

Schoolbags by Carole Lydon

Eloise looked down at her hands. As the optic haze lifted she saw them clearly. She'd almost worn a hole in her school jumper. Like a pre-programmed instinct to destroy, she worked the threads loose. Slowly unravelling her school promise to conform. It reminded her of a Clive Barker horror story, where some guys hand decides to leave him. The right hand chopped the left hand off and the left obligingly repaid the favour. Two hands then embarked on their mission to free follow hands all over town.



Fidget fingers, by Lisa Conolly

What a strange thing to remember. Jamie gave her that book. Jamie's dead. He's fucking dead. Now Eloise is going back to school this year like nothing ever happened. So that her parents can pretend that nothing ever happened. So the entire adult world can press on with important daily tasks in an effort to wipe away their pain. Eloise wondered why things were so clear to her and so completely fucked up with her parents.

The police said it was an unfortunate accident. A bad batch. They were tracking the guys who sold it to him and they would deal with it. Mum and Dad blame the drug dealers. It must be their fault for selling it to him. If they don't blame someone, they'll have to blame themselves.

Eloise knew better. Eloise knew Jamie killed himself. Eloise knew her brother. She knew the secrets behind every crease in his brow. She knew what every laugh betrayed. Jamie wasn't the confident, successful teenager they saw. The fourteen months between them strung a line of understanding. She had spent her whole life breathing in Jamie's last breath out.

