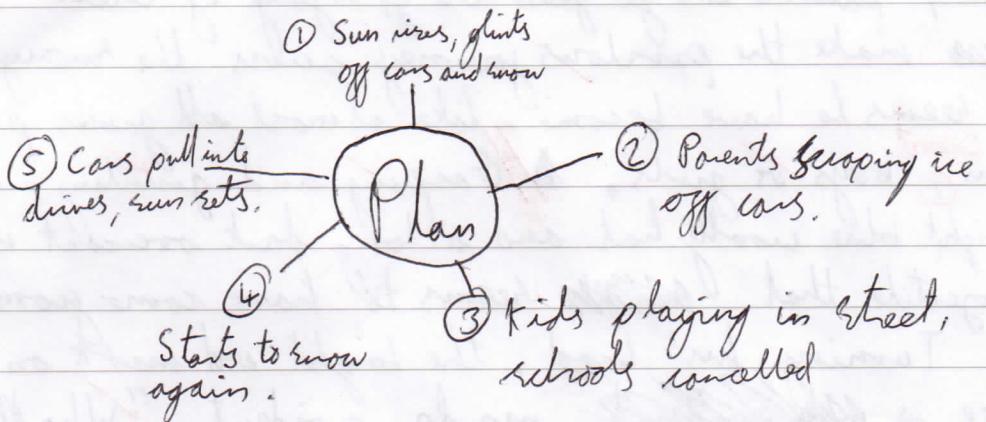


Red Photo



A stoney silence ^{is} echoes around the estate, no birds chirping, no music playing, no cars rumbling: ~~an~~ utter silence. Slowly, at a snail's pace, the sun lights the sky, revealing more of itself with every passing second. The first alarm rings, the first realization that know has fallen, the first cries of joy from the children who dream of what ^magificent structures they will erect, the first sigh from parents who know that arriving at work on time will be a miraculous feat, almost impossible to achieve. Then others follow suit. Curtains are opened. Children are up. Doors are opened.

Craunch.

semi-colons
needed
here

The foot of a child, no older than five or six, who is still wrapped in his Batman pyjamas with Guyana slippers to complete the look, breaks the snow's surface and then slices through the fresh powder like a sharp knife through a Christmas pudding. He is the first, but will certainly not be the last. ~~First~~ Other children run out into the white ~~land~~, gleaming wonderland and prepare snowballs for the forthcoming battle; it isn't really the best kind of snowball snow, too fine and powdery, but that doesn't stop them. ~~After~~ ~~minutes later,~~ ~~the~~ ~~parents~~

A few minutes later, parents emerge from the safety of their homes in order to make the perilous journey across the snowy warzone, which seems to have become, like almost all games played by young children^{Color?} boys vs girls. // Gaping and grunting, a man with a bright blue woolly hat and a long dark overcoat recoils from a stray projectile that ~~explosions~~ seems to have come from the girls' trench. Turning his head, the bright red mark on the side of his face is ~~now~~ ~~soaked~~ made evident. "Who ~~thought~~ threw that?" he exclaims. // A pause, no response. // He gives up waiting for an admission of guilt (although he did wait a good length of time but like all children, the guilty littleascal didn't own up to it) and opens his car. There he must sit, waiting for his minders to thaw. //, thanks to the heating whilst he and every other person driving to work in the snow, ~~is~~ ~~not~~ thankful for.

As the ice thaws, the children can be seen through the glass. They are still ~~playing~~ fighting their war, the cause ~~long~~ forgotten long ago. Some have donned hats and gloves to protect their heads and fingers from the piercing winds, that cut through the best of soldiers, and the icy fire that accompanies a snowball ~~the~~ ~~children~~ that finds bare skin. // One boy is not so lucky. His comrades surround him, but nothing more can be done. // ~~mother~~ like a fearless beretted warrior from a history program, she braves the desolate wasteland that separates the two entrenched forces and tends to the wounded. He was dragged into the fight by his friend - Timothy - but never really understood why they ^{were} fighting. He screams in pain; his mother cradles him inside. // Cows beep. Children shout. Birds chirp. A ~~sense~~ ~~as~~ ~~a long lost memory~~ sort of silence is a long lost memory.