

Last Tree Standing

Nan had put up a picture of a tree on Facebook, underneath she'd written, "Marked with the red cross of Death – I'll be there tomorrow!" Not wanting her to be alone, I sat beside her in the shade of the large tree - marked with an X – like treasure was hidden.

Nan was talking...

"When we were children, there was no tarmac, just grassy verges, sprung with an avenue of horse-chestnut trees. Huge and old, they gave us fresh clean air to breathe. Come autumn, they gave us conkers for our games. "

Nan sighed...she continued. "Without warning - Tree Doctors - came! We watched from windows as they severed branches from trunks. So called, 'Doctors,' blind to the rings of life showing age and story, sliced the trunks, to fall and die as stool like stumps. At school we whispered - they're slaughtering our friends!

Nan closed her eyes to go on. "Next, they dug up the grass verges and lay black blistering tar where our sweet-smelling piece of nature had been. Just one leafy angel stood sacred and alone on the corner. We named him- Last Tree Standing – and to stop him feeling lonely, we would clasp our hands around him in a hug."

Nan was smiling, I saw why. Carrying picnic bags and picnic chairs, came her friends. No-one spoke but placed their chairs around the tree and sat and joined hands. Nan whispered; her face close to the trunk... "Old friend, as long as it takes!"