

CATERPILLAR by Alison Carr

Act One, Scene 1: IN THE SKY

CLAIRE: I launch myself off the pier. The wind fills my ears and my fingertips brush a cloud as I soar past. It's soft, as fluffy as the ones your Dad painted on your bedroom wall for when we brought you home and are still there.

I'm propelling forward, still forward, have I made the jackpot distance? I'm probably not even close, but then –

A gust whips your birthday balloons out of my hand. I watch them skitter away, brightly coloured dots in the blue.

I expect the plummet, I brace, but no. The wind is now a breeze is now a whisper and I've stopped; suspended in the sky. The light glistening off the water is blinding.

I slowly stretch myself out as long as I can go. I feel my spine crick and uncurl, my shoulders loosen. I hold my head up high for the first time in ...

I point my toes. I hold my fingers like a dancer. Like I think a dancer might. I'm not really sure.

My body hangs here. My mind is quiet. I breathe the clean crisp air, in and out, deep and long. I picture my lungs filling to bursting. I picture you.

I don't know how long this will last. It's already gone on longer than I dreamed. The drop is coming.

But I've done it.

It's done.

I jumped.