How does it work?

**Coke**

Mornings. I walk down the highway past the old weatherboard houses just stewing there, their screen doors open, hanging off their rusted hinges, slamming in the breeze of an almost winter morning. Everyone walks past me on their way to school. They’re walking faster than I walk, slamming their arms into each other’s sides, like there just ain’t enough space in all the world.

Some kid yells out, ‘You’re Aunty Leena’s a MILF,’ as he walks by slapping the roughness of his two-dollar shop backpack against the back of my arm.

I steer myself into the front gates of the Coke factory and let its crisscrossed wires hold me there. This is where we used to come, Dom and me. We’d stand here on our way to school just staring through the fence, imagining the mountains of sugar laying just beyond our reach. He’d start singing the Coke song, ‘Open up, open up some happiness,’ in his loud off-key way. Dom had big dreams of breaking in one day, of scaling the walls of its giant rectangular surfaces and diving into a giant sea of Coke.

I can hear the first morning bell ringing in the distance and I know that it’s my cue to keep on walking, but I don’t. I get distracted by the factory’s hum and the neat rows of Coke machines all glinting in the morning sun and I stand there some more until I can feel him, like he’s here. And I picture him somewhere inside those big grey buildings, floating in the bubbling brown liquid, Coke bleeding through his thick hair.