



Les Wicks

Tide Times

Could be I had a mini-stroke
or parts of the brain gave up working
a result of over/underuse.
I lost an hour.

Christmas two days away
a baked cookie beach, sunshine glaze.

Surf folded like giftwrap as
Santa leant out of the rescue helicopter
waved to the kiddies on the sand.
Inexplicably I waved back.

Living with Silly is harder than ballroom dancing
but less exhausting than Worry.
THAT roommate I've harboured all these years, he
made a mess never paid a cent
took up space
as if that alone was a reasonable contribution.

Could be this is an idiot wisdom — heading home
I nod to a passing eucalypt.
older than me, we both share a scowl
at some upstart shrubs.

On the tinsel day I plan to walk to the family
burdened by sugar, love & flagrant paper.
Grandchildren will tear up everything with their
laughter
as armistice leaks from each corner.
The wine, I swear, will croon.

With just a tinge of jealousy we'll watch
toddlers head off to afternoon naps.

The golden retriever
won't even raise her head.

The Numbers

At 17 I told my father

Come the revolution you'll be the first person I shoot.

Self-medicating, the narcotics of change

a life goal to ditch the suburbs —

achieved 12 months later, *what then?*

Drugs eventually gave me up

though I still like the music. Bloody cigarettes.

Some sensations are stronger than ever

is this *normal*? I'd have thought

it would be publicised somewhere as we all

turn down that dirt track to decay.

At 17, in just 5 minutes, I could fall in love

with the wild teenage escapee from the convent
school.

Her Indian cotton, that deluge of laughter

caroming in a few days loose.

How can I find out
if she grew up to become a defendant
or the judge who handed out sentences?

To believe in social justice
or your friends
when you don't believe in belief.
I'm riding something
& hope this cart is not just
reinforcing the ruts in a
woeful path. I'm 69,
today pass nothing more interesting
than refuse & drear
(though there's still some glitter
deep in the rickle).

Marched against most wars
even when it was just me & 24 Indonesians.
20 years in the union movement
didn't *overcome*

but we tried.

Some say never look back.

How can you look forward if you don't?

Occasionally think worry is just an indulgence.

I get emails from Ukraine

read about Gaza.

Can't "pick a side" in Africa so

visit a friend in hospital

lost 26 inches of bowel

she loves the meds *remember when...*

At 17 surrender was not an option.

Nothing's changed.

Les Wicks

For over 50 years, Les has been active in the Australian literary community. He has been a guest at most of his nation's literary festivals alongside a substantial list of international ones. 2024 Boao International Lifetime Achievement Award, 2025 Silk Road Oceanian Poet of the Year.

Publication has been seen in over 500 different newspapers, anthologies and magazines across 42 countries in 19 languages. Has conducted workshops around Australia, edited various projects over the decades, latest being *Class* (2024) & runs Meuse Press which focuses on poetry outreach projects like poetry on buses & poetry published on the surface of a river.

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