

### Score

I couldn't tell you what my father did. I'd never understood it. He was a professional gambler who would curse and swear and thump whenever things went wrong or right. It was hard to know when he was winning or losing, every outcome had extreme responses. He'd walk so hard and heavy on his heels he would dent the mustard coloured linoleum in the kitchen, triggering my mother to curse and swear, which she did as often as he did. Living then in my parents house was like living in the eye of a hurricane. I'd listen to their competition from under the kitchen table where I'd be keeping score in pencil, every now and then licking the salt from the skin of my bent up knees, breathing in the smells of sausages and smoke, damp detergent and the slow discharge of my own bad breath. I'd be counting the seconds with the clock, thinking about leaving.

### Forecast

I never work with information that isn't real, so I never make anything up but on the day of the boat I pretended hard. The diesel fumes went through me, I was that sick. I got a mix of sympathy and scorn from the crew and passengers who just about helped me to mount the narrow footbridge into the belly of the boat, the biggest one I was ever on, and the last one I was ever on. One of them helped me stack the cases on their sides, enough to make a bench on the deck where I could get air and get sick in relative peace. "Geesus, what's in them", she'd barked, "dead bodies?" When the ferry pulled out of the bay, my body shook and shivered like a thistle on the bog, and I prayed never to see the place again. The forecast wasn't good.

### Divisions

In sleep you'd estimate for yourself, how is it going to fail? How is it going to fail? On the other side, I had to ask something new. How do I start? Gone behind me the limey limbs of summer, prepping low and balmy skies. My face pressed fresh into the dead-pan suburbs, and in the port toilets I surrendered to new divisions in myself, over hearing men speaking of good places for pay and conditions. From there I dragged his tools, case by case, determined to make them work for me.

### Syndicate

It didn't take long before I'd joined a local syndicate for the pools, making me a gambler too. A strange sort of a way to write home. Through the dead weight of paper, I'd learned the look of a good listener. And for that they'd save these leftover bits for me. I'd keep everything and nothing would be wasted. I'd used to worry about the circulars and what they said, then I'd noticed their doing was more impressive. I saw how the foolscap was secretary to a kind of hope impersonal. And I'd fallen in love with the notion of office...

### Score Draw

My companion cases, much lighter now, frame a private desk for me, where I work the old tools in another way, sifting through leftover pieces of the world I've found since the boat. I don't necessarily understand, but I can relate. I draw information from them in a different kind of way. This is what I do behind the steady hours of survival, I carry on those quiet agreements of replication. And some sleeps I am still under the table, the vanishing twin of a shadow cast between gambler and secretary, waiting for a score draw. But always in the dawn I return, settling amongst the reams of paper, the smell of ink, the noise of machines, to the office in the garden.

### Results

I don't plan anything. I prefer the results.

109  
120

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