

Red

*Put it on, Mum had said,
Just for this afternoon.
I know it's not really your style,
but your grandmother made it
and it would mean the world to her
if you turned up wearing it.
Besides, who's going to see you in the woods?*
I knew she was right, about it meaning a lot to Nan –
but who was going to see me in it?
In that eye-scorching scarlet MONSTROSITY?
I would probably be visible from space.
Honestly, you've never seen anything like it.
Hand-knitted, with a great floppy hood that fell down over my eyes,
ribbons that tied at the chin,
and FAR, FAR too long.

A North Face puffa it was not.

I made as much fuss as I dared,
huffed and grumbled about what an idiot I looked,
but in the end, off I went,
with a wicker basket over my arm,
just to add insult to injury.
Ugh, don't even ask.
Apparently, you can't carry a freshly-baked quiche in a rucksack.
You know what happened next, of course –
The Wolf Incident.
Front page news for a week.
I try not to think about it, but how can I not?
It makes me crimson even now,
that THAT was what I wearing in all the photographs.
I swear, I'm never going to live it down.