

'His Roof, His Rules' from *Wyuen Pyne* by Jean G-Owen

*This commentary is accompanied by the short story 'Piranha' in my book *Wyuen Pyne*. All the pieces in the book are supplemented by commentaries and essays to inspire your reading.*

My mother Barbara endured twenty-five years under a tyrant's control. A poacher by trade, her husband (my father) lived by trespass—trapping, taking what didn't belong to him. He made our home a battleground, brutalising Mum and children alike, declaring *My roof, my rules*, as if the bricks were built from his own ribs and the people inside were his to govern.

In those years, the house was his in every sense: the rage, the silence, the fear, even the air we breathed bent to his will. But Mum endured. After twenty-five years she divorced him—an act that took every ounce of resolve, cost her dearly, yet marked the first door she closed on his dominion.

She rebuilt a gentler life from the wreckage, one room at a time, though the scars remained. His legacy couldn't simply be shed; it lodged in her body, in her thoughts, in the quiet spaces where trauma festers. And yet, she also found how to live otherwise: to shape days not defined by his shadow. That is its own kind of triumph.

Her struggle is part of a wider chorus. It runs through the voices gathered here—women who endured silencing, who were branded, broken or made small, and who found ways, however fragile, to resist, to live beyond the rules forced upon them. My mother's survival is one root of that lineage.

The next story, *Piranha*, and dedicated to her,* is about resistance—the slow, exacting study of a man who believed himself invincible and the woman who learned how to remake herself.



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