

The Cold War by Carole Lydon

The pain burned like incense behind his right eye. His line of sight swept through the burning glow to the page before him but he did not read. He just stared. At the page. Without turning. The now familiar ache in his head swelled like a king tide. Residual waves lapped and filled the bags under his eyes. The overspill ran down behind his cheek bones threatening to push them through his skin. The earth pulling the stream down through his nose did nothing to relieve the pressure.



Sick Man, by Lisa Conolly

Washing up against his nostrils eroding the sensitive skin it stung with caustic intensity.

The muscles in his neck reached gridlock as he dragged himself out of bed this morning. No glancing at the left today, just straight ahead. Torque wrench tension inched down his vertebrae. Spreading the word across his shoulders.

No left turn today. Right only. Pass it on.

As he turned the unread page, his fingers reminded him of the intricate web of pain in his joints. Each knuckle, wrist, elbow and shoulder joined the resistance, swelling and stiffening, capturing and squeezing the hapless nerve endings. Shooting messages against the extreme left to his weary brain. His body was turning against him, against itself.

The bell of an old era rang and swam through the fluid in his ears. Grenfell Street already. He warned both sides of his body of the impending pain, slowly uncurled from the narrow seat and stood up into his leaden aura.

Workplace reform, my arse. I used to have sick leave.

