

The Inkspots' Warning

I come back from five months locked down in Kent and right across the road there are rustling grasses under the ash and willow trees. I stand close by and listen to them whispering. Later, it's as if I hear small girls giggling at a sleepover. A part of me wants to shush those grasses because it has happened before. I want to say, 'The trees might blabber, and then what?'

In the morning light they're still waving at me. They have never got to be so tall before, so tall that when I go to visit in my lunch break, I see they have heads of soft froth and slate-grey seed bouquets. If I look through them at the view, there seems to be a fog over the Forth. Their elegant stems grow close so when the breeze comes, they all jive together. Butterflies rise momentarily. When they land, they bat their wings like sleepy-baby eyelids.

Perhaps those green grasses did tell the trees and then they told the birds and bees, because soon everyone knows. Nature lovers flock. They take photos and put them up on Instagram - #grassesgrowtaller #grassesofgranton.

And so, one day it happens. I am writing in my bedroom, the velux open, when there's a terrible noise. Wobbling on one foot on the edge of the bed, I lean out and see three men with trimmers. I know it's already too late, though I rush outside to remonstrate. All they can say is, 'We have our orders'.