

The Years Shall Run like Rabbits

Words by Jessica Furseth. Illustration by Holly Exley



'Time flies' – it's an old person's saying and I keep saying it.

But instead of getting used to it, this racing of time, it just seems to scurry on more intensely. Time rushes along at an increasing pace, which doesn't make any sense because there is more, not less, to do. Week-ends come along thick and fast and all of a sudden it's summer again when I could have sworn it was mid-winter only yesterday. When I was a kid, an hour was an age and winter seemed to never end. I walked home from school, one little foot in front of the other in seemingly infinite repetition, but I know now it was no more than 15 minutes. I think time is supposed to be a constant element, but I'm really not all that convinced.

I keep getting distracted. I pick at the seam of my shirt, turning the hem upward to examine how the hastily assembled item is unravelling as I wear it. I feel my skin tingle and how my cardigan rests on my collarbone, my fingers wander up and slide into my hair. There they have work to keep busy for ages, twirling around the short, soft whisks underneath my ponytail, digging for rough strands near the crown and greedily feeling their coarseness when one is found. I look up and the sun has moved across the sky.

The dizziness of this new freedom is subsiding and I have more good days than bad days now; when it's one of the latter the thoughts no longer feel like my own but as if there's an intruder. Pragmatic as I am, I evoke my mother for the task at hand: 'Don't be so helpless,' I hear her say inside my head, not unkindly. I get a broom and sweep the intruder away. I read back those last few sentences and realise how precious and melodramatic it sounds, to say things like that, but it's the truth and don't you think I wish it wasn't. As I figure out what I want I can feel the world opening up but at the same time it's getting narrower. I haven't really changed anything but I am becoming determined and with it, ruthless; just a pinch.

And all of a sudden it's the weekend again and we're waiting for the green man so we can shuffle on in flimsy sandals, soles tapping against paving stones and there's that feeling again: I want to be working. I've had the moment where I've realised that work is no longer something I'm trying to dodge - no more clock-watching for Jessie. There's just me here, and all the things I've always wanted. And I've wanted them for a bloody long time too - so long that I was starting to wonder if waiting was all I could do.

Now that my time is my own I feel like it should be slowing down again, back to its leisurely, trusty ticking of the days before double-digit birthdays. 'The day is long,' my grandma used to say, as I stood in front of her wall-clock which counted the seconds so loudly they rattled through the whole house. Outside that living room, time runs like rabbits and I know it. So why isn't all that dead-end inspiration of office afternoons here for me now, waiting like water in the tap? I spent so much time wanting to be 'big', for my time to be my own. Now both those wishes have come true, but there are other forces at play.

Again I catch myself staring into the middle distance.