



Handover

by Jiayi

Sundays I learn the car park off the A9,
the one with the Greggs, because it's halfway,
because halfway is the arrangement now —

the thing we agreed so we'd never again
have to stand in each other's hall.
I get there early. I always get there early.

I watch for her car the way you watch sports.
She's on time. She's always on time.
That's one of the things I used to love

The boy climbs out
with the same bag, the wheel gone on one side
so it drags, and I don't say anything

about the bag, because we don't do that.
He's got a new coat. I don't ask
who bought the coat. In the car

he tells me school, a fortnight of it
in forty minutes, because he saves it up,
and I say no way, and I mean it,

and I watch the road so he can't see
my face doing the thing it does.
Two days. Then the same car park, the other way.

He hugs me at the boot. He's getting big —
the hug lands higher up me every month.
Then he walks to her car without looking back,

which is right, which is what you want.
You want them safe enough not to look.
I drive the halfway home the long way round.

His hoodie's in the footwell. The school one.
He's always leaving it. I don't ring ahead
to say I've got it. I put it on the seat beside me.

It smells of him. I get about three days of that
before it goes, before it's just a hoodie
and then I wash it, and then I take it back.