

# Halloween's crumble

*Poem from Werewolf Club Rules by Joseph Coelho*

The biggest berries are in the centre  
of a tunnel of thorny bushes.

A shark gaping wide,  
promising not to nip.

The juiciest berries dangle  
from the barbed canes.

Savage whips,  
swearing they won't mark.

The plumpest berries are out of reach,  
boxed within sharp leaves.

A chest of swords,  
vowing never to cut.

The best berries are in my tub.  
Frogspawn, black beads, spider eyes,  
wet and bleeding,  
giving their word to please.

The sweetest berries  
are in the crumble.

A rocky sandscape over a gory lake,  
guaranteeing to be delicious.

# Eastbourne (2017)

Joseph Coelho

Kicking the pebbles along Eastbourne beach  
as the orange-pink of sunset  
plays with the ebbing tide,  
my mother asks...

*"What do you want to do when you're older?"*

There is every colour of pebble beneath my feet,  
grey lumps of flint winking their sharp, shining  
cores  
gritty ovals of sandstone pregnant with fossils,  
worn amulets of glass of every sparkle.

They crunch and shift under synced steps  
as we stroll, towels wrapped around sand-dusted  
bodies.

The sea sings with the pebbles,  
knocking a tone from each,  
forming a hushing melody.

Sunbursts dip into the wispy clouds,  
bounce from the greens, blacks and purples of the  
rock pools,  
shine red and gold and white from the sea.  
There is every colour in the sun.

My baby sister toddles alongside my grandmother,  
the years between them  
like the ghosts of waves already ebbed  
and the years to come  
like the promise of tides,  
as their silhouettes whisper in the sunshine.

*"What do I want to be when I'm older?"*

The question bounces around my head  
like light and wind and water and time  
and I smile...

*"I don't know."*

Image © Sally Anderson / Alamy

Poem © Otter-Barry Books Ltd, for 'Eastbourne', from *Overheard in a Tower Block*,  
by Joseph Coelho

## **There are Things that Lurk in the Library**

There are things that lurk in the library,  
that thumb and squeeze between the leaves.  
New worlds can be found in the books,  
characters listen to all that you read.  
There are whisperings between the words  
and shivers rearing to leap on your spine.

Run your fingertips along the spine,  
feel the bones of each book in your library.  
Watch amazed as the muscle-words  
flex! Robbed of the will to leave,  
you are compelled to stay and read.  
There are worlds to be found in these books.

There are worlds to be found in these books:  
ideas that wise minds have opined,  
tales of the deepest red.  
Unknown narratives skulk in this library  
where parables rustle like leaves,  
where mouths taste new words.

There are sagas in you if you look inward.  
Your whole life could be read as a book,  
all your fears bound into uncut leaves.  
Fairy tales are written on your spine.  
Every wrinkle has its own library,  
every crease is waiting to be read.

We leave volumes wherever we tread.  
Every sigh has its own hidden word,  
every hug is its own library,  
every goodbye a dog-eared book,  
every choice bound to a moral spine,  
a story we can never leave.

As your book forms its leaves,  
as you leave a story for others to read,  
make sure you bind well your spine.  
Don't let the ink smudge on a word.

For you yourself are a book.  
You yourself are a library.