

Losing Haringey

The Clientele

In those days there was a kind of feeling of pushing out of the front door, into the pale exhaust fume park by broad water pond where the grubby road eventually leads to end field. Turkish supermarkets after chicken restaurants after spare pawnshop, everything in my life felt like it was coming to a mysterious close.

I could hardly walk to the end of the street without feeling there was no way to go except back. The dates I had that summer count to nothing, my job was a dead end and the rain check was killing me a little more each month. It seemed unlikely that anything could hold much longer. The only question left to ask was what would happen after everything familiar collapsed, but for now the sun was stretched between me and that moment. It was ferociously hot and the equality became so bad that by the evening the noise of nearby trains stuttered in fits and starts, distorted through the shifting end. As I lay in my room I can hear my neighbors discussing the world kemp and opening beers in their gardens on the other side someone was singing an Arabic prayer through the thin wall I had no money for the pub so I decided to go for a walk. I found myself wandering aimlessly to the west past the terrace of chicken and bomb shops and long dreads near the tube station. I crossed the street and headed into virgin territory, I had never been this way before grapple Dutch houses alternative with square 60s offices and the white pavements angulated with cracks and litter. I walked in wall because there was nothing else for me to do and by the breeze the light began to fade. The mouth of an avenue led me to the verge of a long greasy A road that rose up in the far distance with symmetrical terraces falling steeply down and up again from a distant railway station. There were 4 benches to my right indispurced with those strange bushes that grow in the area. These blossoms are so pale yellow they seem translucent almost spectral and suddenly tired, I sat down. I held my head in my hands, feeling like shit but a sudden breeze escaped from the terraces and for a moment I lost my thoughts and its unexpected glooms. I looked up and I realized I was sitting in a photograph. I remember clearly this photograph was taken by my mother in 1982 outside our front garden in Hampshire, it was slightly underexposed I was still sitting in the bench but the colors and the plains of the road and the horizon had become the photo but I looked hard and I could see the lines of the window ledge in the original photograph were now composed by a tree branch and the silhouetted edge of a grass barge, the sheens the flash on the window was replicated by gunfire smoke drifting infinitely testify slowly from behind the fence my sisters face had been dimly visible behind the window and yes there were pale stars far off to the west that traced out the lines of a toddlers eyes and mouth. When I look back at this there's nothing to grasp, no starting point, I was inside an underexposed photo from 1982 but I was also sitting on a bench in Haringey,

strangest of all was the feeling of 1982, dizzy illogical as if none of the intervening disasters and wrong turns had happened yet. I felt guilty and inconsolably sad. I felt the instinctive tug back, to school; the memory of shopping malls, cooking, driving in my mothers car, all gone, gone forever. I just sat there for awhile, I was so tired that I didn't bother trying to work out what was going on. I was happy just to sit in the photo while it was lasted which wasn't long anyway. The light faded, the wind caught the smoke, the stars dimmed under the glare of the streetlamps. I got up and walked away from the spot of little benches and an oncoming of Garish kids. Our bus was rumbling to my rescue down that hill with a great big fire Alexandra palace on its front and I realized I did want to drink after all