# Fear of falling

An anthology of poems relating to fear:

# Index

Page 1: Foreward

Page 2: Epigram

Page 3: Reflection Statement

Page 9: Fear

Page 11: Melting Away

Page 12: Anna doll

Page 15: The Petals drift

Page 16: The Helper

Page 18: A memory carefully framed

Page 20: Help!

Page 22: Reflections

Page 24: Let forgiveness in

Page 27: As do I . . .

Page 28: Fallen . . .

Page 30: Carpe diem

Page 31: A Melancholy Melody

Page 33: Olivia

Page 35: A leap in the dark

Page 37: 'Mein Kampf'

Page 39: Forget me not . . .

Fear of the responder:

The main aim of this anthology 'fear of falling' is primarily to enlighten the reader through the medium of print; this has been achieved by employing the use of poetry and thus poetic techniques to explore and assess the concept of fear. The intention is not to be overly philosophical, but to address a very real issue in an extremely sincere fashion. Many people are restrained and held back by their fears. I hope that by reading this edifying work those bound, will be able to overcome their fears and break free by confronting them; whether it be a psychological, physical or mental process.

I hope that through reading this work readers will be able to better understand the nature of fear and grasp the umbrella concept of this issue, thus be able to face their own individual stumbling block know as fear.

Fear is a human condition, this anthology is dedicated to all who are bound by fear.

"Fear: the best way out is through."

Helen Keller

"A man who fears nothing, loves nothing."

Unknown.

"....I lived in fear of dying. The strange paradox is that by confronting my own fear of death, I found myself and created a new life."

Lucia Capacchione.

## Reflection statement

Fear – to feel fear, to be afraid. To feel terror, to be terrified. An unpleasant emotion caused by the proximity of danger or the expectation of pain. The notion of fear is so diverse, that difficulties lie in the very nature of simply defining the term. In this anthology 'Fear of falling' I have viewed fear as an umbrella concept thus allowing an examination of this very real issue in its entirety. In doing this it allowed me to integrate many aspects of fear such as the feelings associated with fear, reactions to fear and finally the innumerable types of fear that people experience, into my work.

Not only did I desire to integrate various aspects and perspectives on the reactions to and feelings of fear in humans but also to address the issue of breaking free and overcoming fears, edification is a key concept here.

I chose to portray this concept of fears using the medium of print and presenting in the form of poetry. I believe that in using this form it allowed me to approach the topic in the most imaginative and powerful way. My paramount goal in undertaking this project was to examine and address issues through verse that are generally not confronted or openly discussed.

"A good poem is a contribution to reality ...... A good poem helps to change the shape and significance of the universe, helps to extend everyone's knowledge of himself and the world around him."

Dylan Thomas (1913-1953)

I have always had an interest in poetry and throughout my junior years of schooling this interest expanded and a deeper understanding of poetry, the techniques used and the various ways in which poetry can be represented, were developed.

In undertaking this challenge, a great deal of research was needed to further my understanding on both the topic of fear and the form in which I aimed to present this concept. Throughout the year my research consisted of substantial wider reading, I also interviewed or discussed the nature and concept of fear with many people.

Firstly through hosting discussions with others I was able to fully grasp the reality of fear, it also enabled me to better understand what people truly fear, what creates this fear and the physical and emotional effects, which accompany this sensation.

Continually these discussions eventuated to the theme of fearing death, regardless of the age of the person I was conversing with. In effect this led to some rather depressing poetry, it appears that the inevitability of death is extremely daunting to most people.

To follow up this idea I read extracts from Elizabeth Kubler Ross' book On Death and Dying. Poems such as 'A Melancholy Melody,' 'Fallen' and 'Let forgiveness in,' indirectly address the issue of death.

In regards to fearing death other issues subsequently arose such as fear of dying alone or dying young, the fear of aging, the fear of loneliness, fear of being forgotten, fear of God and fears originating from childhood. This diverse topic was described earlier as being an 'umbrella concept' this is evident in retrospect as fear reaches as far as the psychological realm, creating a fear of heights or even drowning.

My further reading consisted of books ranging from 'Exploring Poetry,' to reading, analyzing and deconstructing various works of other poets including Judith Wright, John Donne, Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath, W.H Auden, William Wordsworth,

<sup>1</sup> Exploring Poetry. PEEK, James; 1983s

Jewel Kilcher, William Shakespeare and Bruce Dawe whom I found to have an extremely experimental style.

Although I was able to research and investigate the various forms of poetry, and the concept of fear in a very real sense, it was quite difficult to employ this knowledge in the construction of poems, as I found the construction process to be largely an imaginative one rather than an investigative. A lot of material or ideas used, stemmed from my discussions with others, the poem 'Olivia' directly addresses the tragedy of a close friends suicide attempt.

Admittedly not all of the poems in my anthology have a set structure or form, many take the form of free verse, and some use enjambment to increase pace. A lot of the poems in this anthology 'Fear of falling' have personal overtones, however I would not say that my style is strictly confessional, as rarely have I directly addressed my own personal experiences. It was suggested that many of my poems could be classified as being written in a romantic style. This anthology could also be described as being vaguely metaphysical, as metaphysical poetry deals with the nature of existence, truth and knowledge. I would suggest that the emotion or feeling of fear is indirectly associated with truth, existence and knowledge, especially in the sense of overcoming fear.

Throughout the year I undertook to experiment with various forms and structures of poetry. 'A Leap in the Dark' began as a sonnet using the traditional form of an octave to establish the issue, followed by the sestet of six lines, which aims at finding a solution.

However, due to the brevity of the sonnet and the set patterns of rhyme required, I found it difficult to create an effective poem therefore I edited and rearranged the poem into a number of shorter stanzas. I have also experimented with poetry in the form of stream of consciousness which can be described as the free flow of thought and of associations which give rise to others and they, themselves in turn to other thoughts. Whilst poems such as 'Fear' and 'Mein Kampf' reflect this experimentation, it remains hard to correct and make drastic alterations to poems written in this form due to the very nature of the style in which they are written. Therefore they do not reflect a perfectly rounded or polished finished product but rather an elevated train of thought. It is more so through this style of stream of consciousness, especially 'Fear' that I have endeavored to address the overall theme of fear, describing emotions felt and physical reactions to fear.

As discussed earlier some fears such as a fear of heights are psychological, the poem 'The Helper' aims at raising this issue and explains that the only way to overcome fear is to face it. I found this poem extremely difficult to compose and to portray meaning effectively, however I felt it was an important sub-topic or fear that needed to be addressed.

I employed the use of language techniques or poetic devices throughout 'Fear of falling' to convey meaning; the majority of the poems are written in first person and make use of persuasive or emotive language. This was done to create a deeper level of involvement and enjoyment for the responder, as emotions can be more powerfully presented if the reader can easily identify with the protagonist. The extensive research and investigation undertaken became useful, when attempting to use various poetic devices to provide the

poems with depth and substance. This use of first person allowed for the use of hypothesis as well as allowing me to pose questions, thus increasing the responder's involvement, also a technique to evoke emphatic feeling.

To encapsulate the concept of fear in it's entirety poetic devices such as repetition, onomatopoeia, assonance and alliteration were used to reinforce the feeling of a fear. For example the poem 'reflections' deals with the issue of ageing through the use of the word fading being repetitively used, this enforces the idea that the ageing process is inevitable and is constantly occurring.

Two of the poems make use of religious connotations, 'Anna doll' and 'Help.' The use of visual aids for a number of the poems helps to capture the ideas being expressed through verse. For some of the poems the title suggests the overall theme, for example

Carpe diem . . . which translates from Latin, meaning to 'seize the day.'

This anthology 'Fear of falling' is aimed at a general audience, but more specifically an audience with a passion for honest, real and moderately confronting poetry. Due to the topic focused upon and the straightforward way in which the poems have been written and presented, this anthology would appeal to an extremely broad audience.

The main purpose of this major work is to enlighten and have an edifying effect on the responder by helping them gain personal fulfillment, through overcoming and gaining a greater understanding of fear. By focusing on the topic of fear and using poetry as my medium, I was ultimately able to address a taboo subject, which is rarely discussed

openly. Fear is one of the most powerful forces in today's modern society, fear is able to bind a person preventing them from achieving their goals and ultimately preventing them from reaching their full potential.

If nothing else eventuates from this anthology, then I would like to at least believe that I have helped somebody gain the understanding and knowledge needed to accept their fears and the courage enough to conquer them; if this is achieved then I will be satisfied.

#### Fear-

Fear- yes you know what I'm talking about. The feeling of nausea and uneasiness, that washes over you. The abrupt moment of breathlessness then the churning in the pit of your stomach like the fluttering of bats in hell, while your heart pounds wildly inside its ribbed cage.

This overwhelming feeling occurs when your boundaries are crossed; your borders are rudely extended, there is an intrusion ... The sudden compulsion to scream is held back only by the lump in your throat, heavy and restrictive. You clench your sweaty fists, your nails digging relentlessly into your clammy palms.

Your knees start to shake, quake and tremble then simply give way. You can now hear the giants footsteps in your head . . . louder and louder . . . like the pounding of a child's toy hammer against a tiled floor.

Each pupil expands beyond belief, larger than an orb.

The muscles held in by your pale skin stiffen, tighten, the unyielding compression of the bones freezes you; you are unable to move . . . trapped!

Your breathing ceases, you're really struggling now, fighting against this strong force until you discover that you're in control, and this remarkable experience is drawing to an end.

Yes! Your heart begins to slow, returning to a melodic beat like that of a dripping kitchen tap. The butterflies in your stomach vanish, you gulp and swallow the lump lodged in your throat as slowly you begin to unfold your fists to reveal palms specked with red ...

Your knees strengthen and your muscles begin to relax; the back systematically

reassembles itself and your pupils gradually dilate:

There you have it: fear has been conquered. It's time to move on. Don't miss a single beat; you must prepare for the next feat.

#### **Melting Away**

You are like a candle burning brightly in my life.

You are so deep within me like the sharp blade of a knife.

I am the jagged lock and you the uneven key.

You are the ever-changing tide, always crashing through me.

You instill a fear within me that will surely never fade,

like the darkness of a memory held from yesterday.

You are the piercing arrow shot from cupids' bow.

It rips throughout my heart and soul, but you don't even know.

You are like the rainbow that slowly disappears;

like the painful ripping of my heart that no-one ever hears.

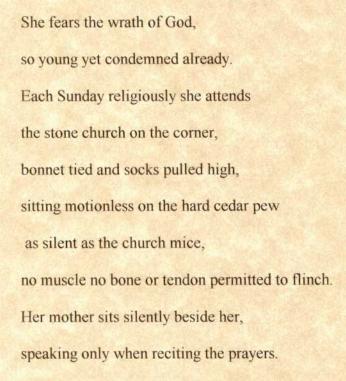
Our love is like the weather, changing every day,

just like a child's ice-cream that slowly melts away.

#### Anna doll

This young child
agile and innocent.

A reflection of all that is holy and pure,
yet even she, so young is held back
and bound by fear.



At home her life represents chaos, violence . . . scared of her father whom is seldom there.

Outside she plays alone, neglected, but content.

The autumn breeze cleanses her mind, gently caresses her cheeks.



Her thoughts are of a far off place,

her only companion, her Anna doll.

Her obsession with hopscotch unexplained;

an attempt perhaps to disappear,

her only real escape from here.

At night she lies alone in bed, holding tightly to her Anna doll.

She's kept awake by the whistling wind through the trees outside.

A twig scratches the window pane.

On nights like this she is terrified of the dark,

the noises scare her.

She shivers, imagining the hairy monster tapping on the glass,

tapping on her window!

She hides under the covers, shielded from the dark,

and the monster at her window.

She lies motionless, frozen by her fear.

Too afraid to emerge, she can feel him, the monster now by her bed.

He stands at her bedside, staring down at her,

his fiery breath can be felt through the covers.

She closes her eyes, tighter, much tighter,

her hands clasped firmly together.

She prays, and cries out for protection.

She's drifting now, off to sleep.

The eyes remain closed, but the muscles around them loosen.

In her sleep, she takes herself and Anna doll,

to another place far away,

a safer place . . .

No dark, no screaming, no preaching,

just her, the hopscotch square and . . .

her Anna doll.

# The petals drift

My life is like a rose, so delicate if touched.

One by one
the petals fall.
My heart is breaking once more.

I'm trying to hold on the connection is fading.

I fall away from the stem,
the petals drift toward the soil,
floating, but for a moment.

The dew on this velvet surface is no guard from the bitter wind, which pierces through my veins.

Don't break my heart.

Don't make me cry.

Don't leave me again,

my rose will die.

#### The Helper.

In unison you walk together one foot in front of the other.

A single goal to reach,

your determination admirable.

Higher and higher you climb together along the precipice, balancing - don't falter.

Yet when you reach the top,
you can't look down,
this fear of falling down, down, down.

The eyes incapable of peering over the edge.

The head fills with ringing,

the heart beats faster.

Dizzy, dizzy from the height reached, you creep to the edge, creeping closer, closer.

Still overwhelmed you can't make it -

You can't peep over.

Like a child in a cot you can't get over.

Your legs would take you -

but the mind won't allow it!

Something so long ago has caused you to balk,
the memory so deep you're surprised you can walk.

To get over my fear I'll just have to face it.

You pushed me over the edge, pulled the parachute string.

The deafening scream, ground rush,

I floated down, down,

gently, ever so gently through the blue sky,

floating with the clouds, twirling in weightlessness

exhilarating.

The air cool and crisp, gushing against your face.

Falling, free falling,

rushing now to the ground.

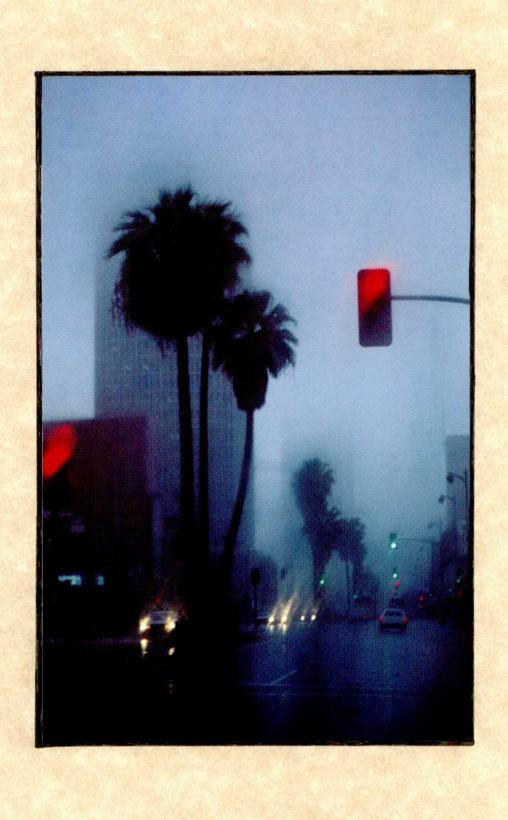
Hope I make it -

safely there.

The fear of these heights now overcome, confidence regained.

Sitting on the highest cliff face around - dangling just dangling,

my feet toward the ground.



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# A memory carefully framed ...

Blurring, a blur:
your life flashes before your eyes,
like slides on a reel,
every memory carefully framed,
instilled and imprinted in your mind.

You get over this ordeal,
freed from the scraps of metal, the cars' skeletal shell,
maybe you've learnt a lesson or two!

Your bruises, scratches, broken bones,
your friendly reminder.

The memories however were blurry, blurred.

They rushed forth at a speed like the traffic in the city.

You felt as though you were being left behind,

unable to keep up with the masses.

Faster and faster the hands on the clock went flying, faster,
out of your control!

The lesson is time doesn't stand still,
it keeps ticking and turning.
The traffic keeps flowing, the fire still burning.

Your life may have ended, abruptly, prematurely that night . . .

Suddenly
you wake from this nightmare,
breathless and sweaty.

Time to get up,
yet you begin to change, doing things differently.
Imagine the terror if you were trapped in that car,
numb from the waist.

It can be prevented if you act,
with less haste.

# Help!

Speak to my fear;

Please make it subside,

it's eating at me 
mostly on the inside.

It's burning and churning

making me gurgle and choke,

holding me back,

It's such a big hurdle.

Please hold me and tell me
these feelings will pass;
that the rocks will soon smooth
into a yellow brick path.
I'll walk on this path, maybe I'll skip!
If only . . .
If only, Lord, I knew what to do.

Please pull me to the surface,
I'm gasping for air,
like a young child drowning in a backyard pool.

Please look at me and tell me exactly what do you see?

Is it bruises that go deep into the soul?

Or scratches like a cracked windscreen?

Are my eyes sunken back with terror?

Or lips - too afraid to even tremor?

I beg you dear Lord, to rise up and say -

not to my child, no longer,

can you hold her in chains.

Not for another day!

Perhaps now I'm transforming into something new?

A clear blue sky, clean crisp breeze,

perfect; new beginnings.

Or a fresh token of unscathed beauty?

Please pray with me that I'll find the strength

to do what I must-

to free myself from here,

and move forward.

For now I'm breaking free,

I'll fly away from here like the birds of the air.

See them?

That's now me!

### Reflections

She stands before her mirror and sees what is there - instead of flawless beauty an aged woman – not fair!

Her beauty is so faded . . . fading . . . fading.

Through wrinkled eyes she sees this reflection, as hands revealing the signs of work reach up to touch her wrinkled face, worried, so worried by what she sees.

The thing she has feared is now upon her.

Age, old age replaces the youth echoing to her through the faded photographs on the dresser.

Fading, fading, vanishing, dissolving.

Her hair now thins and her bones ache, ache, the beauty fading, dissolving 
It has dissolved.

The radiance gathered from better years, now fading, fading . . .

Years gone by, which tell the tale of where beauty often leads in youth Naivety shines through.

But it is the outer shell that fades, is fading; the inner soul never shall.

Though the wrinkled hands may hold this head, the heart is not disturbed.

Still the knowledge of this is overwhelming.

# Let forgiveness in

Alone, all alone,
sitting in the silence, your silence.
No-one around, no single sound;
just you and your hermit surrounds.

It was never meant to be like this.

Did you intend it to be different?

Did you ever dream it'd be like this?

Your life, such a lonesome existence.

For hours on end you hide away,
sheltered by the silence,
never to reveal the way you truly feel lonely . . .

The waves crash around you,
smashing against the rocks,
cleansing them as the emerald green water rolls back into the ocean.

You sit all alone, reading your books, the knowledge wasted.

Your wisdom cannot be shared.

By daylight you write and by night,
by the flickering candle-light you conjure and dream,
and imagine what it would be like
if you weren't so hurt and rejected, wounded or bitterly scarred.

'Sticks and stones' - you hear them chant, but words you know cut deeply, to your soul, and slice the heart like a loaf.

Alone, all alone you dwell on these hurts,

ponder them more as you grow older.

Bitterness grows like the root of a tree,
spreading like cancer through the body.

Unopened letters scattered on the desk,

While the empty envelopes for planned responses sit in a pile.

It's eating at you now from deep within,

like the worm that begins in the apples' core,
working on the inside . . .

Not scared of being a walking corpse, but afraid of knocking on deaths' door alone. Who will notice when you're gone?

The birds you spread seed for will notice.

The books lying unopened will notice.

The plants you nurture and water will wilt.

If only you'd have sorted things out;

Put differences aside, swallowed your pride, and let forgiveness in.

Let forgiveness in.

#### As do I ...

She towers over

and flings herself upon me.

Her claws are out -

eyes full of fury.

When will the attack cease?

I crouch and cower.

The walls forming this corner

hug me, surround and protect me.

There is no peace,

no sign of still waters.

Words inflicted violently,

in anger.

Scars only time will heal.

Emotions pour forth

like waters from a severed pipe.

So dense

as is the atmosphere -

The most delicate flower would wilt,

As do I...

#### Fallen ...

Fear of shattered dreams, dashed hopes,
make this girl fall,
as if down life's spiral staircase,
twisting, bending, contorting,
thumping, bumping, smashing and swerving.
She refuses to step forward.
Why always backward?

The reality of her circumstances are blocked
by the melding obstacle of hurt and confusion,
but frustration surpasses them all.
Once already has she aimed for the stars above,
she's been tripped,
now she refuses to stand.
As if incapable of stepping into the whirlpool of life,
unable to decide which direction to take,
unable to begin again.

The sign was turned, pointing her in the wrong direction.

It reared its head to trick and tease, to mock and jeer,
as if those around her knew the way,
had the right instructions,
yet failed to show her, to aid and correct her.

As if purposely leading her astray,
down the wrong path further and further,
until it seemed to close in behind her.
It had enclosed her.

How could she know the path she was treading was not the right one!

Had the sign not told her this way?

Wrong – now she's trapped.

This time she doesn't make it to the end . . .

Instead, she stumbles and trips, crashing to the cold hard earth beneath her, never to rise again.

## Carpe diem

A tick tock o' time goes by

to fear it is a waste.

Take hold with open arms -

and run . . .

for your time is nearly up.

You compare life to an hourglass

that only turns once.

But you know more than others

the pleasures that it gathers,

the value life bestows.

So the meaning of all this is clear:

don't let them hold you back!

Potential is what life's full of -

to ignore this is not bliss.

To achieve is to succeed and to attempt

is to surely master,

but to squander is to fail.

How can this bring satisfaction?

He who dies without overcoming disappears.

But he who overcomes then dies -

just fades.



## A Melancholy Melody

Blending into the scenery

your smoky surrounds.

Somewhere off in the distance

they can hear your melancholy melody,

At least it can be heard!

Oblivious to your loneliness

their banter continues,

Laughing, drinking, dancing.

You blow into your instrument,

it's your new voice,

your comfort and safety,

your only companion and friend.

As you play soulfully sad hours grow longer, longer,

the pain in your heart pounding deeper, deeper.

Feeling more alone than ever before,

the night closes in around you.

The back streets let in no people,

the main road surges, pumping with life.

Your hat pulled casually over your eyes,

shades them from the light that beams from the street lamp,

across from you.

Your fingers gently stroke the keys, the warmth gathered from movement.

A sadness overwhelms you
as you remember better days.
There in the shadows is the fear
of playing alone,
living alone and dying alone.

#### Olivia

Your life in your faltering hands, your actions, emotions out of line, out of control.

You fear for your future,
or is it your past?
The creator of your circumstances,
without your knowledge others too.

A failure you haven't been,
but this time you were!
The knife not sharp enoughThe noose not tight enoughThe pills not strong enoughThe pull not forceful enoughOr was the night not long enough?

Judgment and self condemnation are why it occurs,
and why you still may continue
ruthless, unthinking.

Acts of submersion in the pool of self-pity deeper and deeper you continue to dive, but you can't help but gasp for air.

From day one He had a plan for you,

your future so carefully mapped out

no intricate detail excluded.

Was this one of the ingredients left out of that recipe?

I think not!

Excluded for a reason?

Is it boredom or fear, attention or grief,

loneliness or confusion

despair or addiction?

Is it not knowing?

Perhaps the knowledge of too much?

The inevitable accelerated . . .

Your plan this time failed!

You feel helpless,

but continually fail to help yourself.

A world robbed but preserved,

This priceless gift of life is yours,

But not to take...

## A leap in the dark

Time forces humans into transition;
moving from day to night, black to white,
from scorched earth to flood,
bread to blood.

To stand crowded yet alone.

To possess flesh, then decay only to bone.

To have a dream,
now only memories.

To be loved as remembered
then gone as forgotten.

Fear lurks in the center of transition,
a place of contemplation and admission.
Each stage is unique,
no one has a clone,
while this fear rattles my bones,
remember, that each has its own.

Where failure is the hunter
there is no time for regrets,
doubts or stand still,
time only for decisions.
Shed the old skin to grow another,

leaping into the dark chrysalis to emerge anew,

breaking into the light.

Nothing can restrain

a determined soul.

Have faith in your wings,

the ability to fly comes from within.

Although the door creaks

step through;

the draught is sweet

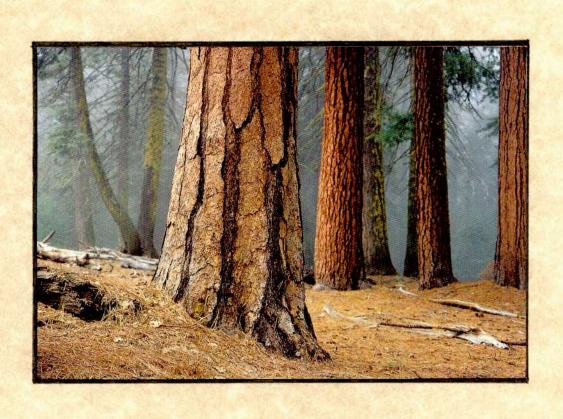
and it beckons you.

Change is the catalyst,

the resurrection.

Do it fearlessly.

Leap!



# 'Mein Kampf'

Great care was taken with your outfit that night . . .

I remember standing behind you watching you twist your hair.

I remember the way I painted your face, the pale blue eyeshadow glitzing in the light, crimson lipstick which later bled into the creases in your lips.

Your nails were perfectly rounded and coated in crimson colour too. Soft blush highlighted your delicate cheeks, lightened them, lifted them; Higher.

The black skirt you wore was simple yet elegant, detracting not- from the shiny crimson shirt which sat pertly over one shoulder, the other purely bare.

Your shoulder bone protruding gently under your golden skin.

The legs shaved not long before stood tall and smooth. Your ankles framed delicately by the thin black straps worn across your feet, sitting atop the piercing heel of your stilettos. For those who took notice your toenails, also crimson in colour.

The bag you carried of little significance held in its seams, only tissues, lipstick and keys. Your wallet remained at home. A blue ten-dollar note was all the cash you carried and it sat smoothly, hidden in your bags' secret pocket, there to buy a drink or two.

You stood so proudly, head held high. You walked with grace, holding yourself like a colourful flamingo.

The outing drew to a close. Time to retire you made your way home. The others had left earlier but you were having such fun...

As you strolled home through 'See Park' you reflected on the night just passed. Through the darkness you walked, the fresh wind on your face the trees swaying your ears still ringing.

Suddenly behind you a crunch on the gravel, snapping twigs. You spin on your heel.

You hurry on just two blocks from home. Before you could gather the thoughts in your head a hand large and strong tightened on your bare shoulder. The breath darting down your back was steamy and unpleasant, the putrid smell of stale smoke.

In two short seconds you're thrown to the ground: cold, hard, scratchy. Your hair now not as perfectly worn like before, the shirt not so shiny when viewed in this light, the skirt not so elegant when forced to wear it this way.

Helpless you struggle with all of your might, struggling, still struggling deep into the night.

Your piercing scream muffled like fire with a blanket.

Your strength waning, you break free.

This terrifying ordeal over, yet will never be. Your attacker still roams.

That night will be one that will in no way conclude, for the memory remains; in the minds' book of horrors.

## Forget me not ...

Gone is forgotten,

wiped from memories.

Fear of not being remembered.

Walking into the crowded room, rubbing shoulders

yet appearing unnoticed.

I scream. Face burning, throat dry,

screaming to the masses:

I'm here remember me?

Not a single head turns.

Have I been gone that long?

Have I changed that much?

Now seemingly unimportant.

No one remembers,

no one cares!

In the darkness I cry out.

I'm gone,

forgotten.