
POETRY | FALL 2013

The Ghost of You

By: Rosie Garland

We were sisters in sickness, two chemo chicks.
Made jokes no-one else could understand;
like *do you know who I am?*
because it was easy to lose sight of things
as small as names through the fog of narcotics.
We cheerleadered each other through the sweats,
the sickness, the boredom, the thankless task
of grinding through those long weeks on the ward.
We held quiet tickertape parades to celebrate
the tiniest gains in weight, or getting out of bed,
showered and dressed before midday.
We traded recipes for gentle custards, soups; rejoiced
when we discovered how to make tofu taste of something.
We teetered down our private catwalk
comparing scarves, hats, long-sleeved shirts
that could cover up tracklines left by the canula.
We giggled at the ugly prescription wigs.
We went bald together, braving out the stares.
We invented new sports: One Hundred Metre Barfing
and Speed Waddling with Zimmer Frame.
We panted out our marathon, but when I breasted
the yellow tape I turned to find you gone;
fallen behind somewhere I could not return,
your fire stamped out. The path ahead is lonely.
Your memory sparkles. Your photographs still shine.

Rosie Garland, who was born in London, England to a runaway teenager, has always been a cuckoo in the nest. She has five solo collections of poetry, and sings in cult gothic band, The March Violets. Her first novel, The Palace of Curiosities, was published in 2013 by HarperCollins.

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