

## Wilderness House Literary Review 21/1

*Niamh Lafferty*  
**Two Weeks.**

**2** WEEKS AGO, MY HUSBAND LEFT HOME to drop my kids to a party and do an Aldi shop. He told the kids "I love you, have fun and I'll see you later." He called his mum and told her his plans for the day: to do the shop, pick up the kids, cook me my favourite meal and watch the rugby. Then he called me on the way to the shop and his last words to me were "I love you baby, you don't need to worry about me, I'm fine."

Paul did the grocery shop, but never collected the kids and never came home. I never spoke to him again. The next day, following a community search, I had a call from my dad telling me he had been found. At first I was elated, relieved, ecstatic, until my father said "they've been working on him for 20 minutes." I knew at that moment my better half was gone.

I remember screaming. I remember collapsing. I remember hearing my sister say "he's gone."

The next thing I remember is being in the back seat of a car, driving ten minutes from home, with sunshine breaking through the trees, on a crisp sunny day. We drove through a dirt road and came to a stop. Getting out of the car and through a clearing I saw our car parked, and something laid out beside, which I first thought was a long bundle of plastic - until it hit me that it my husband with a cover over him.

My father walked me down the rocky aisle to my husband. Someone lifted back the plastic to unveil his lifeless face. I screamed, I cried, I collapsed again.

I was led away then and driven back home.

Someone held me. Someone called a doctor. Someone brought me water. Someone wrapped me in a blanket. Many arms embraced me. None were the arms I wanted.

Later that evening, I calmed myself enough, to sit my 8 and 5 Yr olds either side of me, and explain what had happened in age appropriate terms - age appropriate terms for a situation I could never imagine. My 8yr old cried and asked to be alone. My 5yr old said "it's OK, he's just visiting kevin (which he calls heaven), and he'll be home as a ghost."

In the following week, I picked a burial suit for my husband and funeral clothes for my children. I was asked to think about his ashes. I howled through his wake on Thursday and his funeral and at the crematorium on Friday.

The week since then, has been a blur of exhaustion as I try to provide some sense of normality to my two babies. Answering questions I was never prepared for.

I don't know how today will go and can't predict tomorrow. I don't want to think about my daughters birthday on Tuesday or mine on the 17th. I don't want to think about Christmas or his 40th bday celebrations next year. I don't want to remember our plans to renew our vows.

I don't want this new "normal" and would never have chosen this.

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When people say I'm strong, I think, "what choice do I have?" Talking and writing helps, but my heart aches and my brain is foggy.

This is two weeks.