

Concerning That Girl

P. R .

DOES IT MAKE her cry at the number on the scales, again? Has It given her a never-ending list of unrealistic goals? Did she have another tough week? Were the days long and the nights longer? Does she believe It when It tells her she is a big fat disappointment? Has she ever tried to ignore It? What is the tone? Is the relentless commentary always so cruel? Is the girl glad to have It looking out for her?

Will the girl faint, again? It makes her pulse tired. Is the beat fading away? Does this frighten her? Will there be an audience this time? Will anyone help her? At which point will the soft-faced school nurse intervene? Has she seen It too many times? Will her forever-smile melt and give birth to a frown? Will her good heart sink? Does the girl see all this?

Is the girl incoherent, again? Does It make her mind cloudy? How long did It take to annihilate her old thoughts, the rational ones and nostalgic dreamtime? Have her A*s turned to downward Ds? Do her teachers worry? Is there a newish teacher who has seen a similar thing with his daughter? Did he cry and regret at the funeral? Could he have done more? Do they discuss It in the staffroom? Has anyone remembered to order the NHS info leaflets? Would the girl notice anyway?

Will the girl lie, again? Has It made her paranoid? Does she refuse to eat her mother's groceries? Does she worry that she is being tricked? Has she noticed her mother weep as she refuses to eat breakfast, lunch and tea? Did she see her throw a glass hard at the wall? Has It turned her compassion to fog? Has her

conscience gone on standby, like most of her body? Does the girl care?

Does the girl admire her ailing body, again? Does she celebrate when another clump of hair glides from her balding head to the floor? Has she got enough sores and half-baked scars to parade? Is her immune system too floppy to fix them? Does she feel victorious to see her naked body and all Its hard work, all but jutting bones and a fine powdery down? Did this sprout in attempt to stop her constant shivering? Symptoms or medals? Is this indoctrination irreversible? Does the girl remember life before It?

Will the girl ignore her body screaming out for help, again? Will she ever realise she is poorly? Has she started to hear the whispers in the corridor? The muffled conversations at home, behind closed doors? The lingering stares from strangers on the street? Will the heart attack she is about to have be the end? Will It stop tormenting her before It slowly kills her? Or will she drag her weariness out of bed and cry at the number on the scales like always? Does the girl have the strength to fight Its pull?

Will the girl continue to deny Its existence, again? Does It have a name? Does she secretly call It Ana? Does she think if she calls It Ana It will be her friend? Has It made her forget what real friendship is? Does the girl call It Ana because deep down inside she knows Its real name?