Home Base
poems – life as a regular force cadet 1964–1966
Keith Westwater

To be released October 2021
rrp $25 • 150mm × 190mm • 200 pp • poetry

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.

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