

ss of it. The simplicity. It's just showing where to
e Ennerdale people come here!" Bear says.

dale's still a hundred miles away, Bear. Ennerdale's
n river. The Liza, remember?" I think of the blue
Mum's map, flowing down from the mountains
erdale Water.

people then. Forest folk. Fairies?" Bear's eyes
e."

und a magical kingdom, Juniper!"

."Yeah, let's not get carried away. We've still got
ful."

see the lakes soon, Ju. And then Mum and Dad!"
xerted the twigs and is bouncing on ahead with
ts, swinging them, swinging them hard, so water
ght over the edges.

like we should leave the twig bundle, but the
still there in the tree, if you know where to look,
to the river.

Dad! We're coming! We're actually coming!"
s and I only tell him once to quieten down.

I could feel so happy. Sometimes it seems the
get, the more scared I am of what we'll find.
nerdale must still be there. It has to be.

nows we're coming back one day. That was always

the plan. She'll be waiting for us. And Dad. If anything
had changed, someone would have got word to us. Mum
promised.

Once we've made the fire, I heat a bucketful of water
to wash in. It's the nicest feeling – warm water against my
face.

I loved bath night back home. There wasn't enough
water for separate baths, but Annie Rose always let me go
first. She knew what it meant to me. That tub of hot water.
There was always a lingering smell of disinfectant, some
bleach-like stink in the water and in the steam that misted
up the bathroom mirror, but Annie Rose had these drops
that took the edge off it. Lavender oil. We've used the same
bottle ever since I can remember, but because there was
no hope of getting another, we made it last. Just two or
three oily drops, like tiny pearls, from the old glass bottle.
I swirled them in by hand and shut my eyes as I sank into
the water.

We've never seen the sea, but that's where I took myself
in my head. Some bright clean ocean, back when the world
was this big open place you could travel across, where it
was green, or blue, or yellow. Anything but grey. Anything
but the city outside our windows.

Bear's never been too bothered about washing and I
don't make him now because I know what he needs most
is to play for a while.