

## Wings

I am a bird with clipped wings, a newspaper blowing down a busy city street, a tree cut down to make way for a skyscraper.  
I am lost, I am broken, I am alone.  
I am trapped.

I clutch the handle of my suitcase and push my hair behind my ear. Silence surrounds me. I'm standing at a train station in the middle of nowhere and there isn't another living being in sight, only stretches of dust and an empty road. I needed to get away, and here I am.

I take my first step onto the road, and begin to step onwards. I walk the painted white line like a tightrope, and I feel the sun beat down upon my neck as the heat creates a low hum in the back of my mind. My now-ridiculous blue polka dot dress sticks to my skin as the humming in my head increases to a scream.

The music of the desert is all around. The scuff of my flat shoes on the dirt, the pushing of gentle winds, birds flying overhead in the shape of a V, following each other to an unknown destination. I swap my suitcase from hand to hand, blisters forming where the handle of the heavy object once was. I begin to tire, but I can't stop, not now, I have to keep going.

In the distance, a small cluster of buildings begins to loom upon me. I continue to force my feet ahead, one in front of the other. Walking along a highway, in the middle of nowhere, dressed for a sunny day at the park and nothing but a small, plain brown leather suitcase in hand.

I have reached the town now. There is not another human in sight, but the short and harsh brick buildings standing side by side seem to say enough, *you don't belong here, what are you doing, stay away from this place*. I keep my eyes on the road ahead and don't stop. Breathing steadily, I resolve to continue in my journey.

It is sunset now. The sky is vibrant and alive with red, pink, blazing orange. Birds fly above, and I wish to be like them. Soaring above the troubles of the world, wind rushing in my ears. For the first time in many months, I feel life creeping back into me. I sit down beside the road, fumbling with my case.

A hand mirror. An assortment of mismatched dresses. An old book. A photograph of a happy family, showing a girl who vaguely resembles me, but happier, more carefree, careless. All of these things, my things, but I can't seem to put them together in my head. Darkness falls upon the land like a blanket, muffling any sound.

The stars light the desert around where I lay. I can see for miles, but I still feel just as trapped. And I still feel broken. After hours upon hours of trying to sleep on the hard ground, nothing but an old jumper as a pillow, I give up and try to count the shining dots that cover the black of night.

Many sleepless moments later, daylight finally breaks the sky and I begin my journey once again. I don't know where I am, where I'm going, but it feels like the right thing to do, the right place for me to be. I notice the scenery begin to change, with more trees lining the sides of my path. I reach a fork in the road, one way leading off onto a dirt track. It feels right, like this is the way I need to go, and so I do.

I haven't seen another human being in days. Not a single car has passed me on my travels. This would seem strange, but many things about my life are turned upside down now.

Many miles later, the dirt road stays the same, but several other things have changed. The trees are thickening, shadows falling across my path and I struggle to push the branches away from me. A sound is growing in the distance, past the rustling trees and calling birds. The sound of rushing water. I hurry my pace, needing to see what is ahead I turn a corner, and suddenly I see.

A magnificent waterfall is before me, and I'm standing at the edge of a crystal pool. It is breathtaking, fast and terrifying, all at once. Placing my suitcase down gently, I take out the creased family photo and hold it tightly in my palm. I struggle to clamber up the rock face, but soon I am looking down into the rushing falls. This is what I have been looking for. This is where I need to be.

I plunge into the water.

I am no longer lost.

At last,  
I am free.