

There was a summer before it all began- a summer of unrealistic beauty- a gathering May, a sudden June, a dense July and an August of ripened russet pears. That summer, wildflowers grew with abandon, as though there was no tomorrow. And how were they to know there wouldn't be?

There was a pool in the woods, where we swam, free and myriad in our own loveliness, the water mellifluous about our supple limbs. We used to pile our clothes, neatly on the root of an ash tree, and the golden green dyed our shirts to richness while we bathed.

Beyond the woods, we walked the chalk track home, past the church on a Friday night. There we talked and gave laughter to our small philosophies of insignificance. We had no need for future, when our summer was eternal.

When we reached the house, our feet dusty from the long walk home, we'd sit between the apple trees, or precariously on the swing. We'd cast our eyes to the heaven we didn't need yet, and sigh at our immortality.

After summer storms, the sky used to break. Each day was crowned by a spreading lark who pieced it back together at dawn. Each day we thought we could stay like that, for morning's assured renew, when all the world would be well again. A true dawn mends the pieces of yesterday's broken sky, and covers over the joins with clouds, (for the glue we used in our model boats was unromantic).

The world came down to us in September, when the branches burdened with burgeoning fruits dropped them, and sinking low into the grass, they were washed away by the cooler rain. At the fall of our Eden, we wept for ourselves.

Ourselves and the glorious sight that we'd lost.

There seemed little left to imagine, little left to believe. Still less that we could understand now, without the sweet armour of innocence. We turned our faces to a dark that gathered the fabric of our world together in wide, sweeping stitches. And our sacred fairyland, water lapping at banks of sugared earth, and paths of chalk and wayside blooms, gentle on skin painted with hues of delight, was dried up, and gone. So we lay there on the grass, and the dew wet our clothes, and we were cold.

And suddenly, it is June again, and we have fallen into the open lap of summer. Again, the larks have an overture to dawn, but they have not the power to steady our sky. Again, the lanes are lined with wonder, but they are not devoid of obstacle. Again, we crown ourselves in tows in the orchard, but we have to go in at dusk, and face the lives that are upon us.

And we say to ourselves, as we tread the weary stairs to bed each night: "Think of all the beauty still left around you, and be happy," for the world has not changed, only we.