

5pm voicenote

By Sophie Jo

5pm voicenote: *how was it today?*

I thought of you lots, pal. I hope you're OK.

A pause, then a flurry: *I hate being new!*

My manager scares me! I'm so glad for you!

Next door in the kitchen, at number sixteen:
a home-made lasagne, then pricey ice cream.
The birthday girl said that she'd like that the most.
They eat it together. She opens the post.

A newspaper clipping from Nanny to Dan.
(‘Cause he doesn't read them, but Nanny's a fan.)
She'll see something mentioned: a piece about sport.
She'll head for the scissors. *'He'll like that,' I thought.*

And thirteen, he drove himself home in the wet.
He picked up the loo roll; he knew she'd forget.
And her face as he walked through the door made him beam.
My day was horrendous. / I know. We're a team.

The cat (number thirty)? He needs to be fed.
His owners? In Cornwall. His neighbour? Old Ted.
And Ted hobbles over, twice daily, with keys,
despite the small fact that this cat makes him sneeze.

An ordinary road, here. An everyday street.
The houses that line it are red-brick repeat.
But behind all the windows and all of the doors
are stories of sweetness. Monopoly scores,

books read loud before bedtime, and hugs after showers.
Vases on windowsills filled up with flowers.
The world is ferocious. That's true – so are we.

When we wake up tomorrow, we'll prove it. You'll see.