

until He gets home so that they can be shared. Feeling itchy and energetic for once she'll start up His console and play video games for a while. It'll turn out to be more complex than it looks. She'll wonder idly why every good computer game involves killing strangers, and why the strangers you kill never seem to get the message and just back off. Then she'll give up and fall asleep with the controller still in her hands, cradled, lodged against her chin.

The doorbell will ring. She'll get up to answer it, and her joints will still be sleepy-stiff and harsh, and her head will be unclear. The room will move, spin, snap back into place.

The doorbell will ring.

And it'll be way too early for Him to be home.

She will open the door. A woman will stand on the porch step. She will not know

"The doorbell will ring. She'll get up to answer it, and her joints will still be sleepy-stiff and harsh, and her head will be unclear."

what to say to this woman, and so will stand there, holding the edge of the door, and she will think hard about what this might mean.

The woman will be crying. The woman will say, "I'm so sorry. Just outside, he . . . I went over it and I think its dying."

She will say "I don't understand." And then she will see on the road outside, a big heap of yellow fur. And it won't look like a dog at all—just a lump, a hairy pile, a mess.

The woman will say, "I didn't know what to do. I have to go, but I can't just leave it. I can't just leave it. I'm so sorry. I'll come back, but I have to go. I couldn't just leave it."

She will step outside, past the woman, barefoot. It will hurt, walking on the crack-surfaced road. It won't matter. She will walk into the middle of the road. The woman will say, "I couldn't just leave it." Then the woman will get in her car and drive away.

She will kneel down next to it. It will be whistling softly every time it breathes. It will not be breathing very much. Its eyes will be blue and not moving, and there will be no blood at all. She will touch dog fur for the first time in her life — the wiry tangle of it, bruise yellow and so important, now, because it's a part of a thing. She will look around for a while and bite her lip. There will be nobody else. There will be poplar trees and grass verges and saltbox houses, but no people. She will stroke it and say encouraging things. Once or twice she will bark, softly, to make it remember what it is. She'll touch its snout and her hand will come away wet. She'll put her fingers near its mouth, hope that it will lick them so that

she could know its tongue. It will not.

When it is dead it will look like a specimen, stretched out there. Clean and close-eyed and ready for labels. She'll get a bin liner from the house and drag it on top by its paws — which will be rough and hard but with some give to them, and still warm. She'll drag the bin liner to the end of the road and get a pen and paper from the house. She will write, "This dog was hit by a car. I stroked its back and stayed with it until it died. I am sorry," and set the note underneath the dog, where it will be visible but will not blow away in the wind.

And even as she has that thought the wind will slam shut the door of her house. She'll sit out on the wall, until he comes home. Her feet will be cold, and when she checks them there will be small pieces of gravel and dirt embedded, worn in between the toes.

He'll come home and unfold from the car with briefcase and concerned frown. Say, "Why are you . . ."

"I locked myself out." She'll smile and shrug.

He will laugh and say, "Silly." They will smile. He'll let her in and say, "Were you out there long?"

Her: "About an hour."

Him: "I'm sorry."

And they'll eat Chinese food and also brownies which don't taste of anything. Nothing at all. She will realise that she forgot to put in any sugar. He will say he likes them anyway.

She'll fall asleep on him on the sofa and when she wakes up the TV will be the only light in the room. She'll go up to bed and they'll both be tired and they'll kiss but nothing else. She'll fall asleep, dream of things so far away you can't even tell what they're supposed to be. In the middle of the night she'll wake, sit up, kick off covers, stumble towards the bathroom all heat and dark and dizziness. Throw up, heavily, into the sink. Sweat. Feel terrified of something she cannot see.

She'll go back to the bedroom. Put her face up close to the window. Look out and down and across the street. Where she left the dog, anymore, there will be nothing.

New Art Book Releases

London Street Art 2

Alex MacNaughton

Prestel



One of the most innovative things about this little book is that it gives you a tour around the al fresco galleries of north London. Following on from the success of *London Street Art*, photographer, Alex MacNaughton continues to cross London and snap some of the most striking artworks on display.

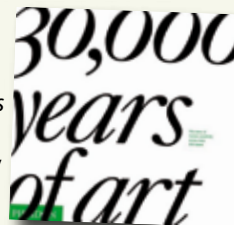
The book includes a map, which takes the reader on a tour around London to visit an exciting array of urban art. With the rise of Banksy, Space Invader and Shepherd Fairy, street art is more and more in the public realm, which questions the difference between graffiti and street art. Are they the same thing? The opening photograph is of a text-based piece that says, "Art is Dead. Long Live Graffiti."

London Street Art 2 features 150 images all taken in 2007, which encapsulate the funny, political, angry and downright bizarre. This book highlights the here and the now, as well as being interactive; the works showcased reflect some of the major issues of today.

Cherie Federico

30,000 Years of Art

Phaidon



30,000 Years of Art is an incomparably fertile text, which deftly addresses the span of human history through the growth of various artistic mediums. Edited with the consultation of some of the world's most pre-eminent art history scholars, this book examines 1000 masterpieces spanning from 28,000 BC up until the present day.

Also included is a useful glossary detailing key artistic techniques and materials, strategic art movements and information about little known ancient cultures who developed some unique forms of creative expression. Accompanying each work of art are explanatory notes, which successfully compliment the works and set the pieces within their appropriate cultural and artistic contexts.

Every imaginable art form is represented from early engravings, textile and sculpture, to installation, photography and performance. No other text explores the history of art with attention to such a vast collection of cultures and mediums, which makes this book as enjoyable as it is informative.

Alice Roberts