1.

She can see the edge. It should frighten her but she doesn't feel scared. Maybe whatever she's taken is helping in that regard. It's hard for her to be sure. Standing there, waiting, she knows there is no way out. No alternative. It brings her a sense of peace, a sense of acceptance.

Sorry.

So very sorry.

When she goes over she can feel the air against her face, the twisting of her body as it falls through space. The sensation is odd, unnatural, like nothing she's felt before but not unpleasant. In different circumstances it may even have been thrilling.

She hits the water, goes under into black. The impact is dull, forceful. She's unprepared for such unyielding solidity and it knocks most of the breath from her. The cold clamps its icy arms around her but this is no reassuring hug, no lover's embrace. It doesn't feel like she's got the strength to fight it off. Even if she did, she's pretty sure she would still give in.

Hissing, roaring, gurgling noise rushes and swoops around her.

It has taken longer than she thought it might for this to come around. To get to this place, this moment. She deserves to be here. No-one would grieve if they knew but she never told anyone. How could she? The shame would be too great. A shame she's kept hidden, secreted about her conscience. A dark place no-one else visits. It's been her burden to carry. A self-inflicted wound that has festered and wept without any sign of healing.

Her limbs are heavy, failing to respond. She doesn't care anymore. It's time. It's way past time. The rest of the world will be better off without her.

The reflexive holding of what little breath survived the thumping contact with the surface is coming to an end. She's spinning and turning without any propulsion on her own part. The cold is starting to leave her, being replaced by a strange warmth.

Her eyes open to an endless, blurred murk and instantly close again.

The first breath inundates, causes coughing spluttering panic. She's changed her mind, she wants to fight. Perhaps this isn't the time after all. She's wracked with remorse, of course she is. Surely, that should be enough? Why wouldn't it be enough? Why would anyone demand more of her than genuine, heartfelt contrition? What is done cannot be undone. There's no denying her sorrow, her willingness to make amends. This shouldn't have to be her penance.

Sorry.

So very sorry.

She tries to muster arms and legs; invites them to join her in a race to the surface, but they don't seem to be interested, don't respond to her encouragement. She just keeps turning and choking, the warmth spreading through her like someone pulling a blanket up to her chin.

Two or three more breaths and the choking stops.

Her eyes open.

The murk and the cold no longer feel like adversaries. They are guides.

Despite the turbulence all around her, she feels calm; at one with all of this.

An apology would never be enough. This is what is required to make things right.

It *is* time.

Too late for changing minds.

This was inevitable. Only a matter of time.

Sorry.

So very sorry.

The hardest word, but such difficulty offers no consolation to the wronged.

This will be her penance after all.

She needs to go.

The dark closes in around her.

The water can carry her shame away, keep it hidden forever.

Sorry.

So

…...very

…...............sorry.