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GEMMA from CIGARETTES AND CHOCOLATE by Anthony Minghella  
Character age: 25+

When you stop speaking, it's like stopping eating. The first day there's something thrilling, and new, before the pain begins. The pain where you want to give up, where you can think of nothing else.

Then the second day, you feel wretched, the third delirious, and then suddenly there's no appetite, it shrinks, it shrinks, until the prospect of speaking, the thought of words retching from the mouth, how ugly and gross it seems.

Nothing changes.

How to stop people in their tracks, and make them think. Only if you're starving, if it's your son lying in your arms, or you think he might be in that discarded pile of mutilated bodies, or there's no milk in your breast and the baby's crying, or the radiation is leaking into your child's lungs, or the lead or the nitrates or the, or the, or the and all the while skirts get longer, skirts get shorter, skirts get longer, skirts get shorter, poetry is written, the news is read, I buy a different butter at the store and have my hair permed, straightened, coloured, cut, lengthened, all the while my hair keeps growing, I throw away all my skirts, a black bag to Oxfam, lately I've been at Oxfam buying back my skirts, I've stripped the pine and painted the pine, pulled out the fireplaces and put them back in, I'm on the pill, I'm off the pill, I'm on the pill, I'm off the pill. I'm listening to jazz, swing, jazz, swing, I'm getting my posters framed. I'm telling my women's group everything. I'm protesting. I'm protesting. I've covered my wall with postcards, with posters, with postcards, with posters. No this. Out them. In these. Yes those. No this. Out them. In these. Yes those. The rows. The rows with my friends, my lovers. What were they about? What did they change? The fact is, the facts are, nothing is changed. Nothing has been done. There is neither rhyme nor reason, just tears, tears, people's pain, people's rage, their aggression. And silence.

The silence.

*(A silence)*

beautiful  
last year it was cigarettes,  
the year before chocolate  
but this is the best

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