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## Three Poems

*by Ian C. Smith*

### Vistavision

A billowy ruckus of air, hammering  
her dark thoughts, a staccato sound of war.  
The pilot covering the famous yacht race  
lands his helicopter on flat rocks  
to collect his annual order of crayfish.  
Stilled, their view is a sea eagle's  
from the small mountain they must climb.

This time she gets his smell of napalm joke,  
prefers the dewy morning's eucalyptus scent,  
the enduring islands in the glittering strait.  
A wallaby bounds across their track,  
distracting her from the direction marker.  
She misses it, and he corrects her,  
another irritation, like his movie quips.

They see the helicopter lift off, bank,  
circle the cove three times in farewell,  
a gunmetal dragonfly flashing low  
against the murky violet of scrub and scree,  
the sea flogged by the blades' commotion.  
He strains to keep its ghostly flicker in sight.  
On the track she seems to disappear like a dream.

### Unreconciled

I moved only a few miles away, but long ago.  
Walking around where I once lived  
I feel like one who has been in far exile,  
wondering why I have neglected this return,  
discomfited smelling the tangy neighbourhood,  
wood smoke, breakfast cooking, scattered leaves,  
calculating sequences of events  
involving my people in the clandestine past,  
now vague, unlike memorable town landmarks.

In thrall crossing driveways I strain to recall  
exactly what led to this estrangement  
but chronological memory baffles me,  
details waver, shadowy facts confusing.  
I bear what seems like guilty sorrow.  
For moving away? For being memory-drunk?

Editor's Note

Guidelines

Contact

The town's pool where our boy learned to swim,  
superseded, of course, by a heated facility,  
lies eerily quiet, its black water still.

I swerve toward the safety of my parked car,  
leaving what can never be left.  
Short-cutting through familiar back lanes  
behind houses where newcomers spend days,  
I pass a fence so rickety-faded  
it could date from my boyhood.  
I feel overcome by loss, imagined echoes,  
want that fence imbued with its original hue,  
straight, strong again.

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## Impedimenta

Opposite the horizon of the dark sea,  
bending, rattling, she can't make the gas surge,  
shields a small flame, sputtering.  
She might as well have landed in a squat.  
Only the stove will light up, just,  
not the hot water, nor the fridge,  
that stove's wan heat in constant danger.

She fumes, needing tea's habit, a shower,  
needier still for the comfort of wrongs put right.  
He slumps on the sullen periphery  
of this gas bottleneck, this powerlessness,  
knowing they gaze in different directions,  
a man with anniversaries of battles.  
Outside, a sombre sky, wind skirling.

A wasps' nest caused the mini-crisis,  
abandoned in the narrow copper pipe,  
a paperiness lighter than sea air,  
now blown away, disappeared, like time.  
He stays up late reading a novel by gaslight  
about the way love fades at the edges.  
She sleeps, exhausted by the heft of the day.

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Ian C. Smith's work has appeared in *The Best Australian Poetry*, *London Grip*, *New Contrast*, *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Quarterly Literary Review Singapore*, *The Weekend Australian*, & *Westerly*. His latest book is *Here Where I Work*, Ginninderra Press (Adelaide). He lives in the Gippsland Lakes area of Victoria, Australia.

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