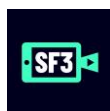


Given

by Joshua Maule

In the caravan's annex, he tapped the keys of his age-old laptop: strumming out thoughts from *the* year. They played fast, like slot cars, whizzing. The corners of his affections curled. Dedicated as he was to the task upon him—a writing project, a would-be book—he wondered if time would go on permitting him to think so hard. And for so long. He shoed the thought breathing, “Never mind that right now.” No one else was there except the voices on the album he'd been given which played like a film soundtrack. It made the whole thing more nostalgic though the songs were unfamiliar. That morning he had taken photographs of empty caravans, bunting, sand on the road, empty beaches, and everything else around the apocalyptic landscape that is a holiday park in late winter. Summer would not delay of course. He could imagine children swarming in then clutching oversized chalk and riding new bicycles as their parents drank wine and low-carb beers in chairs. He thought about all that. The thoughts as if they were significant satisfied him as company. It was funny how imaginings, dependent clauses, even adjectives, could satisfy a man. It was all given.



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