

Sam Trotter

Lifelines

The excitement comes every year. After winter feels like it's never going to end. Suddenly I'm walking to the train station and I notice there are green shoots coming up. A sea of daffodils and crocuses is flooding the green space. Each day I see another flower has popped its head out into the sun and I'm filled with joy. Time is ticking on and spring is on its way. As the train pulls away from the station I see three trees filled with pink blossom; their big rosy cheeks blushing as I look up at them.

After the first signs of spring have shown, time speeds up; all of a sudden the trees are green, the daffodils are having their last hurrah and the temperature is rising.

As my train passes the field I see the first lambs wobbling about, one of the happiest things to witness. Going over the rail bridge, I look over the forth and see Inchgarvie island covered in fulmars, protecting their eggs and chicks, making a racket if anyone approaches.

When I get off the train some butterflies are waving hello as they pass through. The bees have returned once again and clusters of new flowers are blooming. My camera roll is bursting with colour – pictures of fox gloves, pink and purple pointy trumpets, poppies whose embarrassed crumpled faces can't look into the sun and honeysuckle enticing small creatures with a sweet aroma. I take the coastal path route on my way home. From the top of the village I can just see the roof of my house, the outline of pigeons and magpies dancing on the tiles. Inside, my dad is making dandelion jam with the dandelions I picked. The yellow is melting away into the pot as the sweetness brews. Further along the path my nose is invaded by wild garlic. I've never really liked the taste but there's something special about wild food, so I rip off a leaf to munch on. Further on I hear the familiar sound of crickets talking as I pass the long grass.

It feels like no time has passed since the daffodils left, yet the eider ducks have already arrived. I saw two at the pier and couldn't believe they were back already. The ducklings usually arrive just before my birthday and it's the best present I could ask for. Every year I watch them grow and figure out how to use their funny little bodies from our kitchen window. We usually have around six ducklings in our bay. I enjoy watching them appear.

First there was a few males and females that came into the bay, then two ducklings joined them, soon there were five, then six, then eight and now ten little ducklings! That's the most we've had in a few years.

Each day it's getting a little bit warmer and I'm slowly shedding my layers of clothing. It was 18 degrees yesterday, the hottest day this year. It's as if I almost forget the sun and heat exist during winter, I almost get used to the dark cold days.

Now the days are long and the heat is glorious, it starts getting dark at nine. As the sunset rolls in and the night begins, the bats begin to awaken, ambushing moths in the moonlight.

The next morning a sadness is upon me when I listen for the terns and realise they have left. Home to the tropics to enjoy the heat over winter.

Watching all the nature around me, I don't need a calendar.