

Home Base

poems – life as a regular force cadet 1964–1966



KEITH WESTWATER

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Selling points:

- Long-standing Lower Hutt poet
- Poems and stories about life in the army – a little discussed topic in New Zealand poetry
- Sequel to *No One Home*
- Author is head of the Regular Force Cadet Association, with an anniversary event in December 2021

*As the train pulled away from the station,
He felt as though a guillotine was slicing off a part of his life.
What he was heading for, though, just had to be better
Than what he was leaving behind.*



Lower Hutt poet Keith Westwater has received or been shortlisted for awards in New Zealand, Australia and Ireland, and has been selected for ten anthologies. He's published three previous collections of poetry and a chapbook. Keith writes about his work on his blog, *Some Place Else*.

Keith's stepmother 'Maw' gives him an ultimatum – at fifteen he either leaves school to work or joins the army. So, Keith departs Auckland and reports to the Waiōuru military camp, enlisting as a regular force cadet.

Home Base is a snapshot of Keith Westwater's boy-soldier life in the New Zealand Army during the 1960s. From a motherless and peripatetic childhood in *No One Home*, the sequel *Home Base* is where Keith finally finds a place to call home: underneath Mount Ruapehu's shadow and amongst his fellow cadets.

From spit-polished 'brightly black' boots to doing 'the marchie marchie', *Home Base* is a candid and often humorous look at the lives of Regular Force Cadets. It's also a memoir of Keith's adolescence depicted through handwritten diary entries, photographs, maps and poems.

Praise for Keith's previous books:

"No One Home is a seeking, examining work, as concerned with absence as it is with presence, and the losses in both ... elegantly produced, the book has a sober and quiet beauty, 'moments of glad grace'." — *Takahē*



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