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## The Year Without a Summer

by Vera Gajic

If I had to say when it started going wrong it would have to be that year without a summer or more like the summer that wasn't a summer. It didn't go above 15 degrees and the rain – oh God the rain I can still hear it, feel it, smell it. Continuously – sometimes a hard deluge sometimes huge goblets dropping from the sky, other times light enough to be swirled around in the wind but no let up, on and on.

The year before wasn't great which was why I reckoned this year had to be better, give Cornwall one more chance. I loved Cornwall, not so much now mind, I'll probably never go back. Back then I was desperate to show it in all its glory to the wife and kids. Ok the nippers were a bit small to appreciate its special magic, the craggy coast full of secrets of smugglers, taverns and sailors and I'd be King Arthur and the kids my knights. They'd find it impossible not fall under the spell of the place, like I did with my Dad – if it ever stopped bloody raining.

I remember the caravan – tiny – on a park just outside a village full of thatched cottages and a thatched pub. We thought it would be OK – we'd be outside all the time, on the beaches, walking amongst the thatches, fat chance. The kids got fed up with the few games we brought on the first day, we couldn't afford to go to those indoor play parks. We splashed out on the indoor pool (ha, ha) once .

It was in the middle of the week that "it" hit the fan, when my wife burnt the tea – how could she fucking burn it – we couldn't get more than 6 feet away from the stove, but I shouldn't have hit her, I know that now. I'd been in a shit mood since we'd left home. Kept checking the weather forecast but no sign of summer.

Shouldn't have gone – even if we'd saved all year, but I was determined. By Wednesday I thought I was going mad. Oh innocent me, I had no idea then, drop of rain driving me mad, what a woss, spoilt brat, self righteous bastard thinking that I was owed a summer – who by? What the fuck!

Now of course the rain really is bad, can't get dry once you're wet when you're on the street. Someone pinched my spot last week, tried to stand my ground - said it was my spot but the council had thrown my stuff away. They do that regular like, what do they think, that we'll go home if they clear our patch. As if we wouldn't if we had a home to go to, even a little caravan in Cornwall – what luxury that would be to keep out of the rain.