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The Same Old Story

by James Figges

There's definitely an idea, but the knot of snakes slither into smoke at the edge of my vision, into obscurity. Let Terminal Drift take me, I decide, and sink into a large red or nestle under the electric blanket on 5. The world is hardly begging for my words.

Yet sooner than I can say 'Flog It', the bliss of floating is ruined, caught on the barbs of a shadowy voice that seeks shape in words – my bloody words. It's too hard, I snivel, but would have taken my pinching idea to the page, though suddenly we have to rescue a mouse from under the fridge where it has escaped the claws of Mizzle the cat. It emerges, on its back, dead, and its little furry tummy and goofy mouth remind me think of my own impending death. I don't feel up to much then; I watch The Crown.

The next day I sit down, but first poke at algae in the pond in an attempt to clear the green smear. In the process, the slow old speckled Tench rises from his submerged resting place. I give up and he disappears into the murk.

It was that day that I had the thrill of nearly killing my husband when he asked when I'd finish my novel. He is one of those men for whom there is a solution to everything, seen through bi-focal glasses.

A few days later, after I'd checked there was nothing I wanted in the seven charity shops in town, I try again. The marmite on my laptop tells me there was a time when I wanted to write so much that I ate at the same time, but as I write this, the snakes, the greyness, the sloppy slide downwards returns in the same old story.