

# anchor

*by Susan McCreery*

Heat shimmered off the road. Even if her dad still lived in Brentwell Street he mightn't be home. He could have a job, hah-hah. Not once in ten years had he mentioned work. Ten years since he'd left, kicked off the steelworks for constantly turning up pissed. Kicked out by her mum. His phone-calls and letters, always muddled and rambling, grew less and less frequent. Until they stopped. She unfolded her grubby printout of a grid of streets. Brentwell was round the next corner. She walked along checking off each number until she stood outside a neat blue fibro. Beds of flowers flanked the steps. Heavy tomatoes adorned the sunny wall. And there it was: the brass anchor doorknocker, the one thing he'd taken with him. Her knock echoed hollowly. Yapping on the other side. Her heart lifted. He has a dog. If he could care for a pet... She knocked again. Not home. She sat on the top step and turned the printout over. She wrote about the baby. Due in five months, just before his birthday, she said. You're going to be a grandad. She'd be hitching back that afternoon. Your dog sounds cute. Here's my address in case you're ever passing. Later, back on the highway, a car pulled up. At the window a face – thinner, bearded, but those eyes, she'd know them anywhere. Clear as clear. A grin the size of a welcome bridge. Got a feed ready. In you hop.



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