



Louisa Adjoa-Parker

Kindness

Instead of you dying, why don't we go
for that walk, in the woods I couldn't find
in spite of your neat, hand-written
directions. You'll pick me up, I'll climb

into your car, you'll say Sorry it's a mess,
although it will be clean. When we arrive,
I'll say It's so pretty here, and we'll laugh
at how many months ago we planned this.

Instead of spending Sundays at the shop
where we'd talk in the back room, littered
with clothes, and you'd patiently steam
dresses, while eighties songs played on the
radio,

we'll walk and talk amongst the trees,
breathe in cool, clean air. You'll get
to see the leaves fall, the days grow
short and cold. Perhaps you'll pause,

take off your hat, and your hair
longer now – won't spring up
like your curls did when it grew back
after chemo, but will fall into place.

We'll sit by the lake, watch shoals of fish
move through a patch of sunlit water,
stare at water lilies, orange leaves
twisting in the air, and we'll talk

about our children like we always did,
and we won't have slipped out of touch,
and the cancer won't have crept back
and caught you by surprise,

and I won't keep remembering
how kindness spilled from you like oil,
because you'll still be here,
and on the way home we'll wander

into an ancient, honey-coloured church,
and later, when I look for you in town,
I'll see you, sitting outside Costa
sipping tea, with the sister

who looks so much like you
and the son who's always needed you,
whippet sleeping at your feet,
and you'll lift your hand and smile.

'Kindness' was commended in the 2019

National Poetry Competition.

<https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/kindness/>



www.louisaadjoaparker.com

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