

Jigsaw Puzzle

by Steve Campbell

We separate the sky from the darker colours by tossing any pieces that include the faintest fleck of blue onto a mound of sapphire, navy and cornflower. Starting at the top, we work our way down and, as each piece clicks into place, the picture literally falls from the sky.

We forge mountains, plant trees and then sow fields into the foreground.

With the final pieces snapped into place we run our hands over the finished scene, feeling the grooves of the interlocking edges. Proud of what we've built together.

When I decide to tackle the puzzle on my own, I start in the same way, passing pieces through my hands from the box to the upturned lid. It takes days of sifting before I realise that the edge pieces aren't there anymore.

Friends tell me that it's important to carry on regardless, that maybe the pieces will turn up. So I sort through the colours, the sky, the trees and begin to rebuild the picture from the inside out. Even though we both know that it's the wrong way to go about it.

Progress is slower with only one pair of hands. Some days I barely manage to slot in a single piece. But, over time, the picture starts to build and, when the box is finally empty, I'm left with the same completed picture, but the edges are jagged and rough.

Bio

Established in 1973, Steve Campbell is a designer, writer, taller. He has short fictions published in *Sick Lit Magazine*, *Ad Hoc Fiction*, *Twisted Sister Lit Mag*, *Occulum* and *Fixional*. He somehow finds time to manage EllipsisZine.com. Follow him online at: standondog.com or @standondog.