

### Creative Writing on the picture – Antonia Haycocks

The frozen fog set in menacingly, a predator waiting to catch its unknowing prey. Some of the razor-sharp tips of the looming trees peaked over the thick foggy blanket, only to be swallowed whole by the vulture-like clouds. There was no definition between fog and sky, just a quiet mass of grey. The only occasional sound was the harsh squark of a bird, more like a scream of pain than bird song. The scent of the damp forest floor was trapped in the fog, almost stifling. Infused with the strong fragrance of pine from the trees, it could have been almost pleasant if the woods themselves weren't so spine-chilling. The seemingly never-ending mizzle that overshadowed the town made the path even more unwelcoming, it was damp and dangerous, a single wrong step and you could be stranded in the murky woods forever.

It was one of those short winter days, when there's more darkness than daylight. It was cold, freezing almost, and a downpour of icy rain hung in the air. Of course, the teenagers of the town decided this bitter day was the perfect one to go out. Yes, it was cold, but they had coats and some of them had hoods. It was group of around ten, all of secondary school age. They converged in the dark, on the outskirts of the woods. One of them must have challenged the others to a walk in the woods, maybe who could go the furthest. Clearly none of them heard the local stories from the woods, otherwise they wouldn't take one step in that direction. They giggled obliviously as they set foot into those unforgiving woods, knowing very little of what was ahead of them. But maybe they didn't have to worry about that after all.

Maybe they should have been worried about the dark figure that was behind them, who then followed them into those woods.

I for one, have not seen any of those children since.