

■  
**BROKEN  
LITTLE  
THINGS**


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■



COUNTING  
ALL THE  
GOOD THINGS  
ON ONE  
FINGER AND  
ACCEPTING  
THAT IT WILL  
HAVE TO BE  
ENOUGH




There's graffiti on the back of the toilet door. It says Yer Ma's only hobby is watching rollercoaster crashes on YouTube and when I read it, I think of my own mam, who's on level 4069 of candy crush. She told me she doesn't know what she'll do when she reaches the end. She asked Google how many levels there are, then she asked herself if it was enough. When I stop thinking about that, I start thinking about how much I love the graffiti in pub toilets. There's a desperation to it, but it's not the sad kind of desperation you see on the streets, it's just people desperate to say: I was here, with my friends, who I love.



A MOMENT  
SO EMPTY  
YOU CAN  
HEAR YOUR  
MIND  
FALLING TO  
PIECES


One day I came home, and she was stood in the kitchen with a glass bottle in her hand. The tomato passata that used to be in it was now dripping down from the top of her head, covering her face and every cloud printed onto her pyjamas. I asked her what the fuck she was doing. I needed that for the chilli, she knew I was making chilli. She said she didn't know. She'd had a moment of frenzy and she just did it. Haven't you ever lost your mind for a minute; she asks. Well yeah, of course I have, most fucking days, but you don't see me getting home and pouring tikka sauce over myself, do you? She started to cry. Asking me to hug her. Great, I thought. Fucking fantastic. So, I rubbed myself against the tomato that was now her skin and told her everything would be alright. I'd run her a bath. Did she want to talk about what had happened? Had something happened? Nothing happened, she said. Nothing ever fucking happens. I spent all day looking at my phone and I felt like absolute shit about it, but I couldn't stop it and besides I don't want fucking chilli for tea. I don't want kidney beans and I don't want sweet potato. I want something good. I want noodles. The only thing in the world right now that would make me feel any kind of good is noodles. Please.






# SCREAM YES A LITTLE LOUDER NEXT TIME


A depressed person writes SCREAM YES A LITTLE LOUDER NEXT TIME on a piece of paper and decides to do it. To scream YES! at every opportunity for an entire day, no exceptions. She hopes it'll be exciting and lead to life changing action, like in the Jim Carrey movie. But it doesn't. Because every chance she gets to scream YES! it's either really, really shit or just plain expensive. She accepts a coffee and every website cookie and every offer of a receipt. She buys a banana for 20p and takes it away in a £2 hessian bag for life because there are no normal bags and she's already said yes when asked if she needs one. By the time she's walked to town and back she's withdrawn £30 to give to homeless people, stopped for 20 minutes to listen to a fundraiser talk about dying children. Signed up to give a monthly donation to the dying children. Upgraded some fries to a meal deal with a burger she can't eat. Rounded up a 99p purchase to £5 for charity. It's too expensive to be outside so she goes back to hide, waiting for a friend to message asking whether she'd like to do something exciting. That message doesn't come. The only text she gets is from work, asking if she can work a ten hour shift the next day.





A BODY  
STARING AT A  
TV WITH THE  
FACE OF SOME-  
ONE WHO'S  
GOING TO  
WISH THEY'D  
DANCED  
MORE

As a kid she knocked on her friends' doors and asked if they were coming out to play. They invented games and played them until their parents shouted them back in. Running a twig along the length of a wall and then checking to see how hot it had got. Building child-sized nests out of freshly cut grass and sitting in them. Simple things. Making daisy chains and running home to check if they'd broken a world record. Making perfume out of the weeds they could find on the estate. Now she invents reasons why she can't see her friends without having a drink before. She needs courage. She needs to not feel the crushing weight of her own dullness, the heaviness of which seems so much greater in the company of others. When she speaks, the words don't die; they live in her mind on a loop and she blanks out when someone else is speaking because she's too busy asking herself *what the fuck was that?* Something she said three weeks ago is still playing on her mind now: there was a silence so she filled with the only story from her day that she could think of. She'd been to the shop for some fairy liquid to wash the dishes but had managed to come back without it. So, she'd added water to the tiny bit that was left to make it stretch further.





It was probably the shittiest non-story in the world and it went on longer than it ever should have because she kept trying to wind up at some sort of climactic ending. That wasn't going to happen. So eventually she apologised, *sorry this is the worst*, and took herself to the toilet. She wants to be fun. If she can release even a tenth of her inhibitions, she'll be so much fun. She'll dance. She'll say whatever comes to mind and it will be interesting, and she'll say it all without a feeling of tension spreading painfully through every part of her body. Fun. Fun used to feel different. It wasn't something she needed to prepare herself for, the way she does now, lubing up her mind for a ride that doesn't come naturally to it.

