

Lying there in the peat, Kitty heard a skylark sing. It was so beautiful. She closed her eyes as a wave of pain hit just under her ribs. Breathe slow, she told herself. It won't hurt so much then. Her right leg was pinned under her body. She was sure it was broken. No one could hear her out here, the wind took any sound away and replaced it with its own bluster. Should she try to cry out? Kitty opened her mouth as a shadow fell over her.

At first, she thought it was a cloud. Then she realised the sky was grey and the wind blowing. There would be no shadowing in this light. Kitty squeezed her eyes to narrow slits all the better to see who it was who stood over her. She knew this was no helper. A silver object was forced into her mouth. Kitty didn't want it and locked her teeth. A gloved hand pressed the sides of her cheeks towards her nose, she had to open her lips. The round metal object slid in and down her throat.

Kitty gulped and swallowed, again and again. It slid down into her stomach. She closed her eyes as another round metal object was pushed against her lips. She struggled to shake her head. This too was forced into her throat and she gagged and retched until it went down. As a third was offered up tears ran unchecked down her wrinkled cheeks. She couldn't say the words she wanted to, why? Why me? What have I done to you?

It was as if she had spoken aloud. Her tormentor leaned forward and whispered, "For Annaliese."

Kitty jerked under the restraining hands. Annaliese. After all these years. Annaliese.

She shuddered and relaxed. She deserved this. There was no resistance to the next metal object. She swallowed as if she were taking her medicine. And for her it was. Nasty but necessary. She swallowed until she could no more. All the while her sorrow ran down her cheeks. The pain in her heart was too great to bear. She had forced it into the shadows of her mind for far too long. They would all know soon enough. All of them. Her terrible, terrible secret.