

*HEARTLANDS AND OTHER POEMS*

By Barnaby Smith

My sister works at Silverwater  
injecting the unharvested with  
spirit to endure, spirit to

celebrate even. Once a  
man opened to aaaaah  
and she found tongue tattoos,

a yellowing invitation to  
to make a metaphysical exit.  
Another pleaded for a

vegetable garden and  
said Somalis were  
always in his face.

Not all men of extremes  
end up here, some become porn  
stars or rugby league players. If

Koons had grown up in Wyong  
he might have grinningly  
plastered them all over an inflatable

Subaru Outback; everyone  
is one another's scandalous  
muse in certain straitened suburbs.

A story out of Tahmoor  
lies gaping in the staff room –  
tremors condensed into formality,

demanding that on a campus  
my sister and her sorority  
are taught to breathe through each

moment of doubt. Important  
when a patient licks from his fingers  
the butter he found in his pocket.

***DESPATCH FROM HARIDWAR***

orange silence for a few hours  
bar the hotel room's CNN hum

Bradley Manning's dimple  
& hint of smile  
interrupted by power outages then  
longer  
by a storm

experimenting with a night walk  
clear the belly that curdles—  
technology begins in the bowels  
feels like

tantalising mixtures underfoot  
orientate circles of

dogs licking light  
at their peaceful hour

how voices mutter to participate  
in bold harmony  
with reportage from fusty rooms  
across the lobby  
continuing a darkening song  
(lurid reassurance)

**Bio**

**Barnaby Smith** is a journalist, poet and musician based in northern New South Wales, Australia. He writes for Rolling Stone Australia, ABC Arts, Guardian Australia, The Quietus and the Big Issue, among others, and has published poetry in Best Australian Poems, Southerly, Cordite, FourW, Otoliths, Writ and more.

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