

Amnesty

She finds and shows him a yellowed card
 he gave her on their 10th anniversary.
 He notes the date, not when they married
 but when they first moved in together.
 Wedding anniversaries stir his unease
 sentimental overdoses putting cracks
 soft thinkers choosing fairy stories
 in preference to those of real life.

On the card is a poem he wrote
 and a painting by an Argentine
 from a time of people disappearing
 of terror, torture, murder, despair.
 The painter, a trade unionist
 used jail food to colour the picture
 for his unborn son he won't see for years
 after he and his pregnant wife were arrested.

The poem is about surviving tough times
 rough hitch-hiking adventures in America.
 He thinks it alludes to their relationship
 and is a kind of prediction of the future.
 He knows what the Argentines
 would think of these tough times.
 The loved boy who received the painting gift
 is a man now, the past a time of heroes
 his family reunited in America, free.

He realises their anniversary is due
 another one with a nice rounded figure
 wonders if he should, can, do anything about it.

Ian C Smith