

EXTRACT: CAITLIN MERRETT KING

Through the corridor main and the dining room, a set of doors that led out onto a small, overgrown garden at the back. They would sometimes bring their food or a coffee out there onto what at first, they thought were rather too gaily coloured seats. In fact, when one of the gardeners they hardly ever saw had cleared away some of the weeds, they realised they were not seats at all, though what they really were was unclear. There were twenty-one of them and they had an odd feeling of inbuilt obsolescence, like a series of glitches. The more they stood and looked the more impermanent they appeared, like momentary monuments or fresh sand castles on an improbable beach in faded, once midsummer hazes of yellow, coral, brown, teal, blue, gold, violet, grass green. That night, in the moment before sleep, she thought of a whole field of baby tulips, all simultaneously uncurling.