

Snow

Purple skies paused in silent preparation, ready to release a shower of stunning white crystal flakes. Fields and trees fell still; birds left their feeders in familiar gardens and ceased their busy flitting and fluttering between silver birch and pine. Even the roads seemed quiet: cars, vans, buses and trucks moving more slowly along the carriageway with muted roars. Like raindrops on a window, the lights in village homes started to brighten the gloom of the dark skies above.

Matthew smiled; he embraced the dropping temperature and lifted his chin to the blustering breeze. Something special was about to happen and he wanted the best spot in the village to witness it. He jumped onto his sky-blue racing bike and pedalled rapidly past the white stone school, heading towards the rusted cattle grid at the junction. As the wind picked up, Matthew knew that it was almost here. He also knew he should carry his bike across the cattle grid but time was of the essence: he couldn't waste a single second. He threw his prized possession to one side and skipped, with all the grace of a cow, across the grid on foot.

Continuing up the hill, he sprinted almost faster than his legs could carry him. Suddenly, the air around him became busy with white; an early flurry of snow engulfed him as if its sole purpose was to chase him up the hill. He hurdled over the rotten wooden fence that blocked the route to the viewing point.

After slipping on the wet ground more times than he could count, Matthew finally reached his destination as the last of the daylight drained away. He looked in awe at his homeland. In the distance, he could scarcely make out the snow-capped mountains and the dense flurry of white obscured his view of the loch below. The warm glow of the village houses below was the only thing able to compete with the white rush of the snow. Matthew looked on; he was cold, wet and filthy but, for the first time this winter, he was happy.

