**Bad Weather**

by Rosanna Licari

Dad’d go bushwalking alone. Mum’d say Everyone should be careful in bad weather. That’s for sure. It was a grey, wet day when he vanished. The police scoured the tracks and gullies. Nothing.

It’s easier to dig in the garden when it’s wet. You’re a good girl Mum’d say when I helped her after Dad disappeared. At least his beatings stopped. I wanted to burn all his things, but Mum said we needed to show respect for the dead. Every family has secrets. She didn’t want to lose face.

Years later, just after a big storm, I was down in a spot where she never let me dig. My spade hit something hard. I uncovered old bones. I’d done high school science. I got the picture. I turned and Mum was staring at me, leaning on her walking stick. None of us said a word.

At the kitchen table, I never asked how she got Dad to the bottom of the yard and into the garden bed. You know, the details. She just kept stirring the tea in her cup. She could barely speak. By that time, the cancer had got to her throat and we were used to silence.

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