

CONFESSIONS OF AN INCOMPETENT PRACTITIONER OF MINDFULNESS

You sit. You wait.

You bravely set aside the noisemakers,
the barricades that have defended you from this moment, this silence.

You breathe. You look. You listen.

For a moment there is peace.

Then come the lists:

a flurry of 'shoulds' tapping at your temples like flies,
buzzing through your calm.

You want paper, pen, phone,
something to help you remember it all,
so that the world doesn't see how inadequate you are.

The sort of person who fails to put their wheelie bin out on the right day,
and has to chase the bin lorry wearing pyjamas and only one slipper.

Then come the memories:

the what ifs, the why nows,
the roads not taken,
the choices you never made,
the job you never finished, all the jobs you never finished,
the time you let them down, all the times you let them down.

That time you gave a presentation at work with your jumper on backwards.

It was a V-neck.

Then come the people:

the ones you're angry at, the ones who are angry at you,
the ones you've hurt, the ones who've hurt you,
the ones you miss because they're gone,
the ones you miss because they're still here, but changed.

The ones you secretly fancy, but shouldn't,
the ones whose houses are so much tidier than yours.

The ones with perfect hair.

You look at your watch.

Seven minutes.

You wish you'd brought a book.

You wish you'd brought a flask.

You wish you'd brought a cushion.

You are not mindful.

You are not at peace.

You are not good at this.

Bollocks to it!

Tis an ancient benediction, uttered by generations of your forebears,
and it does its work.

You laugh a little.

You decide to be kind to yourself, to be a friend.

The ghosts of your failures still stand around you,
but they're silent,
for a time.

You stop trying to catch them.

You let them be, and they let you be,
for a time.

The sun shines through the beech leaves.

You notice the beauty of moss.

A bird sings, and it makes you smile.

You head for home.

Tomorrow you will try again.

And you will bring a cushion.