

## **The Ghost Train**

**By Terri Mullholland**

When she was a child, her dad would take her to watch the trains. There was a hill, just past the allotments, where you could watch them emerging from the tunnel. They would hear the horn as it entered the tunnel at the other end, then she would hold her breath until she saw its nose rushing into the daylight. Every Saturday at mid-day, she would wave at the high-speed to London.

Her dad made up a story about a ghost train that came out of the tunnel at midnight. ‘Tell me again about the ghost train,’ she would say when he came home from work in time to tuck her in.

He would settle down on the bed and whisper. ‘And then all the people on the ordinary train would fall asleep, and when they entered the tunnel, the ghost train would take over and carry their dreams through the night. If you had a dream while in the tunnel, it would come true.’

And then her dad would always pause: ‘Whether it was a good dream or a bad dream,’ and she would shiver with delight and snuggle up against him.

Now she is grown up and living in London. She often thinks of that story when she’s on a late-night train back to the city. Sometimes she wakes up just as the train is emerging from a tunnel and has to touch the seats to check they are still real.

It is almost midnight, and she is on the train travelling home for Christmas. She receives the phone call just before the tunnel and only hears the first words before the line goes dead.

She shuts her eyes tight as the train enters the tunnel and hopes her dad has sent the ghost train to meet her.