**School’s Out**

Clouds drifted across a sickly moon, rendering the single classroom light as the only relief from darkness. Why am I doing this? Arty wondered as he wiped sweat from his brow. Go to the school at night, spray shaving cream on the front doors. What a completely stupid dare. Only two weeks until school was over, until his time as a primary kid was done and here he was, asking to be tossed in prison just to impress his friends.

The light had to be left on by the cleaner. They’d be long gone, so there was no reason to stress. With the can a heavy weight in his jacket pocket — it was too hot for a jacket, but where else could he hide the can and not look suspicious — Arty picked his way between a grove of pine trees and reached the path leading to the front.

During the day, this spot was bustling with parents, teachers, office staff and students, injured, sick or in trouble. Now, he noted the windows like dark eyes, their aluminium framework suggestive of an alien intelligence. Just past the twin front doors lay the worn blue carpet. Caught in shadow, it resembled a bottomless pit.

A hiss and the school was bathed in light, every single fluoro tube, every computer screen, the desk lap by the reception counter. Then it was all gone. Arty’s eyes burned with afterimages flashing, the outlines of the buildings, furniture. A person. Arty’s heart pounded. A dark outline. His mouth dried. Featureless. Gone.

Arty’s eyes readjusted to the gloom. His hands were wrapped tightly around the can, as if it was a baseball bat. His feet took a step back before he could force them still. No. He wasn’t a coward. It was just a power surge. The humiliation of turning up to this very place tomorrow would be too great. He needed courage, but only for a few minutes. They’d never know if he ran all the way home.