**EXTRACT FROM HANG BY debbie tucker green**

THREE what do *you know?* *What-the-fuck-do-you-know?* Y’look about twelve years old and sit in front of me and nod your head and drink your drink and tell me ‘you know’ – you know *nothing* and you (to ONE) – you who got a bit of the nine-to-five pressure, just enough to start playing away, what-the-fuck do you know about living with any of this? And I’m glad – *glad* amongst all your ‘long hours’ and ‘untold’ pressure you somehow managed to find the time to fuck about cos me and my husband have stopped fucking ever since. What do you exactly (*know*)? About, you *fuckin ‘*know’.

*Beat.*

*Beat.*

*Pause.*

TWO I’m sorry. I –

THREE you wouldn’t know where sorry starts or would you role-play that to find out?

ONE It’s not like that.

TWO It’s not like / that.

THREE How would you role-play explaining to *your* kids? How would you do your version of that? Who played my Tyrell and who was my Marcia?

ONE It’s not – we don’t, we didn’t / do –

THREE You wouldn’t have the course for it. You wouldn’t have the paperwork for it. You wouldn’t have enough mugs of Ikea tea for it. You wouldn’t have the words, the stomach, the imagination for it.

THREE

ONE

THREE And I dunno what you would suggest you would have done with a seven-year-old that couldn’t stop shaking. For hours.

And a nine-year-old that’s staring into a space that isn’t there.

For hours.

A seven-year-old whose shake couldn’t be eased with a squeeze, who saw me shaking more than she was as much as I was trying to hold my shit together. For those hours.

And wasn’t.

A seven-year-old who flinched at my shit touch of comfort knowing that it won’t. That it couldn’t, do nuthin. That it can’t. That it doesn’t do nuthin. Still doesn’t do anything – years later. To comfort. Her.

And my, open-faced, open-hearted nine-year-old son snapped shut, shut down in seconds after seeing…

And I looked to see what my beautiful boy was seeing as he stood staring, into nothing. Some middle distance somewhere I couldn’t access – still can’t.

And, he was the screaming one – he was the, his pitch so high it tore through-your-skull-one. He was the screaming one that didn’t stop for three hours straight. Staring into nothing and screaming straight. He was the one whose scream only stopped when his voice ran out. That had run, even when we couldn’t.

And we couldn’t.

And he’s hollow now.

His voice is hollow. His eyes are hollow. His smile, if you get one after all this time, is hollow. He goes through the family motions, hollow.

Like the rest of us.

And I don’t know what *you* would say to the shivering seven-year-old you only noticed hadn’t said anything after the screaming nine-year-old’s voice had run dry.

Marcia uttered nuthin. *Nothing.* For four days after that night.

The years me and my husband had of filling them up with the good stuff fucked in less than five minutes. Or was it ten. Or fifteen. Or was it the whole evening? I don’t even fuckin…

You tell me what to do then.

When my kisses drown in their tears.

When they flinch from my own touch.

When they flinch from any touch.

You tell me what to do then.

When they are inconsolable.

When it is unexplainable.

When I am lost for words.

When speaking softly scares them

when my silence hurts them

when my words are wrong

when a raised voice has outrageous repercussions,

when they’ve seen their dad damaged, their

mother motionless, our marriage disfigured,

our family fucked.

When I know, and *they* know I do not have the ability – the capability left in me to help them *whatsoever* cos they can see I can hardly help myself – you tell me what to do then, what to *say* to them then. Please. You tell me that.