

# Alone

by Bradley Hook

I wake up in the back of my car, sleeping amongst the junk and a steel trolley I had used to help someone move house. I feel for the door handle to let some of the cold, grey morning air in. I gingerly step out onto the pavement and my leg gives way as a cocktail of numbness floods my fragile limbs. I stumble onto the grass and see a child staring at me.

As I climb back inside the car I feel for my phone under the chairs, on the floor.

I am still drunk. I am blind.

My phone is gone but I notice that I am covered in sand. It's everywhere, in my hair, on my face, throughout my car. I must've slept on the beach for some of the night at least. Perhaps my phone is down there. I clamber down the cold stone stairs towards the golden beach which is bleak and grey. A tactile couple arc round to avoid getting close. I stop, recognising something. It is one of my shoes tumbling in the playful shore break. A small wave lifts it up and slams it to the cold sand below. I walk down and reach for it, feeling the icy water lick my ankles. My lone shoe in the shore break is the saddest thing I have ever seen.

As I walk back to my car I start to think about *her*. She will be in her bed now, warm and comfortable, dreaming. I long to love her and she longs to be loved. I dream of carrying her and she dreams of being carried. I look down as a girl jogs past me, her feet compacting the sand. Trickle of water fill the footprints and soon will wash them away.

I knock on *her* window hoping she will be kind to me, for kindness is all I need right now. The blinds move then crumple and she slides her window open, squinting into the light. I breathe in her familiar smell and tell her I am devastated, I have lost my phone, I am freezing. She tells me to wipe my face, marginally disguising her anger and distaste as I turn around, leaving her words to linger like ghosts in the morning breeze.

