

Cornelis Vleeskens

## COILED SPRING

I don't write about alcohol these days  
It just makes me reach for another glass  
and I don't stop  
until I crawl into bed  
or the last bottle is emptied

\*

So then I play  
the same records I played  
back in the seventies  
in the vague hope  
that I'll recapture the energy

\*

The tyres  
on my mountain bike  
have gone flat  
where it has stood  
in the shed for the past year

\*

I never learned to use the eighteen gears  
The last bike I had before it  
thirty-five years ago  
had no gears at all

\*

Playing back the video I shot earlier  
I'm caught by the laboured breathing

\*

I'd go for walks along the beach more often  
if the stairs down the cliff  
weren't quite so steep

You have to marvel at the beauty of it though  
All those fragile cliffs  
so weatherbeaten  
with plants growing in all the cracks  
like the beard of an old drunk

\*

Sometimes they collapse  
Rocks streaming down like tears

\*

Washed by the salty water

\*

The last of a set of wineglasses  
smashed on the kitchenfloor  
Six glasses in seven years  
Not bad I guess  
But why do they never break when they're empty?

\*

Bright sun on another warm spring day  
Even the mail comes early  
A letter from Billy Jones  
with his special section in Wormwood Review

\*

I tear myself away from the typewriter  
long enough to read it  
Billy's poems  
then the whole mag cover to cover

\*

Walking through heathlands  
looking at wildflowers and orchids  
Tiny twining fringe-lilies  
blueish purple flowers  
with so much detail  
squeezed into a square centimetre

Lost in the beauty of flowers  
I don't see the snake  
but sense him quite near

\*

Glistening black red belly  
slinking off into banksia and teatree  
I watch the space he vacated for an eternity

\*

Death is all around us  
like a cloudless blue sky

\*

My watch stops  
No amount of winding  
can bring its broken spring  
back to life

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