

JAMES FRIEL

Blur

To be published in *An Anatomy of Chester*, 2008

George is taking a photograph of us, but it's her he's aiming at. I just stand by the cooker, a human plinth with a baby on top, for show.

Click. Snap. A bit of a whirr. That's it. Not even 'Cheese.'

I raise my eyebrows, exhale, try not to speak, just indicate my mood. I have become my mother.

At school I was It, skirt to my bum, these bosoms, milky skin and hands I'd tend like topiary.

The condom split. An accident, but, God knows, it was predictable enough.

There was Frank McGinley, the fairlights glittering in his gelled hair, his neck smelling of CK1 and Malboro Lites while Avril Lavigne sang *Complicated* and the orange sky threw away its stars. The waltzers blurred the world into streaks of neon and night flashes, as if the soul of the world was showing through.

He's married now, Frank McGinley. I never think of him at all.

In a minute it'll stop raining and me and George and the little one will go outside. Grosvenor Park maybe. George will take more pictures. He never understands why I am always out of focus.

'It's as if you're not quite there,' he says to me, but looking at the baby.