivity they will exclaim with glee whilst everyone just types away, pissing themselves.

Rain is fantastic isn't it? The way the perfectly formed droplets just hang until their weight causes them to topple, then a thin steam of water trickles downwards. It's something you could watch for hours. You'd get wet admittedly. Why are people so frightened of getting wet? It's always the hair isn't it? Oh, my hair, my hair. Tragic. Truly tragic. They'll become the victim of laughter and torrid abuse if they get caught with wet hair. It's not only that, I'm not talking of a downpour, the slightest shower or even a touch of damp in the air and people freak. I'd like to stick them in the middle of a monsoon. If it not raining it's something else. Oh, the ice, I can't possibly walk in this, drop me off right in front of the shop. I'm not going out in the fog, it causes accidents. No, people cause accidents. It's too hot, I'm sweltering, Oh, I

could faint. It would be lovely this blue sky, if only it wasn't so cold, I don't like the look of those clouds. I'm only walking ten yards but I'd better have my coat to be on the safe side, once a chill gets on your chest.... . Wrap up, it's like living in Siberia. No it fucking isn't.

### **One hundred and fourteen**

Shackles. Rusted metal chain around my neck and hands. My hair has been cut very short and I look pale. My eyes dark and withdrawn. My feet bare and the floor hard. I don't know what events have led me here. I cannot really remember. I have a vague memory. I was discussing something. I must have said too much. Made someone fearful. Things can't be changed. It is dark but warm. I can see figures around me. My mother is sat at a desk nearby signing something. She stands, lowers her head and leaves. I am forbidden to speak. I can no longer speak. My eyes hurt. I close them but my balance gives way and I falter. I look up again and the room is lighter. More serene. I am sat down. A woman opposite me smiles pityingly. She shows me a card with a number of words on. I speak them out loud. The voice has re-emerged but it does not sound like mine. She places the cards face down on a table in front of her and writes something on a notepad. I ask to see it. She says it isn't necessary and beckons for me to leave. I stand with difficulty as my ankles are chained. As soon as I stand I am back in the dimly lit corridor again. I sit on the hard ground and put my bruised arms around my knees. It is useless.

The figure inside my head tries to scream but all that emerges is piercing silence.

Everyone seems so lost. Walking down the street, peoples faces seem to reflect a sadness. Attitudes etched deep within. Some look ready to burst into tears. I don't think it's a conscious thing. Day by day, the routine continues. Up early every morning to go to a job they hate. Bad tempered because they've never had the impetus to change the things they do. Maybe they've thought about it but it's been drummed into them by society that they should make the most of what they have and they believe they are doing the best they can. They elude themselves. They may sit at a desk for hours, just longing for a cigarette break. Or maybe they're a reformed smoker, nibbling their pen, wondering what they can possibly look forward to to get them through the day. Lunchtime arrives and some may wander aimlessly around the streets, some may charge around checking bank balances, lunging them further into despair. Some may go shopping and console themselves by grabbing the latest fashions in the belief that this will help them be a better person. Then another afternoon of mundanity, watching the clock ticking until they can be released. Five thirty arrives, maybe six thirty, maybe later and they exit into the early night. A mad rush home ensues or maybe a few drinks in the local, maybe they stay to finish paperwork at their desk because for some reason or other they don't want to go home. Dinner, maybe a ready meal, maybe nothing at all, they're dieting. They're maybe so tired they plonk themselves in front of the tv and watch a load of nonsense someone has told them is unmissable, then they go to bed. Setting the alarm clock for the following morning, the despair allows its head to rise. Five, maybe six days, the exact scenario continues, maybe

different words, different lunch but the underlying struggle remains. Sunday, maybe it's a Tuesday, brings the day off they've been looking forward too. Their day, their time, they're chance. Some may catch up with their cleaning and washing that they've put off all week because they were too tired. Some may go down to the pub and drink until their mind feels somewhere near to peaceful. Some may sleep til noon and spend the day in pyjamas, watching re-runs of old films and catch up on the television they've missed. All too soon, it's night and the alarm is set and the circle keeps turning. One day, you find you've missed your life.

Then it's too late.

Maybe that's what the bemused people walking down the street are thinking.

Sadly, I think that's not true. Sad, because maybe the thought won't pass through their mind until it is too late.

### **One hundred and fifteen**

In some countries, small children are taught to sing songs to their Great Leaders. As soon as they learn to speak they are taught the national verses. They grow up worshipping photographs on their walls and in the streets, blind to any outside influence. By the time they are older they dismiss any ideas which don't fit with their perceptions of the world. We in the west recoil in horror at such a blinkered view of life. Yet we still worship icons, be they religious figures or celebrities. We go to church on a Sunday and sing songs of praise and fellowship. We take our children to Sunday school where they learn the all important

passages and lessons, dressed up in colourful pictures, where Jesus and his disciples are all western, white and pristine. Is there a difference? I'm not so sure.

Idol worship. Lower down the scale there are the glossy magazines, showing people in the public eyes, lounging around their country mansions or their rooftop city apartments. They're either admired or despised but I know many people who must go out the day a magazine is released so that they can see the new images. If the pictures are bad, social judgement is passed, if they are good, their choice of décor admired and envied. They talk of these people as higher beings. A lifestyle to dream about. A life above our own.

I don't know why I'm analysing everything so much. We'll all blow each other to bits soon and life as we know it know will be gone forever. It's not all doom. I often think it would be a good thing. Let other life evolve. One that's got more common sense and compassion. One that doesn't hate everything. One that doesn't have to assert superiority to feel important, one that values life, beauty, social equality. I'm not a big fan of the human race. It's a sickly breed. If there is no final war and nothing about our culture changes, then I hope a huge comet hits us with unimaginable force, throwing us all to our deaths and wiping out any trace. Well, maybe leaving a trace actually so whatever follows can see what a mess we made in totally screwing the planet.

## **One hundred and sixteen**

The sky is a haze of blue and white. The different formations of clouds are breathtaking. Inviting. I would so love to walk out onto the wing. Not that I want to die. I don't. Just for the experience. I know it would kill me but in my head it doesn't. In my head I just sit with my legs dangling into the untouched sky and breathe. Then I'd push myself off and float in slow motion through the blue.

I can see the moon way way up above me. I can only see the crescent but convince myself I can also see the part in shadow. Its apparent stillness is hypnotizing even though we all know it is hurtling along besides ourselves at breakneck speed.

The window is scratched from the outside. What has caused it? Rain, frost, I don't know. The patterns are complex and look like the scribbles of a child.

Outside the window everything fits. It is nature at its most spectacular. Why would you pull down the blind?

There are so many people on this flight that look miserable as sin. They're flying through the air. No matter how miserable their lives they should never lose sight of that.

## **One hundred and seventeen**

THE BOOK NO-ONE READ

Sitting on the bookcase in the corner of the room

Resting on a dusty shelf up high

Perched a lost and lonely, long forgotten, story

For years it watched the time just passing by

The brand new books in front of it were balanced  
Their shiny covers promising the best  
But the dusty book was hiding such a secret  
For its story way outshone all of the rest

It told of lonely hills and strange encounters  
Of finding that true person you may be  
Of love, of hate, of death, of seeking beauty  
And believing in the dreams that set you free

But the shiny books received all the attention  
For what they looked like far outweighed what lay  
within  
Once read their stories vanished, wiped from memory  
In curious minds they drowned, they could not swim

One evening after dark came from a bedroom  
A small frustrated child far from sleep  
Her thoughts were dull and lifeless, then quite boldly  
To the bookshelf silently she dared to creep

If I reach one from the back, no-one will notice  
And I can read and read and read all through the night  
My this dusty books a right old thing  
There hiding out of sight

The book turned out to be  
The most fantastic one she'd read  
And every night she'd disappear  
And read til late in bed

Then one saddening, fateful day  
The book came to an end  
She didn't put it on the bookshelf  
She lent it to a friend

The book was torn and faded  
From neglect it had been shown  
Now it smiled within its covers  
It would no longer be alone

### **One hundred and eighteen**

The sky clears. The clouds sit, layered upon one another, hardly moving. They look thick with snow. I always enjoyed being snowed in. Trapped in the village, unable to get much further than the front door. A log fire. The windows so thick with snow that it lit up the lounge. Why do you never realize how happy you are until the moment's passed?

I don't think there are people I like less than those who stand up for something, stating boldly that they would never sell out and then do. There is a singer who said this. Quoted often for saying that she was fed up of being looked at as an object and that it was her music that she wanted to be known for. The long hair was cut shorter and jeans and t-shirt were the norm. A year or two later she fronted a television advertisement for a 'revolutionary' lipstick and frolicked around in tight clothes, her shiny locks trailing behind her. I felt sorry.

I think dogs would make great air hostesses. They'd wheel the trolleys down the cabin aisle on their hind legs, snuffling all the goodies as they went along. I'm sorry madam (in my thoughts they obviously have the power of speech) we've run out of bagels, I'm ever so sorry sir, we seem to be all out of apple juice. What do we have, well, there are some lovely raw

mushrooms here, it's been a busy flight and we've been doing a few trips to the cockpit, the captain keeps demanding bacon baguettes.

Unions. I'm not sure how to take them. Regularly in the news there are firefighters, nurses, teachers, the list goes on. Now I am not disputing they do a good job but surely their wage is enough to live on. They don't live in poverty. I was surprised when one of the workers on strike complained that they only earned £30,000 a year. At the time I was earning £8,500 a year. Yes, I was always broke, I still am but my definition of broke is not being able to afford to go out, not being able to afford food I really like and having to eat cheap stuff and cutting down on cigarettes. Now and again, I can't afford the rent but I get by. I shouldn't say that I'm poor because I'm not in the grand scheme of things. I don't have to rummage in bins, I don't have to walk fifteen miles for water which could give me a disease, I don't have holes in my shoes or have to walk barefoot over rough terrain, I don't have protruding ribs because I haven't had a scrap of food for days, or fall ill regularly with little or no medical treatment, I don't have to sell my body to provide for my family or live in a shack which gets flooded every time it rains. I am privileged. I don't like the society in which I live but I can provide for myself easily. I have time to ponder over things. I have an education which enables me to read fantastic books, a television to watch the news and learn about the world and the tools to let me write what I am feeling.

Sure, the emergency services and likewise are necessary to our way of life. Yet what of the aid workers who work on a voluntary basis in the most extreme of conditions? I wonder what they must think. I don't know really what to make of it although

there are severe undertones of something not being right.

Ask people who've traveled the world what they've seen. There is a difference between those who say pristine beaches, exquisite hotels and those who say amazing culture, great people. There is a huge divide. I went to a Greek Island and every day we got in our little hire car and explored the island. We found some wonderful deserted beaches, tiny tavernas where we sat all afternoon talking to the owner. It was fantastic. Yet every day when we returned to the apartment, the same people were still sat around the pool. In the evening, we'd go down to the harbour and have a drink and sample the different restaurants, making a few local friends along the way. We'd head back to the apartments and see the same people in the bar there, talking to the English owner. They did this all week. I think they only stepped out of the complex to go over the road to the local mini-market to buy Carlsberg beer and Walkers crisps.

There is a similar breed, although this time, one with lots of money to languish. Folk who spend £5000 each on the flight alone to travel first class for a few hours, to be waited on to enhance their feelings of grandeur. They step off their flight into a limousine which carries them comfortably to their hotel down the roads which are most amiable. There they step out of the car to be met with a representative of the hotel, maybe even dancers and a welcome cocktail. Up to their glorious room which is far far bigger than necessary and usually equipped with dvd player, well stocked bar area, a balcony as big as a lounge and various jacuzzi features, often a lounge and even a dining area if they can't be arsed to go down in the extremely effective lift to one of the six a la carte

restaurants. Outside, they lounge on the beach or by the pool under their private gazebo and spend the evenings drinking gin and tonic in the piano bar. Can these people class themselves of having seen the world? Do they even know that beyond the hotel grounds lies a very different way of life? Poverty and hunger may be lurking around the corner but as long as they are shielded from it, as long as they don't see it, it doesn't exist. I'm not saying people shouldn't go on holiday, I just think it can be taken too far but I guess as long as people have too much money at their disposal with no useful way of using it then so be it.

I want to go in a spaceship. I'm not kidding, I truly do. I dream about going into space. Seeing the Earth from a great distance. Seeing what's out there with my own eyes. Dwarf stars, gas clouds, the planets I know of and then onto those I've never imagined. I believe in Alien life. The statistics are phenomenal now we are getting some idea of just how huge the universe is and still expanding or so it seems. That is unless, as I mentioned earlier, the inward pull has started sending us all back to our demise when the crunch occurs and everything falls into a dense black hole as big as a ball-bearing. All hearsay. Theories never tested, of course, how could you? There simply must be life elsewhere, what kind of life has been the focus of much debate, from small amoebic lifeforms to technological super-races. Who knows. It would be nice to find out though wouldn't it?

The space program is something to be admired. I was upset when the Pathfinder mission to Mars failed at the last hurdle. I feel it such a shame that government money is continually wasted and that the exploration of space is right at the back of the queue. When was

the last time a man stood on the moon? Why did it all stop. Funding is why. No, we're in a position where even the space shuttles that are sent up to assist with the building of the International Space Station are so old that they run the risk of causing disaster, which happened not long ago. People with far too much money on their hands should consider funding such things. I'm sure some of them do but a lot more could delve down into their abundant bank accounts I'm sure. I think exploration of any area is fascinating, whether it be the depths of the oceans or the intimidating blackness of space. I don't know why I put that in, I don't find space intimidating at all, in fact it fills me with a sense of freedom, feeling that we are not all that there is in the Universe makes me smile a lot. Not many things do but that is one of them. It's just strange to think that after such a surge of technology and scientific expansion that some things have more or less come to a halt. After the moon landings, we could have gone on to explore the other planets, we should be able to use the moon as a launch for exploratory craft. I'm doubtful that this will happen anytime soon. I hope in my lifetime, who knows but hey, we've got enough funding to put missiles in orbit in case we need to blow each others brains out in a horrible fucking mess. If any beings are tracking our progression, what must they see?

Canal boats are lovely. Little fishing boats are also lovely. I could live my life on a boat. Maybe. Dogs would enjoy living on a boat, especially if it was a country with warm weather. We could all relax, swim and sunbathe on the deck, moving to a new place whenever the mood took us.

The weather is doing unusual things at the moment. Blue skies are followed by thunder and giant hale.

Snow drifts cripple roads yet a short time later, there is no trace. Our climate is changing. It was a slow transition at first but I feel it speeding up. The effects are being felt everywhere. British summers hotter, winters wetter. Stuff and nonsense Eve, stuff and nonsense. I'm sorry, I was only saying.

### **One hundred and nineteen**

Tiredness. It can be difficult to combat once you've fallen into it. I don't believe my body was designed to wake up at 6-30 every morning. No matter how early I go to bed, I'm still exhausted the next day. I do think a lot of it is artificial light syndrome but the other half of it is long working hours. I don't want to go to bed straight after having my evening meal. It depresses me. Weekends also piss me off. I'm sure you'd never have guessed. I feel as if I get home from work on a Friday night, shut my eyes momentarily and it's Monday morning again. It's a real bastard.

Newspaper bias. Does a newspaper exist that actually tells the truth? I doubt it. Whichever one you pick up will give you a different version of events. The clever people know which papers are conservative, labour or liberal supporters for example. I haven't got a clue. I naively like to believe that I'm reading facts but I'm not. I'm reading a journalists interpretation of the facts which is often over-inflated nonsense. I wonder what version of the war against terrorism I would get if I lived in France, or Egypt, or Israel. There is no international consensus on such things. We all have different information. Yet this information is what we

try and make informed opinions based on. Ludicrous isn't it.

Again, I'm amazed at how rude some people actually are. Where have people learned to speak to people in such a manner? Demanding, arrogant people. There's nothing worse. Well, there are, there are murderers and cult leaders but there we go. Yet still, rude people fuck me off.

Tradition. It's just an excuse to do the same things you've always done and have the same bigoted opinions you've always had. It gives you a reason to behave the way you do and a validity for your existence. It also stops you from moving on, from experimenting with new ideas and exploring endless possibilities for your life. You're stuck but the sad thing is, you like it.

Why is the sky sometimes pink? I know there's a very rational explanation, I just don't know it yet. It may be something to do with atmospheric particles reacting with sunlight or something. Whatever it is, it's stunning.

Advertisers. I'm taking a break from writing. I make a cup of tea and switch the television on. Not the most productive thing I know. I flick to the discovery channels. There's not much on but I spot a documentary which might engage me for a few minutes. I turn to the channel and I hit the ads break. First of all, an advert for a loan, not to help you out with any life changes but for that luxurious holiday or that new car you've had your eye on. If that wasn't bad enough the next advert is a joyous announcement that you can save up for your own death. Save to pay for your own funeral arrangements, it couldn't be easier, just one regular monthly payment and what's

more exiting is that if you apply now you will receive a free gift, a lovely radio alarm clock so that you can count down your last minutes of being alive. Well, sign me up.

### **One hundred and twenty**

I'm enjoying a stolen day. Stolen, because my time shouldn't be my own today. Its been leased out. It's regularly leased out. My time belongs to someone else. It sounds odd put that way but it's true for most of us. My time is evenings and weekends, nothing more apart from maybe a quick half hour for lunch. But not today. Today I'm at home. There's nothing wrong with me apart from I needed to steal back a day of my own life. All I've done is some washing, a bit of cleaning and a bit of writing but it feels special. It feels so good just to know I'm cheating the system. Breaking the rules. I even went to my friends house for a brew and a chat. The feelings of guilt that have been drummed into me have raised their ugly heads once or twice but overall the feeling is one of unexaggerated bliss. I'm laughing at them today and it feels good.

Understanding each sex. As a culture I don't think we do. Some people do and do it very well, others make up for it by wallowing in their antiquated views. I read a debatable article about how females could survive without males if necessary and that the only reason men have survived and evolved is because if we passed on our genes unaided, we would simply end up producing clones of ourselves. If this were to happen, eventually our immune systems would prove little

resistance to harmful bacterias as there would be little hope for variation amongst our genes and our descendants would start losing the evolutionary race. With men around, we give only half our genes, giving our children new combinations, forever changing over generations, giving more resistance as the dna is always changing, not giving the harmful parasites time to find that one key that they can latch onto. Some species of lizard have adopted a female only clan and it seems to work for them but the hypothesis is that time will be their undoing. Who knows? They might triumph in the end. Maybe humankind will eventually adopt this way of life. What would become of Adam then? I don't believe that will happen but I reckon it could be a good topic of conversation if well timed. I wouldn't relish in a female only society. I love men too much. Well, I'm quite picky but the men I love are the ones who might not understand everything there is to know about females but enjoy trying. It works both ways. I wouldn't class myself as a feminist by any means and there are a lot of things about the male of our species that I can't fathom. That's why it can be such fun. Men and women do think differently, that's what we've evolved to do so that we compliment each other. Originally it was probably only procreation that drove us to become this way but over thousands of years we have adapted and learnt that better communication can lead to healthier relationships and healthier offspring. Even if a women can't have children, a loving couple will still stay together. This is due to evolution and I think it's rather pleasant.

Tolerance of pain varies I think between individuals. It's one of those things you can't really measure. I think that I have horrendous period pains. Do I or is my level of tolerance lower than the next persons? If

two people cut their finger say, the same size cut, the same amount of bleeding, would they feel exactly the same thing? I don't know.

Having to go back to the hospital. Now is that better or worse than having to go the first time? Not sure. I seem to be growing quite nonchalant towards it now. I have another problem, or so it seems. Scans are clear which is good, pain is agony, which is bad. We'll check the tubes this time, maybe there's some sort of blockage. I know it seems I've been writing this for an age but I'm still only twenty-eight. Just. I feel like telling them to take the whole thing out and be done with it but then it's definite that I'll never be a mother and I can't bring myself to do that.

I've been walking through the countryside. Out the old back door and into the glorious backdrop. Whilst out I'm beginning to change my mind about the world. I did think that civilization would be much better off if a huge asteroid smashed into the planet and took us all out of the equation. But looking around at the beautiful landscape and realizing what I'm looking at is millions of years of history and evolution I'm discovering that it would be a devastating shame if it was all destroyed. The sheep on the top of the hill, the Shetland ponies trotting through the fields, the continual song of birds as they flutter in the trees. Maybe I'm beginning to appreciate what's around me. Maybe I'm beginning to see that it's not all hopeless. As long as there are people who remember why they enjoy being alive, maybe there is hope for humankind after all.

### **One hundred and twenty one**

Its cold out but the sun is shining and the sky is a wash of blue. There's frost on the ground, a layer above the grass, catching the sun. I know I'm forever dissecting things but at what point did I actually stop seeing?

### **One hundred and twenty two**

Hatred is so repulsive. I know certain people that don't just dislike me, they actually hate me. To the extent where they are happy to humiliate and insult me whilst I'm not there to defend myself. I hear things second hand and sometimes have that uncomfortable feeling of knowing I've been discussed before I walk into a room. It's so hurtful I can barely explain it. I don't quite understand why. I have ideas why but it's just speculation. One girl I know seems quite unhappy with herself. It's hard to guess from the outside but little comments she makes and the way she behaves gives her away. She's quite severely overweight and claims to be extremely spiritual. She holds evenings where she performs alternative healing and so on. I'm skeptical of this but I do join in the debate quite freely. Don't get me wrong, I'm not insulting. Yet the fact that I don't bow to her ideas makes her dislike me intensely. I'm sometimes sat in the pub and I catch her looking at me with such a look like she's just seen a corpse propped up in the corner. Yet, when I say hello to her, she couldn't be nicer but deep down I know it's a complete falsehood. I know how much she hates me and how she laughs at me with other

people I know but we play this game. Did play this game until I got bored. I'd had enough. It doesn't wash anymore. It stops here. Is it my fault that she's unhappy? I feel like a scapegoat. Sure, I know I'm not perfect and I'm sure I can be as annoying as the next person at times but I'm not a monster. I've done little to deserve this resentment. I think a lot of it is jealousy but that doesn't comfort me. I guess somewhere in the depths of everyone is a desire to be liked. I'll admit I've had this feeling all my life. Friends are so important to me, so much so that I make mistakes with my judgment now and again. Don't we all?

I've been given the all clear from the hospital. It's those male hormones again. Trying to infiltrate me. My ovaries are apparently healthy. The reconstructive surgery was successful. I may still be able to conceive. It's a relief but I'm not convinced. My body often talks over the doctors voice like a loudmouth drunk at a dinner party. I just have to find Eve again before I turn into Steve. A course of treatment will help me achieve this end. So I'm at home, recovering from another laparoscopy. The stitches in my navel are a little sore and I've got the worse trapped wind in my shoulders, yes that really is where you get it. I don't feel much like writing but there's only so much sleeping and watching the telly I can cope with. I can't even take the dogs for a walk. I should be happy. A lot of me is but there's still this part of me that wants to go and punch the fat bitch down the road whom the day I was in hospital, defaced a poster I put up for my hen night.

I did get a nice surprise when a friend who lives in Australia sent me a huge bouquet of flowers whilst I was nice and depressed at home, clutching at my

swollen stomach. It's incredible how much something like that cheers you up. It's so thoughtful. I've not seen her for two years. Back to friendships isn't it. That one's a good one. Just wish she wasn't on the other side of the world sometimes.

Last night I lay awake thinking of all the nice things I could write yet it always seems to come back to the maliciousness of human nature.

### **One hundred and twenty three**

'Yes please', and that's all it takes to find myself sat with another glass of red wine in my hand. I feel a bit pissed to be honest  
The stewardess has sad eyes underneath the eyeliner.

### **One hundred and twenty four**

I am not aboard an aircraft. I've got bored of pretending I am. I've toyed with the idea of this vague and wandering plot line for a while but I've decided it's just not necessary. It's the thoughts I'm having that I want to express. I don't really see why I have to put myself in a situation in which to do that. I suppose I could be on a plane, or even on a bus but the truth is I'm not. I had all sorts of ideas come and go about the

airline plot, I was running away from something or maybe my perceptions had driven me back to something I had foolishly lost. The predictable idea of a plane crash crossed my mind fleetingly but I dismissed it early on. I could leave the reader hanging on with one of those ambiguous endings everyone hates so much. Yet as I have said, I am not on a plane, it's not real. The rest of it is.

A story. I don't want a book that's the same as all the others I've read. I could start again. Start with Eve as a child. Follow her life as all her ambitions turn to shit and die in a most uncomfortable manner. Structure, structure, do I need to use it? I'm not sure. Without a backbone, the book might not hold together. Fuck it. I've come this far.

### **One hundred and twenty five**

I'd like to write a story about a Sleepwalker. A subconscious adventure story. I'm not sure yet if I'd like to write it from a child's or an adult's point of view. Not sure because I've only just thought of it. It could even be a horror. I've read articles about people who have murdered in their sleep without knowing they've done it. Apparently it's a medical illness. Horrendous. Definitely potential to be explored. At the other extreme it could follow the lines of a young boy who is really an international spy in his sleep. I like that one better.

Here's another one for the psycho-analysts amongst you. Of course, I'm presuming I will eventually be published. It's a few hours since I got up this morning

so you will have to forgive the weaknesses of my memory but the dream I woke up in was another strange one. I was still married to my ex but was in bed with my soon to be husband when my ex burst into the room and shot my current partner with a bow and arrow. I won't analyze it, I'm sure there are plenty of people who'd jump at the chance to tell me how screwed up I am. Or maybe it's because I caught a glimpse of such a bad film yesterday with Sean Connery and Audrey Hepburn as an ageing Robin of Sherwood and Main Marion, the latter of which had since become a nun. It was all too much to bear and is probably the main cause of bad dreams amongst anyone that has ever seen it.

Why do some people insist on wearing trousers that hang so low, it looks like you've had a big shit in them?

### **One hundred and twenty six**

A lot of people with bags of money have severe mental traumas don't they? On tv at the moment, a rich woman who's dressed like a whore is hosting a glamorous party for her cats. Her rich friends are all dressed as cats. Meowing for the camera, pulling what I suspect they believe to be sexy poses.... My computer has just crashed, mustn't have liked this bit .... Anyway, it's just not normal is it?

A terrorist reminder follows the engrossing cat story. It's been some time since America was attacked on that terrifying day. The number of people who died was astounding. Thousands. I saw people celebrating.

How could people be glad? In Jerusalem people were dancing in the streets. I've been to Jerusalem, walked through the streets, covered up, hiding my offensive body in respect of the culture. I remember after seeing the people filled with joy on the news, being gobsmacked that the same race of people who suffered at the hands of the Germans, could leap up and down over the deaths of so many people. Yes, people strongly disagree with Western Culture. I do not agree with a lot of it either but I am not a religious fanatic. I am fully aware the country I live in has attacked others unjustifiably. I would struggle to find anywhere that was run by a government that was just, honest and ethically correct in every decision it made. Yet to live in a world where the only way to protest is to kill and to rejoice in the deaths of others is repulsive, whichever side it comes from. Taking sides. We're all just children with powerful toys.

I am not religious. I do not have prayers to say for the families of people killed in wars or natural disasters. I am astounded by those that do.

### **One hundred and twenty seven**

I have an awful suspicion that I may suffer from depression. I've tried to wash over it so many times but I can't seem to find another explanation. I cry a lot. Sob is probably a better word. I sob and sob yet don't really understand why. I stare into nothingness for minutes at a time. Stare at myself in the mirror as if looking in the third person. My mind either races or sits motionless. I hate myself for it which doesn't do me any favours whatsoever.

Last night I went mad. Started worrying about money again and the fact I still have none. I wish my mind didn't bend that way sometimes. I do know how fortunate I am. I have a lovely life. So what if I don't achieve my desire to be a writer. So fucking what. Maybe that should be my epitaph. If only it wouldn't upset my family. Silly really because if I get published, this book will do that for me.

### **One hundred and twenty eight**

This man has realized that he has descended into childish behaviour over the last few months and begun a process of control freakism. He has informed me in this book that he is to become more of a man and lover than some middle class husband shit.

You've probably guessed I didn't write that. If only I could love myself the way he loves me. If only I could see in myself the things he sees.

I wish I could stop analyzing. No, I don't wish that at all. When I can no longer analyze, I can no longer question everything I see and that's what I like to do although it often sends me down a path where all the signposts are missing. They'll be plenty of time to stop when I'm either senile or dead.

## One hundred and twenty nine

I'm sitting here in the middle of nowhere. I should say in the middle of everywhere. The dogs are loving every minute of it, running through the heather and in and out of the bogs until they both blend into the hillside. The trees below me all curl out at different angles as if each born on a different slant. I bet this place hasn't changed much in hundreds of years. I wonder who else has sat here and enjoyed just simply sitting with their thoughts. Probably not with their two mischievous dogs. Although maybe. The sound of the stream and a nearby waterfall is comforting. I can't see it but I know it is below me, amongst the safety of the sheltering trees. I will return here many times. Things make sense here.

I'm even higher now. The stream sounds distant. I've just nearly lost my trainer in a bog but that should teach me to wear 'suitable walking shoes'. There are two cyclists on the other side of the valley. Their voices travel to me so effortlessly. The sun is warm but my fingers are cold, struggling to hold my pen. The cyclists have disappeared now all I can hear is birdsong and the occasional tinkling of a dog's collar somewhere amongst the living earth.

A plane full of people. Where are they going? Who are they and do they have any idea of the beauty that lies beneath them? The dogs are restless. All the smells. They're so excitable. 'Sit' seems to have lost its meaning, their ancestors call them out here. There is not a single sheep in sight. I wonder if I'll see a stag. A bit concerning really, considering there isn't a soul in sight but there are often stags, huge, aesthetically magnificent. I'm isolated but it is

calming. Who would be more afraid if we came face to face?

### **One hundred and thirty**

A girl I know once told me she'd asked her boyfriend if he'd still love her if she dribbled whilst eating. She followed this up by asking if she lost an eye, would he give her one of his. He answered yes to both questions.

Football. Most women I know can't stand football but I truly enjoy it. Not playing it, I simply don't have the physique. I think it all started when I discovered it was a great excuse to get pissed on a Wednesday night.

I exist. A strange phenomenon. Feelings of worthlessness are not uncommon. I don't dislike where I am now. I just wish I didn't worry about losing it so much. The truth is, the existing Eve has a meaningless job, the pay from which barely covers the rent. I exist. Magic beans don't. It's a fucking tragedy.

Today I exist with a hangover existing right alongside me. To be here but not quite here. The bit that isn't here could be anywhere and the bit that is here feels like crap. Why do we do it? Well, that's easy. It's nice to lose your inhibitions and be as obnoxious as you can to everyone in the room. No, I wasn't rude to anyone last night. I just played darts and tried to avoid hitting anything holding a beer glass. Now all I want to do is sit on the couch and eat Quavers all afternoon.

My mum recently came up with a gem.

‘Eve, I was wondering what you were doing next Saturday?’

‘I don’t think I’m upto much, why?’

‘Oh, I was just wondering if you fancied going out for something to eat’

‘Yes, I guess we could, where?’

‘Well, I was thinking you might want to invite Kate, that’s the name of your friend that lives down from you isn’t it?’

‘Yes, that’s right. Why invite Kate?’

‘Well, there’s a few of us going’

‘Where?’

‘Well, it’s at a little bistro’

‘Who’s going?’

‘Oh just some friends, there’s someone doing a health and fitness talk’

‘Would they be church friends by any chance?’

‘Well, yes, sort of but it won’t be churchy’

‘Has it been organised by your church?’

‘Well, sort of but it will be good fun’

‘And this speaker will also be talking about her faith?’

‘Well, I guess’

‘Let me get this right. You want to invite me and Kate to an evening with your church members to listen to a speaker discuss her faith?’

‘Well, I can see it could sound like that. Anyway, I’ll pay for you both’

‘No thank you’

‘Oh, I just thought you might have enjoyed it.’

‘Um. No’

Afterwards, I did actually contemplate it for a nanosecond with Kate, just to sit there and eat far too much considering the theme, apart from worshipping the lord, was health and fitness, get pissed out of our brains and tell everyone they were fucking sad but

even then I don't think either of us could bear it without making a death pact with one another.

I heard another funny story. Someone I know works with an absolute twat (most of us can probably relate to this). He's also a lazy bastard who never ever walks round to the other side of his desk. One of the guys at work, cut a newspaper clipping from one of the tabloids, cut the letters out, rearranged them and stuck them on the opposing side of this guy's desk, just under the lip. Thus, when anyone came in to see the guy for a meeting and he sat acting all pretentious and knowledgeable (even though he knows fuck all about anything) all the person on the other side of the desk could see was a large paper cut-out with the words 'Pompous Twat' on it. Some people really do have moments of genius.

### **One hundred and thirty-one**

Earlier I wrote about a poor bastard that would shag anything. The poor bastard is dead. Wittingly drank himself to death at the age of 49 after making sure no-one had a jot of respect left for him.

### **One hundred and thirty-two**

The plane feels different now. I feel the contours of the seat, the material coverings have a slight scratchiness to them. The plane journey plot idea didn't seem to be necessary earlier. Yet earlier it was

the only part of the book which wasn't true. I could have deleted it. Cut it completely. Yet life has its turns and suddenly it becomes relevant again. It is no longer just a means to an end, it is vital. Vital because all of a sudden it is important to my life.

My face is warm but my feet cold. I reach below my seat for the thin woolen blanket and wrap up my feet. The comfort brings a smile to my lips.

### **One hundred and thirty-three**

I live in a beautiful place. I have a beautiful home. I love an amazing man. I adore the two dogs who share our lives.

I am surrounded by ugly natured people. I work in an environment where I am taken for granted. I am engulfed by a society whose attitude is to scorn.

It is a paradox. I look around and am confronted by conflicting notions.

I dream of transporting the things that I love to a remote place, not one just down the road from a town but more isolated, a few homes dotted around maybe, preferably away from the current mentality I live with on a daily basis the minute I step outside the door or switch on the television. I think I might go and live above the Arctic Circle. Spend nights looking at sky, admiring either the midnight sun or the northern lights. Would it be so hard? Would it be running

away? Or would it be the sensible thing to do? The thing I should have done a long time ago. How can you run away when there is absolutely nothing to run away from, apart from misery.

Fleeting thoughts. When one sticks in your mind it might be worth paying it some attention.

### **One hundred and thirty-four**

I don't smoke now. Haven't done for some time. Don't think I ever will again. I wondered what the point was of mulling over every aspect of my life, striving to improve it in some way when I was in reality committing a very slow suicide. A false crutch which never supported me but just added to my nervous insecurity. Bizarre. I never knew why I smoked. Never really enjoyed cigarettes. Infact when I did give up it was because I realized not only did I not enjoy smoking, I despised it and hence despised myself for being addicted to it. After that realization, I had no desire to put a cigarette to my lips again. ....Don't worry, I'm not getting sanctimonious, I'm just pleased with myself. I'd tell my family but they still don't know I smoked in the first place. I was a whiz with stuffing my face with extra strong mints and spaying perfume on my fingers even in my late twenties. God, that's deceitful.

Party in the Park. Words I never want to hear again as long as I live. Especially when the party is in an over-hyped suburb and the bands are not just singing to backing tracks but are actually sound-a-likes and not the artists themselves. You know the scene, bring a

picnic, some wine, a few fold-away chairs and sit back to be entertained. My experience tells a different story. One of seven thousand pissed up scumbags falling into one another at ten in the evening singing and dancing to a Bee Gee's rendition of 'Tragedy'. People who had lost all sight, trying to do the moves they had seen in the 'Steps' video of the same song. At one point I felt like I had been transported to one of America's fat camps as I noticed the size of some of these people. The majority of children I saw were grossly overweight. The night in general summed up our society's need to consume. And worse, the need to consume utter shit. It was a shit night, shit music, even though it was advertised as a picnic, burger vans surrounded the park, with the smell of dead carcasses spilling into the night, people were drinking not to enjoy it and have a social evening but with the pure intention of getting rat arsed and shouting at the tops of their voices over the music. Men started pissing into trees because they were above walking to the toilet, people started hurling abuse at strangers.....I could go on but it's distressing even writing about it. In essence what it was, was a wake up call. It was like a loud voice in my ear shouting 'GET OUT, GET OUT, WHILE YOU CAN STILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT'.

Consumerism. It's despicable once you begin to understand it. Take, take, take. Don't feel any sort of need to give anything back. As long as you're happy. But are you happy? Or have you just been led to believe it.

I've consumed. I think back to when I was a teenager, when I wrote letters to MP's, governments, to supermarket chains. I remember the time I sponsored a child in Africa and sent money every month. I was a

member of Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund. I also remember stopping all of the above when I discovered pubs and boys, cigarettes and clothes. I think of all the money I spent on new shoes, hairstyles, magazines, holidays, fast food, fags, alcohol, jeans, trainers, new tops for every night out, music, cosmetics, perfume, jewellery. It's a lot of money. I remember having bought things I never even wore or used. Years later, I'd throw them away, untouched. I never needed them in the first place. I might not even have really wanted them but they were there. Some advertisement or other had persuaded me I couldn't live without them. No advertisement told me that the cost of that designer top could feed a family for a month or even that fast food was literally full of shit and would make me fat. Well, they wouldn't would they. Where does conscience live in society these days? I felt liberated when a few days ago, I read an article stating that Iceland was resuming commercial whaling and felt a need to do something. I wrote a letter to the governor of Iceland. I felt fourteen again. I felt enthused as if I could make a difference. I know it's extremely unlikely but at least I did something. It's funny how a small thing can fill you with a new found excitement, a feeling that not all is lost.

### **One hundred and thirty-five**

I thought I might listen to some music whilst I'm writing. I've just spent about fifteen minutes trying to adjust the volume settings on the computer as there was a problem with the sound. After fiddling with all the different mute buttons and pitch variations to no

avail, I thought I'd ring the man who built the computer to ask him what to do. Fortunately, he didn't answer the phone within the first four rings because that was when I noticed I hadn't switched the speakers on.

I'm skiving again. Well, not really. I've fucked my knee up and am hobbling around on crutches. I could go to work if I really really wanted. I don't. I recently thought I needed to get myself in shape. I took up swimming and squash. In hindsight it would have been healthier to sit on my backside doing nothing seeing as that's what's caused the problem. Mind you, if it hadn't, I'd be sat in work today. Peculiar. I'm actually pleased. It's an odd thought but I do mean it. Sure, I think I'd feel differently if it was a serious problem, like not being able to walk again but a bit of damage to my cartilage which may need a spot of keyhole surgery is bearable because I'm really enjoying having the time off. Utter lunacy. I feel ashamed for admitting to it but it's true. It makes me realize how little time is actually my own. Again, that's nonsense if I compare that statement to when 'leisure time' didn't exist at all but in today's society I always have a need to grab something back. It's a bit like consumerism, all the time I feel society is 'taking' from me without giving a damn thing back. I've been ostracized from the village. Well, that's overstating things a tad. What I mean is, I've been ostracized from a small group of acquaintances in the village. It all happened one Friday night when I'd gone out for a quiet drink to one of the village's two pubs. It was at least an hour before I noticed it. Well, the premise being that the village is so close knit that when there's a party or a night out, everyone is invited. Sometimes it girls or lads only but that's the way it's been since we moved here. Well, for the first

time in three years, I wasn't invited. Not only that, I quite deliberately wasn't invited. It was a horrible realization catching a whisper that night of a birthday outing for someone the very next day. Almost every female in the village was going. I was hurt to put it mildly. I was also angry. The person whose birthday it was doesn't like me because I'm not a yes person and occasionally disagree with her. Even so, it felt like a conspiracy. Of all my friends, none of them mentioned it to me, to save my feelings. Well, thanks a fucking lot. I put my full drink down on the table and walked out. I haven't been out in the village since and plan not to. I guess there are a few people who would think me a coward for not standing up for myself but I don't see it like that. Everyone could see I was upset and only one of my friends has ever mentioned the event since but even then said she didn't want to get stuck in the middle of anything. No one has called me or asked where I am. You know the feeling that no-one really liked you in the first place and were just being polite. Well, maybe you don't. I hope you don't because it's one of the worst feelings in the world. Your confidence disappears and you withdraw into yourself trying to figure out what's wrong with you. I know what it is. It's because I don't fit in. It's because I don't like Robbie Williams, read 'Heat' magazine, believe in Palm Readers and all the rest of that shit. It's because I stand up for myself if someone makes a sexist comment, don't laugh at racist jokes, the list goes on. Not going out doesn't make me a coward, I just can't be bothered being nice anymore. Happily chatting to people who will most probably talk about you behind your back as soon as it's turned. It's not worth the fucking hassle. I don't even know why I let myself get upset about it. I wouldn't want to be the person they'd like me for. It's everything I hate about the world.

My mum's going to cook Quorn tonight. She bought some at the same time as me when we went shopping. She's going to give it a try in a hotpot. Fuck me. It's a major breakthrough.

Am I a heartless bitch?

### **One hundred and thirty six**

2-50pm and I really feel the need to sleep. Whenever I fall asleep in the day I have truly weird dreams. Not just the usual weird ones but really fucking warped ones about hairdressing salons being taken over by ducks or running naked through fields of wheat. Maybe I should write a book of dreams. Just before I'm sectioned.

Clock watching. Guilty I'm afraid. Can there be anything more demoralising? I sit in the office at 5pm counting down the last half hour which inevitably makes it the longest half hour of the day. It gets to the cut off point of 5-20. Anyone who calls after 5-20 becomes the devil himself and a torrent of silent abuse rises within me. Especially if it's been quiet all day and at 5-30, when everyone else is grabbing their coats, you're still stuck on the phone to a very polite lady who insists on repeating everything you've just told her in a slow monotone. You really want to tell her to bugger off but that's more than your jobs worth so instead you try the old 'fobbing off' routine. Lie to her. Anything. Just get of the god damn phone so I can leave this shitty office for a few hours. It doesn't take much to get stressed does it? I know I'm not

alone in my frustration of work. I'm probably quite well off compared to some but please bring me someone who says 'I enjoy my job' and actually, really, truly, deep down, means it. Infact, don't bring me them at all because I imagine they'd be far from a barrel of laughs.

Art. I love art. I'm so bad at it I think it adds to my appreciation of it. I sometimes prefer an artists view of something than the actual view itself. Is that wrong?

### **One hundred and thirty seven**

The turbulence hits again. I've been warned of it in this particular area. Renowned for scaring the shit out of people. Who told me that? I can't remember. Or is it just that I don't want to remember? I can no longer distinguish. A bout of turbulence hits and then we glide downwards. It's rather an elegant dive. There's something about the movement that reminds me of being on a roller-coaster. Something deep inside your stomach loses a sense of gravity. It reminds me of a particular hill back home I used to speed up over to achieve a similar feeling. Home. I need to stop calling it that. I'm stuck by a vision of green fields, the white specks of pollen floating past the upstairs window at the back of the house where I use to sit and write. All floating in the same direction, riding the breeze. I felt a connection with them at the time. It was about that time I made this decision. I'll never sit in that house and watch the pollen again, or the way the different shades of green from the ominous trees mingle with the smaller siblings, sharing their history. The spring

lambs proudly leaping from hill to hill before succumbing to a lifetime of eating grass and swarming to the metal gate every time a landrover passes in anticipation of their favourite farmer and then running away again on spotting the pricked up ears of the young collie in the passenger seat. The frogs hopping up the lane, the housemartins nesting in the eaves. I'll miss the very nature of the place. Miss it so very much. Take away the idiots that take the place for granted. Take away the small-mindedness of people who believe themselves superior. Take everything away apart from mother nature and I'd stay. I'm lucky. Once I decided to leave, I began to see again. I'd nearly become assimilated. I forgot what beauty was, I forgot what choice was. So although I may be sad I feel so much more alive in the World and aware that my place in it has never been a given. I am a free person. I just had to figure that out.

Writing is truly bizarre. I often don't know how I feel about something until I write it down. And sometimes I think I feel one way but when I start writing I come to the conclusion that isn't the case at all. As you can tell, I don't plan what I write. I just sit and do it. Re-reading things I written, I'm surprised that it is me who has written such things. Maybe it's because I have a low opinion of myself, I don't know. I was surprised when I wrote the above paragraph. I realized that when I was writing at my desk, I very rarely looked out of the window and admired life on the outside unless something unusual was going on, like an escaped sheep pottering up the lane taking its pick of all the lovely long grass which had previously been unattainable for it. Until I sat and wrote about it I had no idea how much I would miss even the smallest of details. I started to remember all the things I saw out of that small window and all that time I thought I

wasn't really looking. All those times I stared into what I called nothingness. I couldn't have been more wrong. What I was staring out at was in fact everything, everything I admired. I wish sometimes you could live in such a small window but of course, in practical terms, it doesn't exist at all.

### **One hundred and thirty eight**

I'm continually reprimanded for swearing. I don't understand why. It's a form of expression as worthy as any other in my opinion. I enjoy swearing when the need takes me. I'm not a person of particularly limited vocabulary. It's just that when I feel strongly about something, positively or negatively, it emphasises the way I feel. Something can be equally fucking incredible as it can be a pile of bollocks. Bollocks for example is a great descriptive word. You can understand what someone means immediately when they say, 'This is just bollocks'. I don't think it is discriminatory to either sex but we have been taught that. We have been successfully conditioned. Well, most of us anyway.

I'm not offended by the words 'cunt' or 'twat', I use the words liberally myself. I don't think many men are offended by the words 'cock' and 'bollocks', unless of course you are referring to them in person. Of course I was told it was wrong to swear when I was young, it made it more exciting to do it then so object defeated really. I know a lot of women who pull a face when the word cunt is use, followed by 'I hate that word, it's the one word I can't stand'. Why. No-one ever says why. I'd hazard a guess that the reason is that everyone around them has said it at one

point or another. It's a knock on effect. Also, there is a huge stigma about talking about sex in this country anyway so it makes sense that a lot of sexual terms, no matter how polite are frowned upon. Why can't I be free with my use of language? I'm not judging anyone.

I don't swear very much in front of my family. There are the words I know I can get away with like shit and bugger. It's odd how people easily forget meanings of words isn't it. The first meaning a poo coming out of your bottom and the second meaning to have anal sex. But god help me if I dare say fuck, which only means having sex, which in my book is supposed to be a pleasurable way of recreating life or just a pleasurable activity full stop, I'd get a right good slap off my mother. Does this sound familiar or is it just me?

To go off on a tangent, not to get me wrong, I don't believe anal sex is immoral. At the end of the day it's all about personal choice and if two consenting people want to do something, they should be able to do it as long as it is they alone who are affected by it. If penis' were only meant to go in vagina's why do a lot of people stick them in their mouths. A whole new subject matter entirely, my point is simply this, I can say 'bugger' in front of my mum, my dad and even my gran but imagine instead if I started this topic of conversation with them over drinks.

I'd have been fucked if I was born two hundred years ago wouldn't I. Amongst other things I wouldn't be allowed to even discuss swearing. I wouldn't have been educated well, if at all. It would have been frowned upon to know how to read, let alone, write my opinions down. I wonder how many women went through life as housewives as mothers and were thoroughly miserable? Only having certain topics fit for conversation. It's unthinkable really.

All you need do is watch an old Hollywood film to see the way society was portrayed. Women were thin and sexy and happy with their lives spent baking bread and looking after the home. If they were well off, they may even have a Negro servant or housekeeper who was always overweight and jolly. Then, they could sit and embroider. They still show these films, usually in the middle of the afternoon and I imagine a lot of bored, suppressed housewives sit and watch them without making any sort of correlation. Why are these stereotypical films still shown? I think they're more offensive than the word 'fuck'. A million times worse. Is it a bid by the television executives to reinforce these beliefs? No, they're all as thick as each other in terms of not even letting certain thoughts register in their minds. How can it be not only acceptable but the norm to portray black people as happy with their lot, pandering to the needs of white people? It makes me sick. They censor sex and violence because human beings are apparently easily influenced and there is a fear of children especially acting out what they see on the television. So why then, do we reinforce sexism and racism?

### **One hundred and thirty nine**

Guess it won't amount to much.

### **One hundred and forty**

Society. I blame a lot on society but what is 'society'?

- an organised community: companionship  
a group of people organised for some common  
purpose

(Oxford English Dictionary, 1994)

What strikes me most is that I had to look up the definition. I figured it was easy to blame things on a word but what underlay that word?

‘An organised community: the system of living in this’; who organises this community, who is responsible for it because one thing I have learned is that it is certainly not what I would define as a democracy even though that is what we are led to believe. Remember the whole issue of choice i.e. we are encouraged to believe we have choices but we are really drip fed them.

‘People of the higher social classes’ (the dictionary continues); what the fuck is that all about. All these people trying to tell us the class system no longer exists, bullshit, 1994 is the date of the copy this is taken from, you’d think people would know better. Are we referring to the people who are born into money and never do anything which benefits the human race without bringing some benefit to themselves whilst looking down their noses at the scum? A harsh and stereotypical of the upper classes I paint isn’t it. Turn it around. It’s not nice is it.

‘Company, companionship’ (more detail from the source); the society I live in has little of these.

‘A group of people organised for some common purpose’; What are we? Nazi’s? Sorry, that just came to mind. Well we certainly aren’t organised for the advancement of human consciousness, striving for a peaceful way to live together, protecting and nurturing the environment, saving animals that share the planet with us from extinction. I wish someone would tell me what this common purpose is.

Lies. It's all lies. We do not all have an equal voice, we are not all fighting for the same thing. We are all fighting against one another. We do not have a society in that idealistic sense of the world. The social group I live in is an utter mess but can I change anything in this democratic place we live in? The simple answer is no. Decisions are not made for the good of the whole. Decisions are made based on monetary gain over anything else the majority of the time. We are sheep being herded along. Yet my blame towards society is too easy. Society is constructed and controlled by leaders. Often nameless, faceless. We don't know who they are, which decisions are made by whom, which decisions are the important ones which may lead to other bigger decisions, we don't know how to change or even stop them. And why? Because we no longer know who we are, what we want and why we even bother to exist at all. We have lost a common cause. We have lost the joy of community. We have lost the thrill of selflessness. We have lost a sense of communication with each other. It's no wonder so many people feel alone, even in the most populated cities. It's because people stopped caring. They stopped caring because no-one could any longer see any point to anything.

I'm not a great thinker. I put some books down after the first page because I haven't a clue what I'm reading. I like looking at philosophy books, at books on cosmology but unless they're written in simple terms I just haven't a clue. The words blur into one and the next thing I know I'm asleep and when I wake I haven't got the foggiest what I was reading about. I'm sure what I make of things can be discounted by many theories. I'd like to say I don't think anything in this book is right, it's only what I think. I'm just a person fighting against the world I live in. I continue

to write about it because I feel strongly that I can't be alone. Yes, I waffle, a lot of things I say don't make sense. They don't make sense to me either some of the time. I'll never understand how the brain works but I think even if we don't understand it, we should try to use it a little more.

### **One hundred and forty one**

Someone sneezes behind me. My thoughts return to the present and all I can think of are germs circulating through the re-conditioned air circuits. Breathing in each others air. Does that mean I'm breathing in less oxygen with each lungful? I'm not a hypochondriac. I've had enough actually wrong with me to worry about things that might be wrong with me or things that I might develop that will cause things to be wrong with me in the future. I guess I just don't want to get a cold right now. The last time I had a cold, a loving man told me to stay in bed and brought me cups of tea.

### **One hundred and forty two**

Burial. I made someone a promise once. They haven't died yet so I've got a bit of time to think about it. I guess there is a likelihood that I will die before them and then I get out of the bargain altogether. The aforesaid person wants to be buried. Says he wants to give something back to the earth. I thought I was more of a cremation person myself but I'm slowly coming

round to his way of thinking. At first, I had reservations of my body being eaten by insects and other creatures but he seemed to like that idea. I thought this made him a freak but of course it doesn't. The difficult part of his request however, is that he hates churches and does not want to be buried in a churchyard. Obvious really, why would someone who hates religion want to reside for eternity just yards from a church? He wants to be buried in the middle of nature, in a field or riverbank. This poses me just a small problem. How the fuck do I do it. I've resigned myself to the fact that I'll probably have to steal his body. If anyone has any better ideas, I'd appreciate any suggestions.

In a strange twist of fate he and I may die together. That would be nice.

If not, I think I will tell him my wish. If I have to have any sort of service I'd like a humanist one. Then bury me in a place I love where it is unlikely I'll have a house built ontop of me and visit me once in a while.

Odd thing to say when you're twenty-nine. Mind you, you never know.

I don't know what to do with the dogs when they eventually pass away. I won't leave them with the vets that's for sure. Laid out on a slab before being disposed of god knows how. I'd like to bury them somewhere they loved too, even if I have to enlist help and sneak out in the middle on the night with a spade.

I'm so fucking morbid sometimes. I do apologise.

Clowns. Now they really are scary fuckers. Why would you hire a clown for a toddler's birthday? You'd scare the living daylights out of them. Plus I've

never encountered a funny one. ‘Hello, I’m Mr Bubbles’. I bet your wife doesn’t even find you in the least amusing. Fuck off.

Just think, whilst I’m still on the subject of death, in a few years a whole generation will be dead and gone. The first world war generation. A generation with belief systems and perceptions many of us will never have. People who have seen things many of us have no way or inkling to understand. It’s no wonder the older generation feel they get no respect. They don’t. As I keep saying, no-one really gives a shit.

All I have left from my ancestors, apart from my genes of course, which is a huge inheritance, is a clock. It means the world to me. It reminds me that things have gone before and things will come after. It’s only a clock but it lets me know every now and then just how insignificant I am, how insignificant we all are.

### **One hundred and forty three**

Mosquitoes. Latch onto you and suck your blood. Leave you with a horrendous itch and a scar that doesn’t seem to want to go away. Sounds all too familiar.

Have you ever done anything you’ve been told not to do? I find it a bit of a challenge. I guess I’ve always had a problem with authority. I mean for example, have you ever been told on holiday you can’t take a kayak out past the buoys in the sea and then just taken one once the guys not looking and rowed as fast as you can until the security guard in his speedboat

comes and tells you off like little children? Or been in a posh hotel and crept outside to the outdoor jacuzzi at 2 in the morning and sat in it for an hour for the pure hell of it? Gone rowing on a lake, ignoring a sign saying 'Don't go near the water jets'? Saying at work you urgently need to run out to the bank and then sneakily nipping off round the corner for a quick fag? Booking a holiday to Greece for two weeks when you only have one week off college, then ringing them from the resort after the first week, bar music in the background, claiming you've returned home but have been stuck down with a bad case of food poisoning? Different situations maybe. But don't lie. We've all done it. It's how we've socially evolved.

...I'll continue this later as I think I'm about to get bollocked for writing at work. No, fuck it. It's quiet today, the phones aren't ringing and I'm bored fucking stupid. There's nothing for me to do. Well, I suppose I could find something to do but I have little motivation. None actually. I don't know how much more of this I can take. Yes, this job has its perks. I get to go on nice trips and see some of the world – well, as much of the world as you can see through western hotels designed for rich, mainly ignorant wankers but somewhere deep deep down I have the feeling I'm actually selling my soul.

I sometimes feel that my life is one constant bleeding menstrual period. I sometimes feel that I couldn't be happier. Which is it? Is it both or neither? What is my perception worth anyway?

Maybe I could keep writing this book forever. On my deathbed, hand over a ridiculously thick volume of indecipherable waffle. I have a feeling I may not reach a grand old age though. I'd like to. More than

anything I'd like to grow old with the man I love. I think my body might have other plans though. I think cancer will grab me in the end. I seem to keep evading it. I hope I'm just being morbid. Don't get me wrong, I don't dwell on it. I just wish I hadn't had so many run ins. Maybe that's it. Maybe I've had my fair share but nature doesn't seem to work like that does it? Oh well, I shall do my best. I love you Matthew. I know I'm harping on about life and death. It's only because a friend died a couple of weeks ago. Not the man I mentioned earlier. This man was 42 years old. Absolutely tragic. He died in his sleep. I'm sure his children's lives are shattered. His partner loved him honestly and truly as he did her. It does make you stop and think. Death is random. We have to come to terms with that but it doesn't make it any easier. The funeral was a humanist service. It's what he would have wanted. No religious mumblings. There were tears. There was also a lot of holding back of tears, something I've never really understood. He wasn't what I would call a great friend. To be honest, he was someone I knew in the village, that I stood and talked to, danced with when there was a truly bad band playing or simply sat and played dominos with. He and I got so carried away dancing once that I tripped over one of the speakers and fell arse first into the singing duo. He used to get annoyed if I got a crossword clue right that he'd been pondering over at least two pints of bitter for. Alternatively, he'd laugh hysterically every time I beat him hands down at darts. No matter. I miss having him around. You'd have liked him.

## One hundred and forty four

Do Brownies still have to earn a Sewing badge? That's the thought going around my head at 5-50pm on a Saturday. Surely I should be getting ready for a big night out. Walking around in my dressing-gown, toenail paint drying. Body moisturised and face ready for a bucketful of make-up to be applied. Then the hair. A choice of outfits, maybe just bought today, hanging invitingly on the wardrobe door. Maybe sipping a vodka and coke whilst listening to some happening tunes.

Instead I'm sat at my desk, typing this shit. I am actually going out later for a bite to eat but I can't imagine my preparations will take more than ten minutes.

I feel sorry for people who build up such nights out. Look forward to it all week with such trepidation. Spend the next day feeling like crap and then start the build up all over again. What will the night hold? Will I meet someone that will change my life?

Unfortunately the likelihood is that you'll get very drunk, make a right twat of yourself and maybe fall into bed with anyone who'll have you and regret the whole evening. But never mind. There's always next week and you can do it over and over again until one of two things happen. Firstly, you'll get bored and realize you can have fun anytime you want, it's not just restricted to weekends and you'll vary your interests. This will possibly make you a far more interesting person, you'll probably notice the opposite sex find you more intriguing to be with and you'll be a lot happier with yourself. The second option is that you may arrive years down the line completely desperate, you look ridiculous, you're extremely boring and you've got a fanny the size of the chunnel.

## **One hundred and forty five**

I didn't go to the annual village cricket match. Even though I knew it would be the last one I would have the chance to attend. One team lost two players over the past year.

I just didn't have any desire to go. I've the memory of last year and the year before that. They'll be little variation. I've lost the will to be even remotely interested.

That's it. I've sat here for ten minutes without writing a fucking thing. I can't think of anything I want to write at the moment. I think it's because I'm bored so if you'll excuse me, I'm going to fuck off and do something.

However, just before I do..... no, forget it, I was going to write something witty but I can't.

Mars is the closest it's been to the Earth since the Stone Age. I've been watching it in the night sky. It's fantastic. It just looks like the biggest star in the sky. I feel quite alone in my admiration for all things space. I wish other people would come out of their houses and look but the few people I've told just came out with the usual 'oh, that's nice' in a false voice which tends to be translated as 'ok, you're a freak'. I'd like to stand on one of the volcanoes on Mars and look back at the Earth. I probably wouldn't want to return.

The house feels empty. I'm on my own. No lover. No dogs. Nothing. It's just temporary. I could do pretty

much anything and no-one would know. I cherish little bits of time truly on my own. I don't mean that in a nasty way. Part of me is sad to be alone but the other half relishes the peace and quiet. I've no music on, I've not watched the television for two days, in fact I've not really done much worthy of any merit. My head feels calm though. I feel like I'm hibernating.

On the other hand I miss someone sneaking into the room and wrapping their arms around me, shielding me from the outside world and telling me that they will love me forever.

If I write as an exercise, not because I've got something decent in mind but just so that I get used to writing on a more regular basis would that make me any better at doing it or not? Some theories tell you to force yourself to write even when you don't want to. That's what I've done today and I think it's all rubbish. Fucking awful. But I'm leaving it in. When I've finished all I have to say, I'll re-read it and might take it out. Then again I might leave it in as an example of the waffley shitness.

I've just been standing outside the back door watching two sheep head-butt each other. Whilst chuckling to myself, I remembered there was no-one to tell. That led me to something. I justify my life as being valuable when I'm communicating with people. Or to put it another way, when I feel I am having an effect on another person's life. When I am on my own, I don't feel as if I am making a difference to anything. Although it would only usually have been a fleeting thought, I wonder now if that's half of my problem. I am too dependent on what difference I can make to things around me. When the answer is none, I feel a bit pointless. It's back to the whole question of 'why I

exist'. Do I exist for me or for others? And my answer seems to be for others. This is different to saying 'I'm a good Samaritan', it just means I want a reaction all the time, be it smiling at someone across a room or having a right good barney about something trivial with an adversary. I know I'm not phrasing this very well because I'm trying to write it down whilst I'm thinking it. Again, if I write it all down I may gain a better understanding of what I think I mean. Yes, I'm confusing myself. Ok, an example, being alone, watching a film, I feel like I've wasted two hours. I haven't really done anything constructive. I feel it was a fruitless waste of time and feel guilty. However, if I'm watching the same film with someone, even if we hardly talk I feel at least I've entered into a sort of contract with another person, we've shared a moment in time together and they will probably remember the time we sat and watched a film. During that time we may have furthered our friendship by each others company. Going for a walk is the same, I enjoy it much more if I'm with the dogs because I see the pleasure they get from it, when I'm on my own I'm constantly thinking I should be doing the washing or the cleaning or something more beneficial. I can't seem to let myself have time on my own without trying to fill it with justification. Why do I feel guilty for having a lie in, for spending an afternoon doing nothing other than reading an escapist book, for watching a truly crap but funny tv programme? And why do the feelings of guilt come only when I'm on my own? When I write it down it sounds so sad. I should really be pitied. Does it come back to my insecurity about being a 'waste of space' (that's one of my common lines when I get PMT). I just don't know. I don't know if other people feel like this. I've never discussed it. Probably because I didn't know how much truth was in it.

## One hundred and forty six

I'm outside the aircraft again but this time I'm floating upwards into the realms of the stars. I see Jupiter's moons looming towards me, I feel a gravitational pull towards Europa. I travel closer and feel an icy chill. If I assume the dive position, maybe I'll break through the three miles of ice and live forever in a new underwater world.

I open my eyes. The cabin is still cold. I've become fidgety and uncomfortable. Inside and out. I press a button on my handset and a picture of the flight-path appears on my personalised screen on the back of the seat responsible for giving me bruised knees. We are above a place I've never hear of. Are we still in the World I know? Wouldn't it be intriguing if the world was flat after all and you could just keep on going, each step taking you further and further away and no matter how far you traveled, there would never come a point where you would gradually get closer to home again. Imagine if there were still lands, animals, people, yet to be discovered. I guess there may still be. They'd be lucky. Any indigenous tribes found in this day and age are considered below us and need to be assimilated into society. Imagine being a group of people never to be discovered. To be allowed to carry out their lives without having outsiders opinions and beliefs thrust on them. Missionaries, for example. What makes your belief the right one? My head aches and I figure I'm actually shivering. Why does no-one offer to keep me warm?

## **One hundred and forty seven**

Torn cartilage. My god that's something that hurts like hell. It's quite ironical really. Stop smoking. Take up regular exercise. Two weeks later, your leg's fucked and you can't walk. There's a lot to be said for sitting on your bum doing fuck all. No, that sounds bad. I am glad I gave up the dreaded weed. I decided if I was going to die of anything, lung cancer wasn't going to be it. And I did enjoy swimming and playing squash, however briefly. I even lost some weight without really planning to. It's a good job I wasn't really that bothered because for the three weeks I've been unable to move because one of my legs is incapacitated I've probably put it back on anyway. High ho. Life and its comedy fucking twists.

Fuck is my favourite word. It's not a bad pastime either.

I often feel my senses are deceiving me. I remember watching a program about house renovation. On it, were a British couple who wanted to transform their house into an 'Olde English home'. They lived in a nightmare of suburban hell on a 1990's housing estate. The house was worth a stupid £150, 000 or something like that which was as equally ridiculous. They then proceeded to re-design the interior. Their plan was this, one room Elizabethan, one room Dickensian, one room Masculine parlour? and another feminine history? To be frank, they were a couple of morons. If they recognize themselves I wonder if they'd try and sue me? Oh well, I don't give a shit, they were imbeciles. People who couldn't decide what

they wanted so just went for a bit of everything, culminating in an almighty mess. If you wanted an old house, why didn't you go and buy an old house in the first place? And if you're going to go in for imitation restoration at least do it properly and not with all modern materials. Fucking hell. Some people shouldn't be allowed to have any money. When all was said and done the outside of the house was still indicative of what these people considered tasteful or they wouldn't live there in the first place. Dickensian? Wasn't that dowdy and colourless? I don't really know for sure but these two certainly didn't either, considering they put Italian lights all over the room. If I know one thing, the period wasn't Italian Renaissance. I know I get annoyed about trivial things but it just emphasises how stupid a lot of people really are.

### **One hundred and forty eight**

Why do you take things out on the person that you love most? We all do it. My theory is that it is because they are the people that understand you most and are therefore most likely to identify what you're going through and be able to forgive your outburst. I've always done it. All my life. Upset the people closest to me whenever I'm going through a low period. I accuse them of trying to tell me what to do, even when underneath everything, I want their advice more than anything. I'm a very frustrating person to live with. I'm always second guessing things, looking for underlying motives. If I was an airhead I'd be easier to live with although I wouldn't wish that on myself and I wouldn't like to contemplate the type of man

who'd be with me. A person living with me tends to spend a considerable amount of time worrying about me. I don't plan it. It just always happens. I know it's because my moods are unpredictable. I can be energetic and full of life one moment and then completely depressed and self-hating the next. I can be great to be around sometimes but the majority of the time I'm not easy to be around at all. I'm a contradictory person. Mind you, if you've got this far with the book, you've probably taken that into account.

General anesthetic. That worries me a little. In just a few seconds it can knock you out cold and you lose time. You have no awareness of what is happening around you. You have given someone the responsibility of breathing for you because your body is no longer able to. Your life is in someone's hand. You are completely vulnerable. I seem to enjoy it because I have to do it again and again. Each time though it terrifies me. I tend not to try and think about it but the moment I'm being wheeled into pre-op, it's all I think about. Not the operation itself but the fact that I have no control over my body. As the injection is made all I think is 'you'll wake up, you will wake up, no matter what, you'll be waking up soon'. I think it's to implant the idea in my mind in case anything goes wrong and my body and mind have to fight in a bid to come round to consciousness again. Stupid isn't it.

I also have fears about shitting myself once control of my bodily functions has lessened. That's why they tell you not to eat for a period of time before the general anesthetic. I'll leave that at that.

I love philosophy. I don't understand much of it but I love it. I get upset when I don't comprehend things. I

think most of us do. I hate getting lost in words I don't know. Concepts I can't fathom. It doesn't stop me being interested though. I just feel restricted. I'd love to be able to do an Open University course in philosophy or psychology as these are two areas which I can get lost in. However, I wasted my time at university when I was younger and didn't really know what I wanted. Then, I had the chance of being helped with funding. Now I have none and if I can't afford to buy food then I can't afford to study. It pisses me off even though it's all my own fault. I never imagined where I'd be when I was thirty, it all seemed so far off. I didn't think I'd be this frustrated with my choices.

I remember clapping my hands in joy when I asked the doctor for a sick note for a week to cover an injury and he gave me one for a month just to be on the safe side. You know the feeling where you just want to kiss someone. There's a phrase I learnt a long time ago. It's this one – Milk it for all it's worth.

A diet where you eat no carbohydrates but you can eat as many fried eggs and drink as much double cream as you like. Some people bypass common sense don't they. Sure, a quick fix. Means I don't have to do much work. Fucking idiots might have a heart attack from so much fat attacking their systems but what the heck, I'll lose a bit of body mass. I'll tell you how to lose weight healthily and I've had no medical training. Eat less fat. It doesn't take a genius. Some people just cannot look after themselves at all. It's a shame. A real shame. I've seen people talking about how they need to lose weight whilst tucking into a bacon butty and heard people saying they need to reduce their blood pressure whilst eating a family size packet of crisps. Look at yourselves. It's pathetic.

Passion. We seem to forget about it when we've been in a relationship for a while. Then one day you understand how much you long for someone to walk upto you silently and just grab you as if having to make love is the most important thing in the world. Do you know what I mean? The heart-stopping sex you can have when making up after a big fight? The tingling you get from a new love affair. You know how much you need it one day when you're sat watching the telly or making the tea and you can't remember the last time it happened. I'm not being negative about relationships. It's wonderful being so comfortable with someone that you can tell them anything. It's amazing being with someone you love all the time. But now and again, and I apologise if it's wrong, I want that person to walk upto me and tell me that I look so fucking sexy and if he can't get his fucking hands on me immediately he'd rather die. Ok. It's official. I'm a sad bastard.

## **One hundred and forty nine**

My Poems

### ***Tasty***

I eat cows  
I eat deer  
I wash them down  
With lots of beer

I eat lamb  
I eat pork

I wonder why  
I use a fork

I eat chicken  
I eat duck  
I really just don't  
Give a fuck

*Nothing to see here*

See a spot  
Cut down a tree  
To build a house  
Who cares, not me

From giant chains  
I will now buy  
Not local shops  
Who cares, not I

More motorways  
The bus routes stop  
Just lot of cars  
But I care not

Global warming  
Most lands hit  
Tidal floods  
Give a shit?

You never once just

Stop and look  
It's your fault that  
The planet's fucked

***But I need....***

Aren't you glad of those new expensive shoes  
Don't they look great, others are so envious  
Don't they make you feel like a better person  
I'm sure the six year old child who made them in a  
stiflingly hot and humid Indonesian sweatshop feels  
proud

Don't you just need that juicy hamburger  
Won't it just get you through the day  
You dream of the meat sitting lusciously in that  
sesame bun  
Don't think about the way the cow was herded up a  
plank and shot in the head, that might make you feel  
bad.

You've just got to have that new top  
It's so sexy, alluring. You've got the right figure for  
it.  
Men will want you, need you, adore you  
It's something similar to what Rhuna is wearing.  
Rhuna is a child prostitute. Her mother sold her when  
she was seven years old. Men want her too.

You have it. It's your right to have what you want.  
After all, you work hard for it. You scrimp and save  
for the bare necessities.  
Why shouldn't you have nice things  
After all, it shows you've made it in life

Doesn't it?

## **One hundred and fifty**

I've started dabbling in the stock market. It's quite funny. I haven't got a fucking clue what I'm doing. I only buy tiny amounts of things so it's not really worth doing it and I lose more money than I get back but what the hell. I'm in a deviant phase. The overdraft can handle it. You'd never guess my family were all in finance professions would you.

The Divine Comedy were a fucking incredible band weren't they?

I've been off my feet for four weeks due to injuring my knee. I've hardly moved and I think that fact is reflected in what looks like the two bags of sugar I've got stuffed under my top. Someone recently commented that some obese people have odd bumps under their clothes and referred to it as the 'carrying a bag of snakes under the jumper syndrome'. What a great phase. Nasty but great all the same.

What is it with all the new sitcoms on the television? They surely couldn't be more cheesy and downright crap if they tried. They seem to be very fond at the moment of just making up a name for a programme which quirkily ties in with the names of the characters and then fitting stories around that. I won't use programme names in particular as I'd probably get done for that but we all know what I mean, people with last names that match their professions such as gardeners or wildlife keepers.

I was having a discussion recently and we came up with some of our own. Ideas were along the lines of;

Two crime fighting Dinnerladies, one called Anne Bangers, the other called Dorothy Mash. The show of course – ‘Bangers and Mash’.

A crime fighting window cleaner called Jim Pain (yes, as a witty reference to a ‘pane’ of glass) and his childhood sweetheart Gloria, called (are you getting the hang of it?) - ‘Pain and Gloria’.

Crime fighting decorators who find bodies under the floorboards, called Mr Black and Mr Decker. I don’t need to carry on with this one....

My favourite idea for a new series however went like this;

Two cops masquerading as funeral directors, trying to uncover a series of crimes in the area. One old cop, one young. Name of the series – ‘Dead Beat’.

Honestly, I’m not kidding, I bet I could flog these ideas to television stations with rough pilot scripts churning out the usual nonsense such as the odd twist and the love interest. I really think they’d lap them up. Shame I’m not going to because I’d like to think I’ve got some pride left. Now, look at this thing seriously, the above is a pile of old shit two people came up with at 12-30 at night in the space of ten minutes. Is what’s on television any better? I rest my case, which by the way could always be the last line from Mr John Just in the series called ‘Just in Case’ about a crime fighting traveling briefcase salesman.

One other thing. Why are they always crime fighting? In my, yes admittedly, only short life, I’ve not met a single crime fighting lollypop lady or anything remotely resembling one. I think that would freak me out more than the criminal.

By the way, if you watch these programmes, you should seriously consider smashing your telly up with a hammer and going to the pub.

## One hundred and fifty one

I'm listening to the radio. It's beautiful. Shutting everyone out. I could do with a glass of water, my throat is still dry but I've not seen a steward for a while. They must be taking their break period. I look around the cabin. It's a weird setting. Some people are intently watching their mini screens, others are fast asleep, huddled in their blankets. Someone on the row opposite has two seats to himself and has his feet are curled up on the extra. He doesn't look cosy though with his face all squashed up on the seatback. He'll have a big red mark on his face when he wakes up. I wonder what he'd do if he woke to find me staring at him. I smile. Maybe I'd blow him a kiss.

It doesn't look or feel like we're even moving. We could be suspended in the air on strings like the model airplanes you sometimes see dangling from the ceilings of travel agents. I imagine just that. That in reality I'm in one of those model planes. A huge human head ducks to avoid hitting us and peeks at the model right up close. I wave. I see the bemusement on his overgrown face as it pulls away. What is a small young woman doing inside there? He seems concerned and turns to beckon the agent who is sat behind her desk. She comes over to the other side of the model and peers through a miniscule window. I can see a fragment of her eyelined eye right next to the man asleep on his two seats opposite. He'd get a fright if he woke now. The girl steps back. She too seems astonished. She reaches up at full stretch and takes the drawing pin out of the ceiling. All of a sudden we're in turmoil. The overhead cabins fly open and luggage flies around the cabin. Everyone is awake now,

clutching each other in pure panic. The man next to me looks to me as if it is all my fault. The trouble is I know he's right. I blink and focus on the scene outside. Nothing but sky. We are safe again. It's a nice song on the radio.

### **One hundred and fifty two**

How much of my mind was pre-determined when I was born? The two extremes of the argument are the 'Tabula Rasa' argument – our minds are a blank slate on which the environment will write on – or the theory that most of what we know, think and feel was already mapped in the mind before we were born or at least the structures were all in place. I'm not quite sure which viewpoint I favour although like the majority of people I think it is a combination of both. Psychologists will debate for a long time about what percentage belongs to each category of research. In basic terms it is a curious idea to contemplate. I'm one of those people who doesn't remember much about being a child. No, I haven't blocked it from memory because I didn't enjoy my childhood. Quite the opposite, I had fun, well, what I can remember of it anyway. It's not just childhood memories either. I don't remember films I've watched and maybe watch the first half of them before I realize I've seen them before. I have friends on the other hand who remember everything, details about their third birthday for example, or an obscure actor's name in a film they saw years ago. This sometimes concerns me. I didn't know I had a bad memory until I spoke to others. Yet was I predisposed to have a poor memory or was it something I developed over time? The mind

is a vast entity when you stop and think. Yes, my memory is crap in terms of my way of thinking but I guess in reality that is a huge overstatement. Simply because my mind actually remembers lots of important things, many unconsciously, like how to breathe, keep blood pumping around my heart and body, faces (even those I haven't seen for a long time), things I like, things I dislike, knowledge of recipes, how to drive, how to play the piano..... It's a long list.

Darker things though. My depressive streak. Was I always going to have it or was it the environment which shaped my mood? My entire personality could in theory have little to do with me at all. I tend to be impulsive. I say what I think most of the time, no matter what the consequences. If I feel discriminated against at work I shout my mouth off even if it then makes my job so unbearable I end up walking out of the door wondering what the fuck to do next. I've even lost friends (well, using the word in a very loose sense) over my inability to just shut up and keep my thoughts to myself.

However negative this may sound, I like the fact that I behave like this. I feel quite empowered by it. I see people who go through life never saying boo to a goose and am thankful I'm not like that. I'd like to think that this side of my character was shaped by my experience because I used to be extremely shy and let people walk all over me but one day I woke up to myself and decided I wasn't going to go through life like that and began to stand up for myself. Can it be possible that something innate is actually more in control of me than I think? Genetics even. I look to my parents. Both had huge moments in their lives when they stopped believing one thing and started believing another. Different routes albeit but still a massive shift in beliefs and thought systems. My

father suffered from depression. My mother had panic attacks fairly often. No matter how I try and dismiss it, there does seem a trend.

If this is the case, it leaves little hope. I like to think I'm so in control. My life will be what I make it but it seems I could be up against strong opposition.

Any psychologists which may be happen to be reading this out of some obscure fascination, I apologise that my views are not particularly sharp or in-depth, my information is pieced together from snippets of books I've read and my interpretations of them. If I'm taking a pile of shit, please forgive me.

I wish I'd have studied psychology. It is a wonderful area to get involved in. If I had all the time in the world, I'd immerse myself in it. I guess it's partly because I don't think I understand people's rationality at all. It confuses me regularly. My own behaviour does that too. It's a shame that I somehow ended up in an office job with no motivational pull whatsoever. If I am, like I like to believe, in control of my own life, then it is me alone that has put myself in this situation.

I could have motivated myself to be anywhere I wanted to be, in a job that made a difference somewhere. I'd love to be a psychologist, or work for Greenpeace or the World Wildlife Fund. Something where I wouldn't loose sleep just knowing I have to endure a days work doing something I hate and taking another pointless step forward to growing old. Of course, I'd also love to be able to spend a lot more time writing. Yet look at me. Can I change now? At nearly 30? I've looked into going back to university but unfortunately, with credit card debts of £3,000 a loan of £2,000 and an overdraft facility which is utilised every single month, my finances won't allow the £3,000 it would cost for university fees let alone not earning for three years. I'd love to do a masters degree but even that seems impossible as my degree

was in a useless subject which I don't want to pursue so in theory I would have to start again. It's not going to happen. I've looked into funding and scholarships but they don't really exist for people like me who are considered privileged and I guess I am. I just wasted the opportunities. I know I'm only feeling sorry for myself. It would be a slight relief if the reason I've done little of use with my life so far was due to an innate pre-disposition to slide into a pointless existence but I wouldn't be convinced of this. I am self aware. I make things happen. I just wish I knew where to go from here.

### **One hundred and fifty three**

MRI scanning tunnels. My god, they're a nasty invention. Well, no they're not really because they provide excellent scans which doctors can use but the experience itself is not one I'd like to repeat. You are led into a room and asked to lie on what I can only describe as a slab. Whichever part of your body is to be looked at is strapped into a contraption of metal and straps. You are given earplugs and told to put them in because it gets very noisy. Comforting. A button is pressed and the slab you are on starts to move, sending you as if you are on a conveyor belt on the generation game into a tunnel just big enough to fit your body in. in my case, it was my leg, so I was fortunate to be left with just my head protruding from the casing. Above you is a little microphone. I guess this is so you can yell for help because as soon as you are stuck in this thing, the staff leave the room and go into the room next-door where they look at you through a pane of glass. You then get bursts of activity

which last a few minutes each where what you hear alternatives between a loud clunking sound and what can only be described as someone with pneumatic drill in there with you. You must be in there for about twenty minutes. It's not painful at all, it's just eerie and makes you feel like you're in a morgue. If you're due for one of these scans please don't believe any of the above. It's just peachy.

Rationale. Some people have a bizarre way of integrating a moment into the hive of information they already hold in their brains. People interpret things in their own ways. It's a human characteristic. Two people in the same room, entertaining exactly the same conversation can come to very different conclusions. And what's worse, both people believe their way of seeing things is the right way.

Why would a friend refuse to see your point of view? Why would a person who knows you inside out goad you and prod you? Why when push comes to shove would you simply sit on the fence with the attitude of 'I'm alright here'. Where does this selfish attitude come from? A friend who doesn't listen to what she doesn't want to hear. That way it's never been said? A friend who believes adamantly that you're always wrong, that you always misread situations, that you cause all the problems. A friend that can't see past the nose on her own face. Yes I'm angry. I'm fucking furious.

I believe friendship means looking out for one another more than anything else. A real sense that someone would go out of their way to help you. Sure, the ability to have fun together counts for a lot but at the end of the day, it's a deeper bond that makes the friendship a truly special one. Having someone you can talk to, cry with, rely on. There are some people

that you can have the surface level stuff with but when that's gone, there's not much left. To have a friend for a long time and just realize that the friendship doesn't run as deep as you always thought it had is hard to swallow. To comprehend that you put so much into believing that this was the friendship that would last until one of you died because you needed to believe it is just awful.

I have a friend. A very good friend. I needed to believe. I convinced myself that here was a person I could lean on if I needed to. The only problem was she fell over. It's my own fault really. For seeing something that wasn't there. She's not to blame. I didn't tell her when we met that I'd one day expect so much of her, that I'd expect her to stand up for me, that one day this would cause a huge row between us. I crossed a line. I opened up and she saw me inside. Vulnerable. Pitiful. And somewhere somebody laughed.

### **One hundred and fifty four**

I've thought of a new Saturday night television ratings winner:

'Who want to be a Twat?'

Here's today's trend. Aspire to be so thin you look like you're suffering from AIDS. It's a new style which could be classed as 'Heroin chic'. I'm not saying it's great to be fat either. There are far too many fat people. Thin, fat, thin, fat – this is a great game you can play walking own the high street. Everyone is going to have severe health problems resulting from either eating too little or too much

food. What is this bizarre world of extremes we're seeing at the moment? Are people trying to make a statement? If so, can't they make a better one? Or maybe everyone is just a fucking moron.

Powerful typhoon kills hundreds in Korea. Thousands are left homeless. Ships have sunk. Rail lines torn down. Faces of grief pouring into my living room. But hey, what's happening with J'Lo's wedding? Might it be called off? Headline news. What's going on? WHO IS IN CONTROL?

What is entertainment? Is it a cover to keep people happy?

West End musicals. The majority of them mean absolutely nothing. I use to love them. The bright colours, happy sounds, smiling faces. It's something similar to how we appease babies when they cry. Colourful moving mobiles jingling in the air, people pulling over-exaggerated faces. Is there much difference?

Without entertainment would people become more aware of the reality of life itself? Splashes of escapism may help to keep a balance in peoples minds, keep people thinking everything is okay. Musicals are just one example. Television shows are another. Sure entertainment exists that makes interesting points, which is thought provoking and challenging but the majority do not. People do not want to see the world they live in reflected back at them. It would tip the balance. It may make them see there's a fucking lot wrong with the world and they may then begin to wonder who has not wanted them to see it.

Happy go lucky musicals. Saturday night quiz shows making a small minority overnight millionaires. There

is no problem. It is controlled. But hang on. What about the Internet. A medium of choice itself. No, that is considered extremely dangerous. Your mind is in danger of being warped. Well. Compared to the above freakism, bring it on. I'll take my chances. And if people decided to stop being molly-coddled, I hope they explore their world a little more through their own eyes.

One day you look around and you think almost everyone you know, almost everyone you meet and almost everyone you see is a complete fake. No-one acknowledges who they really are. It's all an elaborate cover. Maybe not all deliberate but it's clear to see. People are liars.

Am I alienating everyone? Yes, I know I am. Do I really give a flying fuck? I don't know. At the moment, no I don't give a fuck. I want to say these things because at the moment I absolutely believe them. I'm getting to the stage where I don't like going out of the house any more because I have no control over anything. I have advertisement hoardings in my line of vision that I have not asked to see, I see men walking down the street on a sunny day with their tops off, sporting huge black tattoos and a face that says 'If you insult me, I'll kill you then fuck your mother', I try to have conversations but people don't involve me because I don't know the latest plot-line in Eastenders, I go to work and let pure boredom wash over me, if I need to go to the doctors I have to take a half day's holiday from work to go, if I go out there is a chance I may spend money and I can't afford to do that, the list grows daily. I'm so stressed but I can't relieve the stress because it surrounds me all the time. I went out yesterday to a shopping centre and felt sick. It was accompanied by a feeling of claustrophobia. Of

strangulation. I wondered if it was something I'd eaten but I knew it wasn't. I felt so out of place. It is stress about my existence and the world in which I live.

What I need to do is change the way my world looks before I destroy what's left of it.

There are many stories about outsiders. I've always been an outsider. At school. University. Now. Some people take a strong dislike to me. Some hate me. It happens whether I open my mouth or not. It happens no matter how much I try to fit in. Now I admit I don't try as hard. Sometimes I don't try at all. What's the point?

I understand the word 'hate'. I hate someone. Really hate them. I had a piece of paper popped through my door once that had this person's name on it somewhere. I felt uneasy with it being in the house. That's crazy isn't it? I know I'm wrong to let it get to me so much but I can't help it. I let everything get to me. I'm pretty thin-skinned. On the outside I'm bold and strong but on the inside I'm a complete fucking mess.

I think I'm set to self-destruct today.

### **One hundred and fifty-five**

Where I am going is a strange place. I couldn't have chosen a stranger one. It was easy once I came to terms with what it was I was trying to escape from. I made the decision quite quickly. A life changing

decision, made at the drop of a hat. It's bizarre, once you actually open your eyes, just how much you see and how you become aware of how blind you have been. I'd like to say I'll become a positive person but I don't know if that will happen. I would like to think so. It will take time. As I sit here I know that I am being missed. Not by many but by a few. They couldn't change my mind any more than I could, once I'd made it up.

There are so many people who think I got lost. People who think I've had some sort of breakdown, entered into a realm of madness. They may be right. Chances are they are very very wrong.

It is incredible how enlightened I feel. How much better I felt once I'd shaken off some of the trappings I once relied on. The first real clue for me was selling the television. It was a huge relief. I could sit in my lounge and consider what book to read or what I could sit down and write. I found a heap of time and freedom in which to plan my future. I had acquired time itself. Time I forgot existed. Time which I had for years been so keen to fill with nonsense. Afraid of silence. Afraid of spending time with my own thoughts. I'd been screaming inside for years. I'd never let myself be heard.

All my writing. All my anger at the world. Is it a projection (however well justified) of the anger I felt at myself for getting wrapped up in this warped world for so many years? Of believing there was nothing I could do about it?

I recently pushed a whole load of people away from me, keeping close only those who I knew really cared. The others, the fake's, I purposefully let fade away. I

could breathe again. I no longer had to laugh when I didn't want to. I no longer had to pretend that I was part of the lie. I could be myself and not be afraid of being judged.

The job thing is difficult. Do you tell them what you are planning or do you carry on as normal until it's time and then just walk out, maybe throwing in a few words to the boss regarding what you really think of him? I haven't decided yet although each day it becomes more and more difficult to carry on with the façade. I wish I could be elusive. Just not turn up one day. No forwarding address. To them, it would seem as if I'd just disappeared off the face of the earth. I think that would be fun. Give people something else to talk about. Oh if only. If only I could do it tomorrow. What joy that would be.

The sky is growing darker outside. Just imagine if you were sat inside, watching an approaching storm. Imagine if the sky kept losing light, the darkness creeping ever closer with the torrent of rain it brought. Imagine if it were to grow darker and darker until the sky went black and that was the last you ever saw of the light. I love watching storms when you are sheltered. Especially if you are in a car. The wind lashing the windows, the rain drumming so hard on the roof you think it's about to break through. Yet you are safe. You aren't in any danger. Well, unless you are unlucky enough to be struck by lightning of course. If you were just the other side of the window however, the world would feel rather different

There are some people who only find me good company when I'm pissed out of my brains. They don't see that when I'm in their company, that's the

only way I can get through the evening without telling them I think they're all twats.

### **One hundred and fifty-six**

I remembered my suicide man again today. It no longer upsets me. It comforts me in a really odd way. Perhaps that's not the right thing to say but he had a real effect on my life in the fact that he's stayed with me. I remember as clear as day how he fell, how he bounced off the concrete like a rag doll and how he came to rest, his breath hanging on for those last few moments. His eyes, his expression. Not one of fear or pain. Considering he had just leapt off the top of a four storey car park I was stunned at how clean the whole thing was. No mangled body parts, no leg twisted underneath him, no pool of blood. He just lay there as if someone has placed him there in a position that suggested he was about to go to sleep. Well, he was, in some sense of the word. He had dark hair, short but with an attractive curl to it. Strange what you notice isn't it. I'm glad I managed to swerve out of the way or I would have driven right over him. I remember getting out of the car and standing near him whilst someone else ran forward and administered basic first aid. It was of little use. I knew that. He knew that. You don't cry for help by jumping off a tall building onto a hard road surface. You want to die. I wish someone would have taken him in their arms and told him it would be alright, that soon all his worries, all his terror at life would be gone forever. No-one did. It's not the done thing is it? Instead we all stood there in shock, trying to escape the reality of what we had seen.

The above did happen. I didn't understand for a long time how I felt about it. I didn't discuss it. I struggled when I watched a film which had someone jumping off a building. I only began to understand once I realized that it was encouraged for me to rationalise this event, to categorise it so that I can put it in its relevant place in my mind. To bury it. I don't want to bury it. I want to remember it often. Simply because it conflicts with the view of the world a lot of people would have us believe. It's an inconsistency. A jolt. I didn't think I'd ever write about him. I didn't want to share him. I've kept a few things back like the call I made later that day. It's a personal thing I guess. If we'd met before he'd decided to die, I like to think I would have liked him.

Some people – One of those poems that doesn't rhyme;

Some people can't get through a day without a cigarette.

Some people constantly lie.

Some people are addicted to television or video games.

Some people overeat because they feel unwanted.

Some people can't function without designer clothes.

Some people throw litter out of their car windows.

Some people don't say I love you enough.

Some people don't ask how you are and really mean it.

Some people don't listen.

Some people are very alone.

Some people simply can't bear to live any more.

Life is only precious to those who can see it that way.

## **One hundred and fifty-seven**

That familiar ping. I've already got my seatbelt fastened. Other people pay no attention. They don't like being told what to do. Ignore the light now, just like they ignore it when we land (You know what I mean - The crew even ask you to remain seated with your seatbelts fastened over the speaker but no, the clever dicks have to get up and open the lockers to get their hand-luggage whilst still taxiing down the pigging runway). We've already started our descent. Part of me wishes I could stay up here forever. What if I refused to get off? No, I've never been more certain. The stewardess passing to check we're all belted up looks tired. She's re-applied her make up but it doesn't mask the bags under her eyes. I wonder where she goes when she get off this flight. Will she collect her attendant's luggage and hop in a taxi with her colleagues to the nearest hotel to overnight before flying back home tomorrow with a new set of faces to appease. Will she disappear to a late night bar with the Captain? Or is this where her shift ends and this is where she lives. She can collect her car and drive back to climb into bed and fuck with someone she loves. I know, I over-romanticize. If she does go home it's more than likely she'll criticize her other half for not tidying up and then climb into bed after a huge row. I prefer the first scenario.

## One hundred and fifty-eight

I nearly threw a stool at someone who insisted on being racist not long ago. We were watching a football match in a pub. I got so fed up with hearing the words 'black bastard' and 'coon' that I asked the person in question to shut up, in not such a polite way. His reply was that he knew he was a racist bastard. He seemed rather proud. No-one else in the place backed me up. Why, it's just how people are. 'Best not to wind them up'. Well, excuse, fucking, me. I wish in retrospect I'd spend the rest of the match shouting 'white bastard' any time a player was fouled. Yes, I know its no wonder I get on the wrong side of people but why would you want to know shallow minded cunts like that? I just wanted him to know I didn't find him as amusing as he thought he was. More than that, I wanted him to know I thought he was a complete penis. Racism is all around me. If I feel it and I'm white, how the fuck do others feel.

'All these immigrants taking over our country'. A much heard of phrase I'm sure you'll agree. Can they hear themselves? Have they even delved below the surface of racial tensions and prejudices? Have they seen how some races are persecuted across the world? What some people have to suffer? I don't see them slapping Hitler on the back. Oh, sorry, that's okay isn't it, because Jews aren't black. Black people bring everything on themselves, they're an inferior race. How is it possible when we know what we know to carry an attitude like this around with you? Especially when the majority of those who come out with such shit are either ill-educated beer-swilling 'hard men' whose opinions are shaped by those around them and can't spell what they're trying to say let alone understand it or middle to upper-class wankers who

rave on about how our country is being infiltrated by outsiders but cruise round Jamaica on a big fucking boat with a lot of similar toffee nose bigots, pointing at the locals and saying 'hey look at Rasta'. I think the Cruise boats who carry such turds would be better off at the bottom of the sea. Careful now Eve, you'll be mistaken for a terrorist. No, I'm just saying in theory. My mum and dad cruise. I wish they wouldn't but they do. Who am I to say what's right and wrong? (\*Afterthought – maybe I should erase everything I've written so far.....). Shouldn't people be able to do what they want? Yes of course. Fuck everybody. So long as I'm having a good time. Say what you think, do what you like. Fuck it. I deserve it. Me Me Me Me Me Me Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Well, you know what I say?  
Fuck you.

Sorry. Rather went off on a tangent there.

Someone I know asked if they could read what I'd written so far. Inside I howled with laughter. Then I said no. No point pissing just about everyone off until I've bundled up my life and buggered off.

You know, that really does make me smile. Oh my god, that was me she was writing about, maybe I shouldn't have been such an evil bitch? The mess I'll have created if I ever get published. Mess is good. Mess might just make the odd person stop and think. Doubt it but hell, it's been fun.

## One hundred and fifty nine

Was it only hours ago I took my journey to the airport? My perception of time has warped. Am I sure I haven't just been beamed up. Was I sitting at my desk at work, typing some indistinct letter when a bright light engulfed me? Next thing I appeared in a new undiscovered place. I don't quite know why I've been chosen but I feel it must all be part of a bigger plan. If only I could put all this mind wandering to better use.

I think back, I have to rack my brains. No, it was yesterday I left. Yes, I'm sure of it. I think. I'd been packed for days. Living like a tramp in the same clothes because I'd stupidly folded everything else away, put things into hibernation for a while. Those last few days were weird. Surreal in a way. Even the dogs looked at me with incomprehension. I remember I sat watching one of the dogs trying to catch a bluebottle which was crawling up its paw much to my amusement. Dogs have a fantastic range of facial expressions if you stop for a moment and study them. When was that? It seems a long time ago, somewhere in the distant past but I know it can't be.

I took one last walk up the lane. The lane I had walked on for years. The lane I had fallen over on countless times. The lane I was proposed to on. The lane. A lane. It had nearly taken a hold over me. So very nearly.

It was a going to be a sunny day. It seemed fitting. The taxi was early but it didn't matter. I'd been ready for a long time. The place no longer belonged to me. My stamp had been erased. The rooms I laughed in. Cried in. The rooms we fought in. Loved in. I had placed them in memory. They would always be there. That's the only place they existed now.

The taxi beeped. How long had I been stood there? I didn't even take a last look around. I felt something. I can't place whether it was a wrench or a release. Perhaps both. I can't explain it but whatever it was seemed the direct cause of the tears which streamed down my face as the car pulled away from the life I knew. I said goodbye to the sheep, to the trees, to the small stream of water residing off the side of the path, to the crumbling deserted farm building I had passed so many times. Why did I never jump the fence and go there? I passed no-one. I was glad of that. I didn't have the dilemma of whether to wave or look away in ignorance. I wouldn't have known how to behave. As I left the village I closed my eyes and asked myself for forgiveness.

### **One hundred and sixty**

Attractiveness. Surely attractiveness depends on the spirit of the person. Sure, someone who doesn't look like a pig is preferable but falling in love is a funny thing. The hard part comes when you fall in love with someone who doesn't fall in love with you. That's difficult to come to terms with without losing self-esteem. Maybe it's easy to put it all down to pheromones. What attracts us to certain kinds of people could be an innate attraction we have little control over. We are apparently attracted to another whose genes complement our own, giving a greater chance of healthy offspring. Well, it didn't work in my case because I don't think I can have kids so that's that fucked. I should be grateful the odd person still fancies me, if it was all to do with childbearing then

I'd be fucked. Or not, as the case may be. And that would be tragic.

I sometimes think that domestic cats think they are tigers. I know they come from the same line, hence tigers being 'big cats' but sometimes the guts shown by such a little animal are plain stupid. Why would a tabby cat attempt to take on two fully grown working dogs in a scrap? I would say that was plain stupidity. But you want to know the astounding part? The cat won. The deflated dogs ran away in fear. True.

Old MacDonald had a farm, ee ei ee ei ow  
And on that farm was foot and mouth ee ei ee ei ow  
With a bang bang here and a bang bang there  
Here a bang, there a bang, everywhere a bang bang  
Old MacDonald had a farm but all his animals were  
shot dead and he lost his livelihood and now he lives  
in a council flat debating whether or not to blow his  
own brains out.

Rock a bye baby  
Curled in her bed  
When the thing cries  
She's dropped on her head

Mary Mary quite contrary  
How does your garden grow  
With genetically modified crops and pesticides  
And besides, my garden has just been bought out by a  
multi-national.

The world hasn't changed. It is no better or worse  
than it used to be. We're just a bit more aware of  
things. Or at least, we pretend to be.

I wonder if I'll ever run out of useless things to say.

I thought of a fantastic idea for a book or possibly a screenplay yesterday. Today, now I've sat down at the computer, I can't remember what the fucking hell it was. I nearly wrote it down on a scrap of paper at the time but I thought it was such a good idea, there was no way I'd forget it. I'd even thought of details for it. Now it's completely gone. I have no inkling of any of it. How depressing and totally mind blowing is that? It was only yester fucking day! I can't even remember where I was when I thought of it, maybe I even dreamed it. Who knows, I certainly don't. What a fool. Oh well, I'll just have to hope it comes to mind another time or that it was a pants idea anyway that I would have thrown out of the window after ten minutes. Fucker.

Inner peace. I think I have that some of the time. It's just everything outside that really smells. No, honestly, I do think it is vital to have a kind of inner sanctuary. A place within yourself to escape to. I have come to the conclusion that I am at my most stressed when I have had no time alone with my thoughts. I keep meaning to practice meditation – not the religious kind, more of just spending time in a quiet relaxed place, shutting your eyes and focusing on your breathing, leading you to thoughts of how you feel. I do this once in a while but then life gets busy and you forget and then you're back at stage one, tense and irritable. It's amazing how chilled out you feel after only ten minutes or so in a naturally lit room, either lying on your back or sat on the floor just listening to your breathing, I'd recommend it to everyone. Our lives are so hectic. When you do start to meditate you realize just how difficult it is to clear your head and relax. All sorts of thoughts intrude, ridiculous things as well as the dull everyday tasks we think we could

be getting on with instead of wasting ten minutes with our eyes shut. I know I for one, get pants of guilt no and again for spending time ‘indulging’ in such things but when I think more about it I begin to think I should spend a lot more time focusing on what I think and feel about things because usually my judgments are made amongst a barrage of noise and background activity, when I’ve probably got a dozen others things crawling around my brain as well. How can you make an informed decision in so much of a confused state? I’ll tell people I’m feeling depressed. I haven’t stopped to think why I feel depressed. How can I improve my life if I don’t know who I am? That’s a huge statement I know but I’m only just finding out who I am. I would hazard a guess that I’m just under halfway through my life and I’ve only just begun to notice that the me that I always thought was there, based on other peoples perceptions and assumptions that I have taken on board, might not be me at all. And how would I know when I’ve never stopped and looked. I think I will adopt a new therapy. If I get pissed off or miserable I need to go and sit alone somewhere and figure out what the real me would like to do about it.

I feel bound to writing. It feels sometimes like a never-ending curse. I love it and despise it at the same time. I love it when ideas flow into my head and I can’t type quickly even to keep up with my train of thought and I despise it when I sit looking at the screen for hours without a single thing to say, no matter how trivial. However, what gets me most about this whole love affair I have with words is that it is always there, goading me. I have an empty day ahead and all I can think of in the lead up to it is how much writing I can do. The day approaches and I get nervous, will it be a productive day or a wasted one.

In the morning, I awake, I'm too nervous to write straight away in case there's nothing there in my head. I may write, I may not. At the end of the day, just before I drift off to sleep, I mull over what I've done and wonder what the next free day will bring. It's always there, even if I've not written a sentence for weeks. Every spare moment I have I think I should be writing. I'll be halfway through a chapter of a book or doing some washing and I'll think, 'I could be writing, look at all the time I'm wasting'. It's as if I have an alarm clock constantly ringing in my head. I can't turn it off. I think I'll live with this always. I think it may eventually haunt me.

### **One hundred and sixty one**

I've been searching for contentment for a long time. I'm not unhappy. I guess I'm just looking for a more rounded kind of life, where I'm happy in the majority of it and not just for select bits of it. It's hard to describe. I've not drawn up any mental pictures of this thing I'm looking for. I have a feeling it will involve a feeling of freedom about it. I've been mulling it over and safety and security isn't what I'm looking for. Well, not in terms of having a mortgage, savings in the bank, steady job etc. It's not financial reward either. I would imagine I want the same basics as most other people, to be madly in love, to make enough money to get by doing something I get pleasure from and something that hopefully has benefit for a worthy party, to live somewhere beautiful and to have friends who don't judge me. Am I asking too much to want all that at the same time? Is it greedy to want like that? What I cannot accept is the 'this is your lot in

life, learn to live with it'. I don't want to live with it. I won't live with it. I will struggle against it for as long as it takes.

Does anyone truly know what they want? You look at lottery winners. Ask them what they want from life and most will give the same answer, 'big house, flashy car, exotic holidays etc etc'. Is this what they want? If they'd have had prior knowledge that they would be coming into money and told they could do absolutely anything they wanted with it, would it change their decisions. I don't know. I read somewhere a report about lottery winners. Most of them blow the money in a few years and end up living the lives they seemed so desperate to get away from in the first place. Sudden millionaire. It must be a shock. One guy drank himself to death, another blew everything on horse racing. A lot of them seemed to have a nervous breakdown and lost everything, not just the money but often their relationships too. They didn't know how to cope. Not one of these people I read about started their own business based on ideas they may have had in their lifetime, not one donated any money to charities or did any voluntary work, considering they no longer had to work for a living. One chap bought six sports cars. Now is there not a severe warning somewhere in that lot? That these same people who thought their lives would be nothing but happy, created their own nightmare which led them to the depths of despair. All they'd ever dreamed of, their conception of contentment was so far removed from reality, it drove at least one of them to an extremely premature death. To know in one fell swoop that you'd got it all so terribly wrong. That was your chance. Your chance to contribute something to the world but you'd got used to the 'take, take, take', attitude that you grew up with, you didn't realize there

was any other way to be. It never entered your head. Perhaps people other than myself should spend time in peace with their own thoughts to figure out who they really are and what might constitute their happiness.

Why are we so fond of being 'static'? In every sense. Physically and mentally. How many people do not exercise other than skulking around the office? I would put quite a high estimate on it. I know people who won't ever go for a walk or do anything at all that would raise their pulse slightly. I imagine the missionary position or spooning comes in useful for such specimens who just can't be bothered. Yet, mentally standing still seems a much greater transgression. Someone I was with at some point in time commented that part of what makes us human is our ability to change and not to wallow. I thought that summed it up quite nicely. Society cannot change or move forward if the individuals that make up society refuse bluntly to adapt. Our world is in a constant state of evolution, as we are as humans. We can accept it or not but it won't change it being true. Agreed, I hate the society in which I live but my hope is that as it goes forward, the mistakes it has made will be diagnosed and change can occur. It will struggle to do this however, with the mentality that we carry around which emphasises the comfort of the present and the fear of the unknown. One step forward, two steps back. Imagine where we'd be if each time it was three steps forward. We might have a society where the individuals in it actually care about their fellow man, care about what they're doing to nature, actually put some thought into how to improve things for everyone as a collective. We still could but the way I see it, we need to do something soon before

the whole thing is too fucked up for any change to matter.

### **One hundred and sixty two**

Locks on everything. What's that all about? This is all mine, keep off it. I read in the paper this morning that there are more 'gated communities' springing up around Britain. This is an extension of what I am referring to. It starts with people being over-protective of their material goods. The locks multiply on their front doors, the locks go up on the windows of the house, alarm systems in every room, infra-red, trip switches on the interior doors. Then a stark bright light is erected on the front of the house to blind even the best willed of passers by. A gate is put up, then another replaces it, taller, maybe metal bars. A sign saying 'private property, trespassers will be prosecuted'. A bell or intercom at the gate to keep unsavoury types even walking on the drive to call on the house. Now we have that step further. Gated communities. A number of houses, probably as equally 'protected' as the above example, all further safe-guarded by a community security gate surrounding their select properties.

Only fifty years ago, most folk went out and didn't even bother locking their doors. Most people now lock all their doors even if they are in. Gated communities. Can you bear to imagine if this trend continues? Well, we'll all have identity cards soon, maybe we can develop a swipe system which will determine where we are and where we are not allowed to go. A whole new class system could arise, based loosely on the old but more pronounced. Why, we

need never mix with people we deem unfit ever again. What a wonderful world that would be. Sorry, off on a tangent again.

Back to 'gated communities'. I'm not sure why they are termed this at all. They do not fit my idea of a community because surely that involves a degree of integrating with one another not shutting yourself off. I would imagine the people who live or desire to live in such a place would welcome shutting him or herself off from the neighbours as much as 'outsiders' – see the language even I am using now. It hardly seems an appropriate environment for knocking on your neighbour's door to ask for a cup of sugar. You'd be at the police station being interrogated before you knew it. You explain your intentions were good, you only wanted a cup of tea. Mind you with 24 hour shops open, the need to ask no longer needs to be an option.

As a nation we seem to be becoming more and more fearful of our fellow man. We do not trust anyone. We are paranoid and encouraged to be so. Let's just hope we don't start selling guns at the supermarket as they do in America or that paranoia may just be the root of a much more serious problem. We see the effects of snowballing situations all the time but not many pay much attention until it is out of control. We feel there is much more crime than there used to be. Not true. There is just a lot more media than there used to be. Nobody is advocating that there should be less media. Well, there are but they rarely get heard. It's a kind of brainwashing. Be afraid, be very afraid ...because that way you are a lot easier to be taken advantage of by those who claim to know what's best for you. Don't buy it. The world is a lot safer than you think. Obviously, don't go running around naked in the middle of the night or put a sign on your door that says 'I've gone out and my door is unlocked' but have

a bit more faith in the people you share the planet with. Most of them are as scared as you are.

I know I often say I hate people. I don't really. What I hate is what their perception of the world is doing to them and those around them.

### **One hundred and sixty three**

What does it say about a person who has worn down all the buttons on their tv remote so that the channel numbers and function keys are no longer decipherable after only having had it a year? It strikes me as kind of sad.

I'm going to go back to travel now. Why do people travel? What is the psychology behind it? I've already discussed my experience of pandering to rich people's travel needs but it's not just rich people is it? Why do we travel and why do we choose the places we do? We tend to travel to places we consider safe. Not just safe in terms of we don't think we will be physically harmed but safe in that we hope our view of the world won't be challenged. That's why so few of us visit places like Africa. If I mentioned going on holiday to Africa I can mentally visualise a dozen people I know pulling a face. Again, that look like a foul smell has wafted into the room. There must be a reason why our top destinations are countries like our own in terms of standard of living and political democracy. We happily and regularly visit America, Canada, Italy, Greece, Spain, Australia. We are afraid of visiting China, Russia, Chile, Peru, Cuba, India. There are some places that are too different for us to

comprehend. It is easy to turn a blind eye to bullfighting in Spain or dancing bears in Greece because there is always something else to occupy our minds so we don't have to dwell on such things. Yet somewhere like India, where you are surrounded by the knowledge that the world is an unjust place, it is harder to dissipate these thoughts (although some still manage to). Some people embrace the cultural diversity they encounter, some mingle with the people and gain an awful lot of insight into workings of a society, others do not.

So, back to the idea of why we travel. My take on this is that we have to feel that we have a chance of escape, albeit brief. We go on holiday because we need to be away from our real lives. We cope with boredom and mundanity because we know that we can soon start planning and looking forward to our next trip. Then we can shower ourselves with treats for a week or two if we are lucky before returning to start the cycle over. If you told an English person that he or she could not have a holiday for two years, they would most likely fall straight into depression. It is strange that we focus so much positive thought on one or two weeks out of a fifty-two week year. Its no wonder holidays seem to pass so quickly and often do not live up to the standards we've put on them. We build up images of happiness, they usually include sunshine and laughter. If this by some chance doesn't happen, the whole thing is a complete failure and a waste of money. We are buying into a dream. We are sold holidays like we are sold cars and clothes, as a life enhancing experience. We put so much emphasis on this that it is no wonder that we come back down to earth if we open a door on a tatty apartment or have a bumpy and arduous coach journey to our resort. We didn't see that in our minds eye when we looked at the pictures in the brochure.

I hear so many people say that they wouldn't need to travel abroad if there was better weather in the UK. I don't know if that's true. If the weather here is good, people still have bills popping through their door in the morning, work pressures are still close to mind, other people around them are still consumed by the reality of everyday life. At home, would they eat al fresco at ten at night, soaking up the atmosphere? I doubt it. More than likely, if they had a week off work, they would stay in bed till noon and spend the majority of the day and night sat outside the local pub before falling home. Mind you, there is the young British sect that do exactly that abroad, rolling out of bed at noon before heading to 'Tommy's bar' for a full English and a pint of Carlsberg.

I will emphasise here that I do not actually have a solid point to make, it's just that things like this go round my head a lot. Why do we go abroad? Why do we choose where we choose? What about those who favour familiarity all the time? They go somewhere once. They like it. It suits them. Maybe it's somewhere like Tenerife. It has a British feel to it. They meet other Brits. They can get their favourites in the supermarket. The local taverna will make them steak and chips. They feel 'at home' as they call it. For others it may be somewhere less British in its feel. They may mix with the locals, frequent the local taverna which serves fantastic local food. Whichever. They come home and immediately rebook for their following holiday. Same place, same apartment, same time of year. Year in. Year out. They don't look any further. This is them. This is what they like. They will continue returning to the same place until for one reason or another they are no longer able to. I'm not saying this is wrong. I'm only questioning why. Is it fear that somewhere else will be disappointing? Why? I don't know but I've always found it a little strange.

If you like a place so much, why not move there? Because deep down you know it won't be the same if you lived there? Deep down you know the everyday reality of life would ruin what you have? I don't know.

We all know that sinking feeling of returning from somewhere beautiful. Of opening the front door to reveal gas or telephone bills on the carpet. Or of rushing to put the central heating on. You have returned to the very place you had so longed to escape from. Of course you feel sad. And to add to it, unless lucky enough to have a job you love, you return to a job you more than likely don't enjoy too much. I no longer know where I'm going with this so I'll stop.

But, to wander off again regarding one of the above sentences. How many people really love their jobs? Really. I don't love my job. I don't even tolerate it. I fucking hate it. Just like I hate all the others I've had before it. Why? Because I work my arse off to line someone else's pockets that's why. And those pockets I've helped line only get dipped into for personal benefit because all my bosses have been selfish bastards. Yes, I should change what I do. That's what I'm trying to do.

Given the choice of working or not, what do you think the statistics would be? I think you'd be surprised. I've met people who can't function without working. I'm not kidding. You must have heard at least someone say 'I have to work, I'd be bored without it, wouldn't know what to do'. Are you fucking crazy? No, they're not. They just don't have any point to their lives. They have nothing to do when they are not working other than watching the tv or shopping and people soon get bored of that day in day out (I didn't intentionally mean to quote Joy Division but it makes my point for me). Give people a month off work and

how many would fill the time doing stuff they enjoy, things they find productive, things that give them a real buzz, things that make them glad they're alive? Or how many would sit on their arse all day saying 'I'm bored'. Isn't this a horrible conclusion.

### **One hundred and sixty four**

We're almost landing. I can hear the wheels cranking down. It's very serene. The lights have dimmed and it's wonderfully quiet. I feel half asleep. As if things aren't quite real. Will I feel alone once I've collected my bags? They'll be no-one waiting for me. Not this time.

I turn to my crossword companion. He is no longer there. Where did he go? He can't have gone to the toilet because we're descending, seatbelts are on, even the stewards are back in their cabin seats. Where is he? I glance around to no avail. Maybe he swapped seats. Had I offended him in some way? Had I fallen asleep and put my head on his shoulder? No, I hadn't slept. Or had I? It's so confusing. I'm not sure what's going on. I glance around again, desperately searching for him. There is no-one. The cabin is empty, all except for me, strapped into my seat.

### **One hundred and sixty five**

I'm losing the plot. Funny, on a book I intended never to have one in the first place.

## One hundred and sixty six

I've written a piece of music. How up my own jacksie it that? Actually it's not but that's the way I've been brought up to think. It's a piece of music for the piano. It's fairly classical in style. It's not brilliant by any stretch of the imagination but I like it. I only did it because the previous night I'd had a discussion with someone about writing music and I categorically stated it would be near impossible for me to write music because since I started playing the piano, all I could do was read the music in front of me. I was never one of those people who could just sit at a piano stool and play whatever came into their head. I was always jealous of that ability. Some people have a natural talent for music, a musical ear as it were. I haven't got that. I can be taught to play but it's not a gift - um, strange word to use, like someone bestows such things, well, lets just go with an evolutionary inclination instead. So, as if to prove a point to myself, mainly, that I was incapable, I sat at the piano the next day and wrote a tune, with chords and everything. As you can gather, I really surprised myself. It was a ball-ache to do admittedly. I had to write every single note down as I played it because as I think I mentioned earlier, I've got a really poor memory. But a few hours later I had something half decent. Wait for the funny bit. After I'd written it all down in note form and put it in front of me, I couldn't play it! It was too hard! My Les Dawson impression came back to haunt me. I'd put flats and sharps all over the place which would have sounded bizarre and lovely had I actually hit the right notes. Oh well, live and learn. I'll eventually transfer it into a sound

programme on the computer but I don't know how to use that either so it may have to wait til I accrue a tad more patience.

Wouldn't you think after being around as a species for all these years, we would have learned to cope better with life's misfortunes? Think of how we completely fall to pieces when someone we love dies. Even if they are old aged and have been ill for a long time, we still fail to cope very well with our grief. I cry sometimes thinking about losing those I love, even my pets. I do believe we should celebrate peoples lives more though instead of the dirge we go though. Funerals really do need to change. They add to our depression. They emphasise the fact that we need to be miserable and understand what a loss this is. Everyone knows that. They don't need to feel worse. Where is the appreciation of having known a person, the thankfulness that they were great, that they weren't a twat, that they were capable of loving us and us them. This gets lost somewhere. When I die, I'd love nothing more than to think people would have a knees up, remembering all the stupid stuff I said and did and how I was fun to be around. I'd want people to laugh and be glad they knew me. Is that too much to ask? For centuries we've followed the same traditions. Well, I despise tradition. Life's all about change. Make your own world. Those that went before won't mind.

## One hundred and sixty seven

Was I about to land? I can't quite recall. I've run it over and over in my mind so many times but this is always where I get stuck.

I lower my list. Now, I definitely want to take the futon. I'm selling the television and the fridge. The washing machine can stay here for the next people. The piano may have to follow, it all depends what size I get. I'm taking the lamps, they may come in handy. The computer is coming too. I'd better back my work up again. I write that down so I don't forget. The drawers can stay. The desk too. I've never liked it. I won't need a full shipping container. I don't seem to be taking much. All the things I've collected over the years and look how little I care for most of it. The clock. The clock has to come. That gets added to the list. Can I trust a shipping company to look after it? I'm still not sure about flying. It all seems fine until I get to the landing part. It seems too sudden. Can I let my life change so drastically over a few hours? Step on a plane at one place and step off at another, without seeing what lies between, without slowly adapting to the changes in landscape, language, life? Have I lost you? Sorry if I have. The thing is, I'm leaving. I think you know that. I'm not on a plane. You knew that too. I'm at home, where I've always been. Writing. Writing about my life. I have been on that plane journey, metaphorically. Hundreds of times. I've just never had the courage to do it.

Until now.

You know, when I began writing this odd little book of mine, I had no idea how my thoughts would alter the course of my life. I had no plans to uproot myself. Yet from the very start I wrote of getting on an

aircraft. I thought that I would leave the vague plot ambiguous. Never divulge whether the character was running away from something or going back to where she once lived, whether she was in a relationship or not and so on, the choices countless. I wanted it to be extremely sketchy. I used the flight idea as a mirror to what I was feeling. I didn't think that two years down the line I would be taking it more literally. The telescope must come too, that goes without saying. I need to look at stars.

### **One hundred and sixty eight**

Another pause. A couple of months at least. Maybe I'm just waiting for something positive to say. Is that what people wait there whole lives for? For that one moment when they can use the phrase 'This is what it's all been about'? Guess what? I quit my job again. I can see the steam coming out of my parents ears even as I think about it. This was a classy exit. I worded my letter of resignation perfectly. I got thrown out that very afternoon. Got paid notice too. I must admit I was quite pleased. There's something about office work that I don't seem to be able to handle. It's usually the tossers sitting in the boardroom working out how they can get away with not paying you any sick leave.

One positive thing I have managed to come up with is to motivate myself to think slightly differently. I don't like offices. Ok, don't work in one. Go and work in a florists or at a kennels. I'll be taking a drop in wage, that's a step down. Bollocks, if you don't half mind it why is it a step down? Stop thinking that money is the

be all and end all, don't forget, it's what makes most people self-centred wankers. I won't be able to pay the bills. Yes you will and who cares anyway, they've had enough money off me in the past. My friends think I'm a fool for leaving a job they seemed to envy. These people are people you have a drink with, you've never had a meaningful conversation with them in your life so what do they know? The thing is, although I'm phasing it out, I do think about all the above and you know why? Because I'm stressed. It's a state I think many of us live in most of the time. Shoulders continually knotted, a persistent hunchback. What are we doing to ourselves?

### **One hundred and sixty-nine**

How must it feel to be all alone in a world full of so many people? I often feel lonely but I guess part of that is an illusion. What I really mean is that I feel misunderstood sometimes. If I really needed someone, I know I would always have somewhere to go albeit not my first choice. I have family, I have a few friends yet not as many as I would like but at least I would have somewhere to turn if ever reaching the depths of desperation. Many don't have such privileges. Correct me if I am wrong but I heard there were 7,000 people commit suicide per year in the UK. That makes me feel so very humble. I didn't see the other 6,999 die but I can imagine most followed a similar end. I'm sure you heard of someone's train being cancelled or delayed after someone saw fit to throw themselves under it. Leaping off a motorway bridge. Hanging by a noose in their school uniform in their bedroom. Slumped in a toilet with a needle in their arm. Lying

in bed with an empty bottle of vodka and a selection of pills. It's not as uncommon as we would like to believe. Yet what do we do about it? What do you do? Bystander apathy. Someone else will do it. The sad thing is, they don't. I know that sounds preachy. You're right, one person won't change the society we live in. I don't have the answers. The least we can do is ask the question.

### **One hundred and seventy**

An plane landing. It has to be both one of the beautiful experiences you can have and one of the most nerve-racking. Descending through the clouds to be presented with the world from above. Yet this time, I don't see the familiar squares of green, separating the fields and pastures, the oddly formed man made and natural reservoirs, the sprawl of the encroaching supermarket chains and ring roads, street lights and closely set housing estates, each indistinguishable from the last. I no longer squint through the smog, trying to ascertain where we are in relation to my home. My home. It is empty now. I doubt it will be empty for long. It was a happy home for a time. I doubt I'll be thought of. The next people to live there won't know how I used to sit in the bathroom and cry, how I used to stare out of the back window over the fields, how I used to share passionate and honest lovemaking in the bedroom. Normal activities I know but each of us carry personal memories, some mundane but all as real as any other memories we may cherish.

The scene below is new. I feel sad and excited at the same time. A surge of trepidation. I never saw what I had been doing as a sacrifice before this moment. Even now, I'm not quite sure if that is what I mean. There is a feeling of loss, of a kind of death. Yet, there is a balance. A sense of rediscovery. Not a new start as that would mean I regretted my life to this point and I don't. I've always been too emotionally involved and I've been hurt in many ways but I wouldn't change my life. Funny to hear myself say that. I've made mistakes, some of which I've learned from, some of which I never will. I can just make out the trees below and I think I can see a farm. Childish as it seems, I burst into tears.

Maybe when the plane stops, I just won't get off.

There is an announcement. We will be landing in approximately ten minutes.

### **One hundred and seventy-one**

I never really expected this book to delve into the serious. I only started off wanting to rant about the things which fuck me off. Turns out there's quite a lot. I am Eve, you've probably gathered that. I was fictional in part to begin with yet as I've written, I guess we've become slightly more intertwined. I did get on a plane too. Maybe as I carry on I'll let you know where I went, who I left, or what I was returning to. Maybe the course of the book won't take us there. It doesn't really matter anyway because I think you already know. Simply because if you've read this far, you're probably fucked off with a few

things yourself and need to do something about it. That however is your choice. What I would say is think hard about your life and what you can do to give something back both to society and to yourself. Then do something you'll thank yourself for.

You may have noticed my mood has changed somewhat. There's a reason for that. I've let go of some of the stress in my life. I decided to fuck working for twats, that was lesson number one. Instead I took a lower paid but meaningful job and decided to take a bit of time out. I couldn't afford to and have a bundle of red bills on my desk. I don't know how I'm going to work my way around that yet but to be frank, I couldn't give a shit at the moment. I caught up on some reading, decided to learn a few more things and slept. It's amazing how much I slept. It's like my body went into meltdown. Now I feel relaxed and ready to cope with the world again. Don't get me wrong, I still despise what's happening to humanity and can't bear that no-one is prepared to change a system so ill-equipped to deal with equality and common-sense as ours and I still get angry with so many things yet on a personal basis I don't get so upset and disappointed with myself as a person. It's the first time I've started to regard myself as a decent entity.

However, one thing still plays on my mind and that's this – when did the world go so mad as to create an audience for a Roy 'Chubby' Brown look-alike tribute act? It really doesn't give us much credit does it.

## One hundred and seventy-two

I read somewhere that it was a good exercise to sit down, clear your head and write the first words that came into being in your mind. To not worry about word order or whether you were writing poetry or prose. In this way what you really want to say will probably come out in one sense or another, even things you didn't know you wanted to say but were maybe hiding in you subconscious. I tried it and this is what happened.

Sensory exploration,  
Vivid pictures live inside you but you cannot find the words to describe what you see,  
You feel alive, confused, heartbroken,  
Senses quicken until you feel the edges of mental meltdown,  
It's a vehicle you do not seem able to stop, it runs away with you, faster, faster and you know there are brakes but you forget where to look,  
Your conscious and subconscious fight for prevalence, hence those moments where you feel truly lost,  
A feeling of inexplicable loss of identity, are these the moments of inspiration, of natural self attempting to escape, screaming for you to stop the madness?

A wilderness inside, sometimes wild, sometimes barren,  
Walking you could find yourself in many places,  
Places which affect your mood, your entire outlook.  
You wish you could stay in the place in which you experience contentment but you cannot for

contentment is soon replaced without you traveling at all, by mediocrity, of self doubt,  
So you keep moving, you look back and the old place has gone.  
And inside your world, you hear laughter which holds no comfort.

Does appreciation of art you have created bear any resemblance to appreciation of self?  
How can one love a work in front of them and wonder if it was they themselves as creator,  
or if by some slip of fate it was all fictional,  
to get carried off on a wind of words, an idea which although just fallen upon, enfolds into a valiant expression of life and then to ponder on the means of its arrival.  
Can a subconscious fleeting thought be nurtured as one's own talent or as a piece of luck harnessed by the structures of the brain, rising from the depths of human experience and instinct.

In essence it is a search for acceptance. Self approval so often masked by external influences, how can someone who has never grasped a moment of creativity with all their soul criticize something even an artist struggles to explain?  
Surely self expression should be encouraged and explored not for fame or as a means to expose egotistical offerings but as a way to search for those moments of inspiration that take our breath away, those few moments where we cannot write quickly enough or the feeling of loss when we see the moment slip by too quickly and the sadness we experience when it has gone, to make time for a courageous voyage,  
Of wanting to know who we really are.

Well, there we go.

### **One hundred and seventy-three**

What life could I have been leading if I had taken different choices? Have you ever asked yourself? I doubt many people think about it too much. It might be painful to look back and wish you'd done something different. I've never really thought much about it until now and I don't know why I'm thinking about it now, possibly because what I'm doing now is a major life change to say the least. There are a few decisions I have made in my life so far that pretty much dictated events which followed. What would have happened if I'd have taken a different path? There have been moments where I'd set my mind on something only to change it at the last minute. I'm sure there are many times, now I stop to think about it.

At sixteen, I had just taken my GCSE's. I had decided what I wanted to do with my life. I wanted to be a hairdresser and beautician. Not just wanted, I had made up my mind. My parents took some convincing but they came around. I even got a place on a local college training course. I had a tour round the place. It was all set. The next week, I changed my mind. I decided I wanted to go to sixth form instead to study drama. Big difference really. Neither option truly thought through now I think about it. At sixteen you don't look forward that far into the future. At least I didn't. I thought as far as a couple of years perhaps but the real world of working for a living hadn't really hit home. A hairdresser? Perhaps I would have made a good one, who knows. I still cut my own hair and

some trusting friends and relatives occasionally but for a living, I don't know if I would have stuck it. Not that it's a bad job, quite the contrary, people will always want and trust good hairdressers. It's just I've never really stuck to anything, apart perhaps for my desire to write. Yet if I'd have not gone to study A Levels, then a degree, would I have been able to chop and change my jobs at whim, whenever I got bored or depressed? Maybe not. Something tells me my life would have been very different indeed. Where would I be now, who with, would I be happy, would I still be sat on a plane at this point in time?

I toyed with the idea of studying Psychology at University instead of Theatre, which I had become rather fond of. My A Level results were higher in Psychology. For a few years, I really regretted choosing Theatre in the end. Again, if I had thought it through, Psychology would have been the sensible option. I found it fascinating, I seemed pretty good at it and the career choices were both hopeful and highly paid. But no, I decided to study theatre for no better reason than I thought I liked it better. I had no idea what I might do after University, I didn't think that far. I'm aware I'm making myself sound ridiculously ignorant but truth is, I was. Instant gratification. you see it everywhere and I was guilty. Still am sometimes. This one was a major decision, although I didn't give it much weight at the time. When I was about twenty seven I looked into going back to University to take a degree in said declined subject but I couldn't afford it and deep down I knew it was too late. Funny, I still didn't get the fact then that all I had to do was get off my arse and have faith in myself. I always believed I wasn't much good and that if I was good at something, someone would notice me and offer me the world. Yet how can

someone offer you the world when you are hiding?  
So, back from the tangent, I didn't become a psychologist (and who says I would have become one even if I obtained the degree?) ... but what if? Would I have bags of money and live in a suburb? Would I be down to earth or would I be full of self importance. These are extremes but who knows? Yet I would be a different person. My personality would have adapted to my situation. I don't believe a personality is mostly innate, I think it is defined by circumstance. There's always the chance I could have dropped out. Maybe I changed my mind again at the last moment and decided I had to study theatre or I'd never forgive myself. Maybe I would be sat in a psychologist's office, looking at my patient list and wondering why on earth I never followed my heart and studied theatre and think myself a coward for not studying something just because I loved it.

When I was close to finishing University in London, I was offered a job in Hackney. It was a low paid job but a first foot on the ladder, working with a children's theatre. I thought about it briefly. Funny, I do tend to only think about a lot of things 'briefly'. It's not a particularly conscious thing, I just tend to go off instinct a lot. My reason for declining the job was that I didn't want to stay in London. Instant gratification again? Very possibly. I didn't even consider working there for a year and then moving on. I just thought about sitting on the tube, being barged out of the way on a bus, being unknown in a city I despised for its ability to make you feel insignificant. So what did I do? I moved back to the North of England. I got married to my first love (or so I thought at the time), moved to a different city where I knew no-one and went to work for a chainstore book sellers. Ignorant? No, I can't really blame ignorance.

In fact, I find it really difficult to explain why I did this because I don't understand it myself. I know it has something to do with the fact that my last year at University was a very difficult one. I felt unliked, paranoid and stupid so when I sensed this was coming to an end, I accepted a way of life in which I would be sheltered, protected. I was kidding myself and when I think back over that time I feel embarrassed at my behavior. It ended with me hurting people (not exactly unjustified) and I'm not proud. If I had taken that job, what then? Would my confidence have re-emerged? Would I have realized that I didn't need to get married to a man I wasn't sure I should be marrying and hide away from everyone? Or would I have become consumed by different lifestyle, taking me somewhere else completely?

After eighteen months of marriage, I knew something was seriously wrong. I'd always thought I was in love. I wanted to believe it. The problem is you can't love someone who has no respect for you. It doesn't work like that. People try and believe it but what they will probably realize eventually is that they had so little love for themselves, they'll believe anything to justify the decisions they have made. I couldn't truly love someone who made me feel so bad about myself. I didn't do what I imagine many people in a similar situations do and stay for a while, see if things improved. I made my decision and I went. Don't get me wrong, it was a painful time, for both of us. I'm grateful now that he made it fairly easy for me to leave by being such a twat and his misguided belief that threats, bullying and bribery were the way to win me over. I felt guilty for leaving. I justified it by telling myself if I didn't stand up for myself now, I never would. I thought however about the mound of money that was lavished on the wedding. Then I

remembered I never wanted it in the first place. I guess I should have stood up for myself then and saved everyone all the bother. Hindsight. I left. I could have stayed. Maybe we would have worked it out? Highly doubtful. I'm pretty sure if that's the road I had pursued I'd be a bored housewife with little to look forward to. I already was restricted in what I was allowed to wear, how much make up I could apply, who I could have a telephone conversation with and where and when I must comply to sex. I honestly can't bear to think where that would have gone if I hadn't hijacked my passport, bank book and third priority on my list, my writing..... I didn't get many more of my possessions back, only the things that weren't worth anything. If I hadn't taken my writing, my first novel in fact, would I have carried on? Yes, I would, I'm sure of it.... But I'd hold one hell of a grudge.

I sat outside a bar in the Castleton area of Manchester one evening. It was a summer's eve and the weather was beautiful. I was working for a television company on work experience. I was twenty five. I thought this was my big opportunity. I had an idea that I would like to work behind the scenes in television. I had been pretty well received and had been working on a well respected television programme. I was offered cocaine by someone fairly important. I declined. I discovered in that one moment that I would never 'cut it' (nasty phrase but one they still use) in such an environment. It's cliché but true. Life in the entertainment industry is all about who you know and how much of yourself you will sacrifice. It has little to do with talent. That's where things need to change. It's a vicious circle, I know people who had the intention of initiating change. They got swallowed up and now they sit there in the bars talking shit with

everyone else. It makes me feel sad but at least I'm not there with them. I have at times an addictive streak. I'm also blessed with a little sense which happens to offset it.

Talking of addiction, I also had a phase of sitting in the pub every evening until I was completely pissed, smoking every cigarette offered to me as well as all my own. Sitting talking with other pissheads, all of whom, had big problems. I put on a lot of weight and bitched about anyone whose name I could still utter. Ashamed of myself? Absolutely. It was the same time as I was suffering gynecological problems. My hormones were all over the place, sending me mad. I don't think I'm using that as just a phrase either. I'm pretty sure I did change mentally for a time. I wouldn't call it a nervous breakdown, just a sense of utter confusion about who I was and what the point of my life was. At that time, I thought there was no point. I never contemplated suicide, I just turned on everyone close to me and tucked my perceived problems away inside my head until they slowly began to gnaw away at my very being. I'm glad to say I came out the other side, once I finally admitted I needed to rethink what the fuck I was playing at. I could have chosen to stay in my drunken and shallowly happy state. I had a lot more friends when I was a funny pissed person. I was great. A laugh. I wouldn't be such a good laugh ten years down the line, still sat there with a fag permanently wedged between my lips, wondering how I'd managed to piss my life up the wall. Yet it could have happened. Couldn't it? Or would I have brought it back round in a different way to wind up sat here now, writing the same thing but with a slightly different slant?

Hormone interruption.... I'm wondering what sticking pins in my eyes would actually feel like. I was happy ten minutes ago, what the fuck is this all about? Now I feel like I want to die. I hate the way my life is interrupted by this nonsense. I want to do one of two things, one is to stare out of the window and sob helplessly, the other is get in the car and drive, just keep going with no plan of where exactly. It's not me talking, it's something inside me steering my mind in an odd direction. Yet, it is me, it is part of me. I wish it would go away and leave me alone.

Where was I? How life could have been. Maybe you believe in parallel universes. Places where lots of different you's exist, all taking slightly different options along their life span. Anyway. I wonder, thinking about the above as examples, what decisions I may make along the line which will alter the way I live. What decisions I have already made.

That's what I'm thinking as we come in to land.

### **One hundred and seventy four**

Kids can be brilliant can't they.

They can also be little fuckers.

Imagine running an after school drama class and having four children shouting out the word 'prostitute' whilst their parents were waiting on the other side of the door to collect them. Sure, sweetness and light when they tell you how pretty you look or draw you a picture of trees but try smiling when they try and bite

you. I met a woman recently with nine children, all of whom were unruly and violent, desperately demanding attention. I also meet many people with one child who behaves in an equally appalling manner due to being ridiculously spoiled. Since when did we forget how to behave normally? It all comes back to extremes, of thinking we can do things better, of wanting to be recognized in our small social groups. It doesn't work, it never does, unless we do it for a mutual benefit. I don't believe in unselfish behaviour. You hear of people throwing themselves in front of cars to save the lives of others they have never even met. It's not conscious behaviour. I don't disagree that somewhere in our nature there exists altruism that defies evolution to some extent (I say to some extent as most cases we hear of are acts towards our fellow human beings which are part of the same species we want to preserve although I'm sure there are cases of putting your life at risk to save an animal) but I would question whether there are many conscious choices involved. We live in a selfish world where we revel in our own perceived importance. It strikes me as bizarre that those with the highest perception of importance are most often the complete twats that most of us can't stand. It's probably psychological. Still shouldn't excuse the twattish and egotistical bollocks so many people come out with.

You know what I find really amusing?

Guerning. You know, face pulling. It's a talent that can't be ignored.

...And people who use odd terms to refer to pooping. People who use phrases like 'number two' or 'business'. I'd like to put forward a poll. Questions like 'which phase would you prefer to hear'?

I'm just off for a shite.  
Off for a number two.  
Need to do my business.  
Business. Always reminds me of how old people describe their dogs having a good crap.  
Now that would be a poll worth reading although I'm sure like most other polls it won't make a blind bit of difference to the way people speak. It's a poo, it exists, we all do it, just cos you don't say words like poo, crap or shit doesn't deny the bodily function. It's not crude, nor are words like breast and testicle.  
Society is warped because of prudish behaviour like that. Get over it and worry about important issues.

### **One hundred and seventy five**

Before I continue, I'd like to tell you of some kind words which were recently offered me. They were these – 'I have not read an unsolicited piece of work for over eighteen months but this intrigued me. I read the work you sent and found it fascinating. Although I cannot place the work due to the contrast it has to other works I feature, I wish you every success in placing your book and I expect to see it on a best-seller list so I can say bugger, bugger, bugger'. So if you hate my work, that poor bastard's somewhat to blame. No, it wouldn't have made any difference what the publisher had said about my work, I would have carried on writing anyway but it did make my day so thank you. I like Eve. I wanted her to stick around a while.

## One hundred and seventy six

I've been sitting on the tarmac for two hundred years. The plane has become little more than a rusted shell. There are cracks in the wings and some of the rivets are missing. It's a little draughty but it doesn't really bother me. The view is stunning. From my seat I can see out from both sides of the craft. To the right, through a crack in the metal I can see a forest of green, magnificent to the eye. For as far as my vision will allow, I see nature at its best, there are trees and flowers, I can see people working with the land, a mutual acceptance. Children still play, adults still sing. To the left, through the cracked window, I see a traffic jam, frustrated drivers waving their fists at each other. There is no green. It has all gone. No animals. No laughter. I sit in the shell I have made my home. I know which side I want to get out but the only exit is to my right. Therefore I keep sitting. Maybe I will sit like this until the end of time. A man bangs on the window. I have seen him before. He wants to come in. He says he has a right. A woman approaches him through a haze of smoke and drags him backwards. I watch as they disappear amongst a crowd of faceless beings. 'Are you happy?' I shout at the top of my voice. The mass of people to my right shout back. 'Of course we fucking are, what more could we want?' The people on my right look confused and say 'We don't understand the question'.

### **One hundred and seventy seven**

Does a thing work if it is taken out of its environment and put immediately into another one?

I have left my life behind. It wasn't much to shout about. I decided to go on an adventure. I did get on that plane. It's not going to be a blockbuster ending. The plane didn't crash. Nor did I decide to turn around once I had disembarked and return home. You know that I am Eve. She and I exist somewhere in the same reality, pulling against each other. Well, I don't know if that's completely true. In some ways she is a very freeing influence. If by some chance you are wondering what happened to either of us when the flight landed, then I shall tell you, in my own, roundabout way.

### **One hundred and seventy eight**

This part is the best. I'm sitting leaning towards the window, desperately trying to see out but I need not have worried about missing anything as the aircraft banked so steeply it was nearly on its side. It's an awesome roller coaster ride. There are snow peaked mountain peaks on either side, it is beyond breathtaking. I can see forests below too. Imagine what dwells in there, things I'm sure never to have seen before. Yet all too soon the plane lurches down. I could linger in this place, up here, for an age.

## **One hundred and seventy nine**

A lot of my life so far has traumatized me. I can't quite put my finger on why. I've always been afraid of self-expression. I love my family but they've never understood me. They still don't. They would be, perhaps will be, horrified to read this book yet I chose to write it already knowing this so if you are reading, if you haven't yet disowned me but are perhaps still in the stages of contemplating how to do it with the best effect, likely you couldn't even bear to read the first page alone without wondering where you'd failed in my upbringing, I am sorry. Not for the book but for the misunderstanding you may take from it. I am not the person you long for me to be. The expectation is not too high, just too different. If we differ in views such as how the world was created, how man evolved and if we're really all living our lives on a planet turning on its axis hurtling through space, then we are bound to differ in our views on whether fear of exile should be enough to smother any thoughts you may wish to voice which differ from the expected way to be. I have traveled through many emotions whilst writing this book and I wouldn't have done it unless I thought there was a valid reason to.

Don't you get a great sense of achievement after putting together a self assembly item of furniture? You are so pleased with yourself even though all you've really done is follow a step by step guide complete with diagrams that Chomski's chimps could have followed reading them backwards. Brilliant. You sit back and admire your handiwork. It's bollocks isn't it. Even so, fills you with an inner pride.

### **One hundred and eighty**

I'm tired after flying. I have a bad case of plane hair where the style now mimics the back of the seat I was pinned into. I'm stood in a bathroom cubicle. It's a good airport. You know a good airport when each individual toilet cubicle has a sink and a mirror.

Granted there are only two of them and I had to queue until I nearly wet my pants but that's a minor detail.

Now I've made the mistake of ruffling. Never ruffle.

I've gone from seat head to that look when you've been rubbing balloons against your head. I hope everybody has done that at least once in their lives else I'll look like a giant tit. Mind you, it won't be the first or the last time. Crap. Imagine if something awful happened to me tomorrow and I died, then I'd have to take that last sentence back but I couldn't because I'd be dead, unless of course I left the world in a most comical way and then I'd have made a great tit of myself for the last time and then wouldn't have told a lie. Good, I'm glad I got that cleared up.

It's fair to say I look a bit peaky. I've woken up a little, well, enough to handle the baggage carousel anyway. Hang on, wasn't there something else?

### **One hundred and eighty one**

I recently met a man whose behaviour can only really be described as that of a naughty little boy. You're probably conjuring up an image of someone a touch backward but this wasn't the case at all. He was just like a naughty schoolboy. He must have been over fifty. Maybe he'd been serious all his life and decided

to try something else. I'd tell you the conversation we had but he was so busy laughing I couldn't make sense of a word of it. Correction, he did start talking about 'The Great Train Robbery' but where it went from there is anyone's guess. Well, the other people stood around who spoke the same language as him probably got the gist.

I'm not so fucking angry any more. I don't want to be you know. It's not pleasurable. I guess I should feel a little naughty myself. People will say I ran away. Yet how can you run away from somewhere you don't consider home? Running away sounds like giving something up. But I haven't given anything up. That's why I'm here now. If I'd given something up, the worst thing that could be would have been my desire to leave.

Have you ever fallen over on a bus? Don't. You look ridiculous. Especially when the whole falling event cannot be controlled in a sensible manner.

### **One hundred and eighty two**

It's incredible how quickly you can scrub someone from your memory. As if they never existed at all. Out of sight, out of mind. There's a lot in that. What is a friendship? A love affair? Doesn't it rely more on familiarity than anything else? Have you ever had a holiday romance for instance? They rarely last. Yes, it's intense when you see each other every day, each desperate night but change the scenery again and it can be like it never happened in the first place, entombed in your mind perhaps but usually only the

best bits, edited the way you'd like to remember, you more beautiful, him more romantic, the sex better, you know how it goes.

I don't mean erasing someone completely when I say scrubbing from memory. I mean just that. Like a really burnt pan or a dried smudge of paint on the skirting board. You can take a certain amount of it off easily, leaving a shadow of its former self. You notice it now and again for a while until it just becomes part of the landscape. You can't remember it having been any other way. One day you will buy a new pan or a tin of paint and the shadow will be forgotten, without even realizing there was something to remember.

Of course all these riddles relate to me, although the holiday romance happened when I was seventeen and I lied, we didn't even sleep together. I was still a virgin and hesitant of any boy that knew it. Don't underestimate the conquest involved here, I suppose I could compare it to an exposed inch of smooth hairless skin to a swarm of mosquitos. A virgin. Funny how much I valued that at the time, carried around with me like a badge from the girl guides. Later, when I married the first man who treated like a china doll on the outside yet a child that needed to be protected and disciplined by her dominant father on the inside, I felt cheated. This image of pureness I self-righteously prided myself with now makes me feel sick. It's no wonder no-one wanted me for my mind. It was full of toss.

I keep wandering off the point again. Let's get back to Eve. Eve was fairly popular once. Now and again she'd be the life and soul of the party. Eve learnt the hard way how to be comfortable with herself. It often meant some people felt uncomfortable around her but you can't have it all. What's the point of being if people around you are false, trying to portray an image of someone they're not. Someone they'd

perhaps like to be but actually aren't and never will be. It's ludicrous really. It's as if everyone is playing a game, no-one quite sure of the rules. Who makes the rules? Us? Society? Who knows. All I know is it's fucking stupid.

Eve likes to think she leaves a mark on people. Isn't that everyone's hope for themselves? To be memorable. It's an illusion. We aren't memorable. Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying you can't make an impression but things fade over time, like the holiday romance. You have no control of how you exist in another person's memory either. You could have morphed into a completely different entity. Where have I gone? In those people's minds I've left behind. Where do they picture me, if at all. What pictures will spring to mind when I come up in conversation. What will I look like or be saying. This lack of control unnerves me. I know I am being talked about. Discussed. Analyzed. Prayed for. Pitied. Laughed at. Dissected. All of these things by different people, or perhaps the same people at different times. People who never really knew me in the first place. Yet in amongst all the words, images, stories, I have, in essence, been forgotten. I exist for them now in the past. A relic. If I suddenly appeared in front of them, things would be as if I never left but to exist in another place is like never having existed at all. Eve, they will say, yes it rings a bell, I think maybe I once knew her.

Was I a fool to think anyone would miss me? There is a gulf between saying I miss you and actually doing so. What do we even mean by the word 'miss'? Is it not simply a break in the routine, 'I miss going out with you on a Thursday night', meaning little more than 'oh I'll have to find someone else to go to the pub with now' or 'I miss popping in for coffee' meaning 'now that was a convenient stop for a brew

and some gossip-mongering'. I miss you rarely means 'you've left an aching gap in my life' or even 'I miss talking with you' or 'you can't be replaced'. You can. Sorry to disappoint you but usually, you really can. I'm overly sentimental and if I thought anyone really felt like that, felt that I really was irreplaceable in their life, would I have left? Yes, you know the answer to that Eve. You did.

### **One hundred and eighty three**

Memoirs. Now they're an interesting discussion piece. When you look in a bookshop at the auto-biography section you can almost guarantee that the books will fall into certain categories. Those written by famous people, who have often done something incredible in their lifetimes, those written by celebrity's, who may or may not have done anything incredible in their lifetimes but who are aware their books will be bought by millions who want to be like them, those written by those who have endured hardships ranging from being held hostage to being raised in a poverty stricken environment, sportsmen who have broken physical records, politicians who feel they have made some impact on modern life and hangers-on i.e. those people whose memoirs sell because they know someone in one of the above categories.

I only mention memoirs because I wonder if this book is perhaps such a thing. However, I am not famous, a celebrity, have not endured any hardships most people would merit as being worthy of disclosing in a book, I am not a sportswoman, politician or have anyone to hang on to. I am what most would call ordinary.

So then, my question is, why are most memoirs only written by the rich or the poor, the famous or the hard done to, rarely, if ever, the ordinary.

People do not want to read about mundanity. Yet is what we refer to as 'ordinary' necessarily mundane? Or is ordinary life full of bizarre occurrences which we have simply become blind to, oblivious of. People want to be thrilled by sex, daring, excitement, money and the secrets of people in the public eye. Yet people's lives aren't that dissimilar. If two people eat in the same restaurant or indulge in a threesome, what makes one of the people doing it more interesting than the other? Because we claim to know them in some way because we've seen their picture in the paper or listened to their music. Don't you see how silly that sounds? Because believe me ordinary people get up to all sorts of things we'd be stunned by if we could be bothered to look. Why don't we want to read about how people we perceive as similar to ourselves have overcome their oppressors. Wouldn't this be a powerful read? Yes, maybe they are not a quiz show host or a singer by numbers of musical drivel but that might just make them all the more intriguing.

I'll tell you another reason why. Publishers don't want to know. The ordinary person isn't exciting, isn't profitable. Funny, we're coming back to choice again. Are we free to choose or only free to choose between the options provided for us?

Perceived freedom of choice is a magical thing. For those in control, governments, media, well, I'll let you carry on the list, it is vital to create an arena where you view yourself as having a world of choice, so many opportunities. Why then are most people fed up with their lives? If there is so much available to us, why do most of today's western adults sit in an office or shop for example, only to come home and watch

the tv for hours before going to bed? What happened to the opportunities, the freedom to live our lives however we choose? Is this what we choose for ourselves? Can it really be true? With the world and all the technology man has created, is this what the person with complete freedom of choice does? Human. The 'superior being' apparently. Capable of abstract thought. Is this really all we can manage or can we just not handle opening our eyes. Or do we live in an outdated model of the world, where society refuses to change, refuses to acknowledge that there is so much more that can be achieved, not necessarily on a global level but certainly on an individual level which in turn will affect the way the world evolves. I wish I had the answers. I don't. However, I do not feel that ignorance is bliss and I do feel that wasting talents and desires is wrong. Yes, I agree, some do not have the opportunities to discover their desired way of life but others simply mustn't be aware of it because you will never convince me that people in a shitty routine they call life are truly happy. People who say, this is my lot, it's not great but what more can I ask for? People whose misery is written across their face as they serve you a burger or rant because they've missed their favourite soap opera really can't be enjoying all life has to offer. These people aren't happy, they just see no other way available to them because they have been told by those in control that there is no other way but this information has been so well assimilated they believe their way of life is their own choice.

I want to talk about negativity too and it sort of has a link with the above. A rare thing so far in this book but as thought patterns often jump about like frogs in a jar sometimes too they follow a logical pattern. I have found that the people who are most negative in

life are those who are unhappy with themselves. The negativity I have encountered most can be summarized in the two following statements;

1. My life is ideal. I do not see any need for improvement. The fact that you behave differently or hold alternative views insults the way I choose to live.
2. My life is far from perfect. I do not change because I am afraid of the unknown and value the security I have now. You upset me by showing me there are other ways to look at things because I don't want to see.

Often the two statements are utilized together, the first being how people justify the negativity, the second rising from the depths of themselves (this second statement is soon pushed back down again).

Ok, so you're not too sure on this one. I'm not stating given truths here, just what I believe to be the case. I'll give you some examples.

A thirty three year old man I know has thrived to be an acknowledged artist for many years. He is a talented painter, photographer, musician and a genuinely astonishing man. He has had his fair share of shitty jobs trying to make ends meet. One day, an art gallery approaches him, tells him they have never seen work like his and that they must put it in an exhibition. By the way, could he write the music for it as well and does he have any work ready for exhibit that they can use in the main gallery window? Wow. Fucking incredible. Understandably excited he rings his mother. That's nice she says but listen to her news, she's just sold a coat she bought from Help the Aged for £5 for £7.50 on an internet auction site. The son listened whilst his mother enthused about herself with no further word about the exhibition, not one mention of it, until the call ended twenty minutes later.

I once told my father I didn't believe in god. He stopped speaking to me for a while because I had insulted him personally. I had, without knowing it, dismissed his life as pointless and couldn't have said anything worse. Was I supposed to lie and go to church? The sad answer is yes, that is exactly what was expected from me. Well actually, the renewed faith would have been the ideal but it would be a start. It didn't happen and as far as I am aware my father still carries this insult to his entire being with him. He doesn't show it as much now though.

I still hear the echoes of the voices I heard before I left. When a few select people got wind of the fact I was actually leaving. When they knew I really meant it. It wasn't just another of my daft, ill-considered, impulsive ideas of which they had grown so used to. I was going to go through with it. Why does the phrase 'just to spite them' come to mind because I didn't think it but I believe some of them did. How dare I leave? How could I be disillusioned with my way of life? Didn't they share that way of life. Was I criticizing them? Was I?

### **One hundred and eighty four**

I didn't want to deny my past. I couldn't if I wanted to. Eve and I are content with the changes we have made. We have succeeded in carving out a new way to spend our lives. Yet there are always reminders. Even if you disappear from the world you once knew, not telling a soul, you still have your memories, when you are alone in the dark.

So who is me?

My name is irrelevant. I could be a number of people writing the same story with slightly different words.

