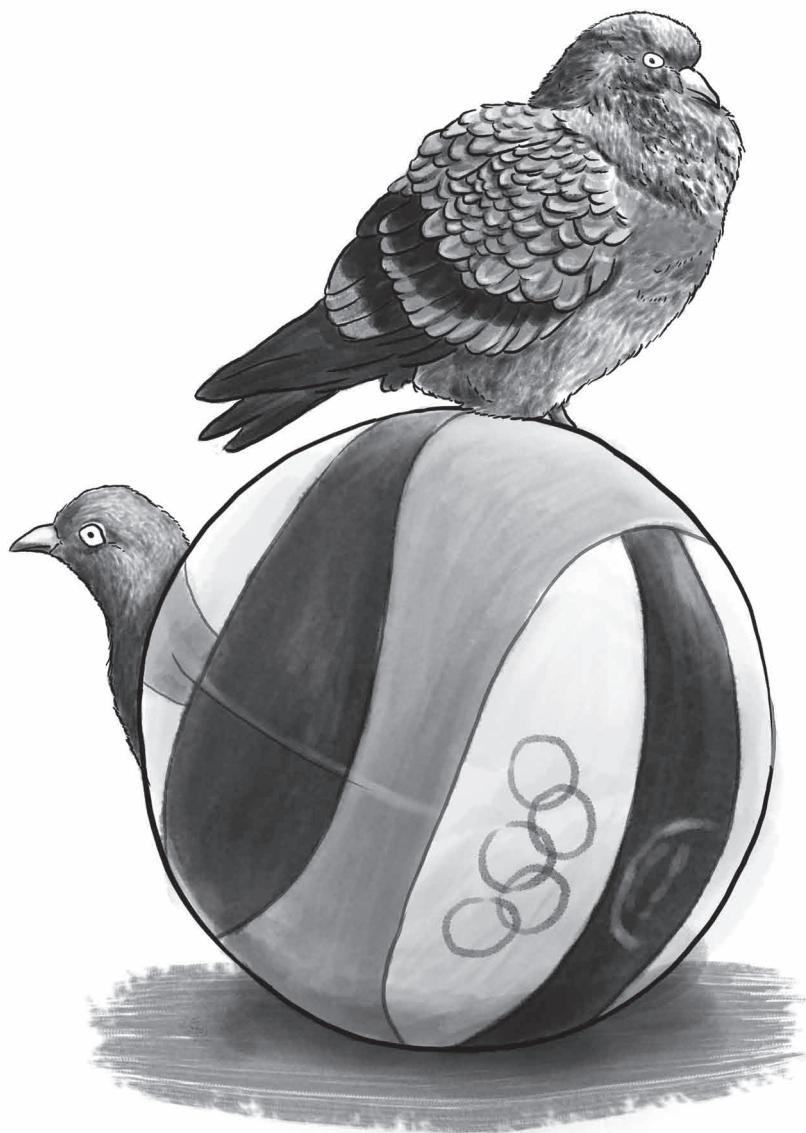


# FROM THE SLOPES OF OLYMPUS TO THE BANKS OF THE LEA

EXCERPTS

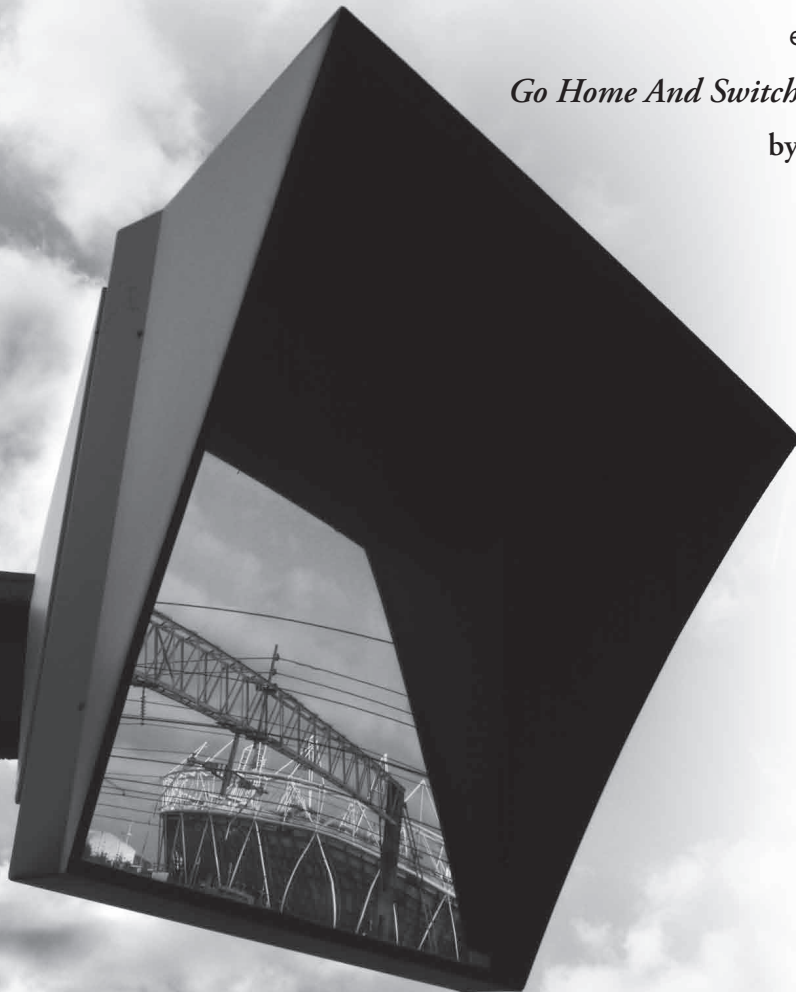


I wander into Stratford itself,  
that formerly run-down corner of  
Newham which, since the Games  
came, has magically transformed itself  
into a run-down corner of Newham  
with a big stadium beside it.

excerpt from

*Go Home And Switch On BBC 1*

by Dale Lately



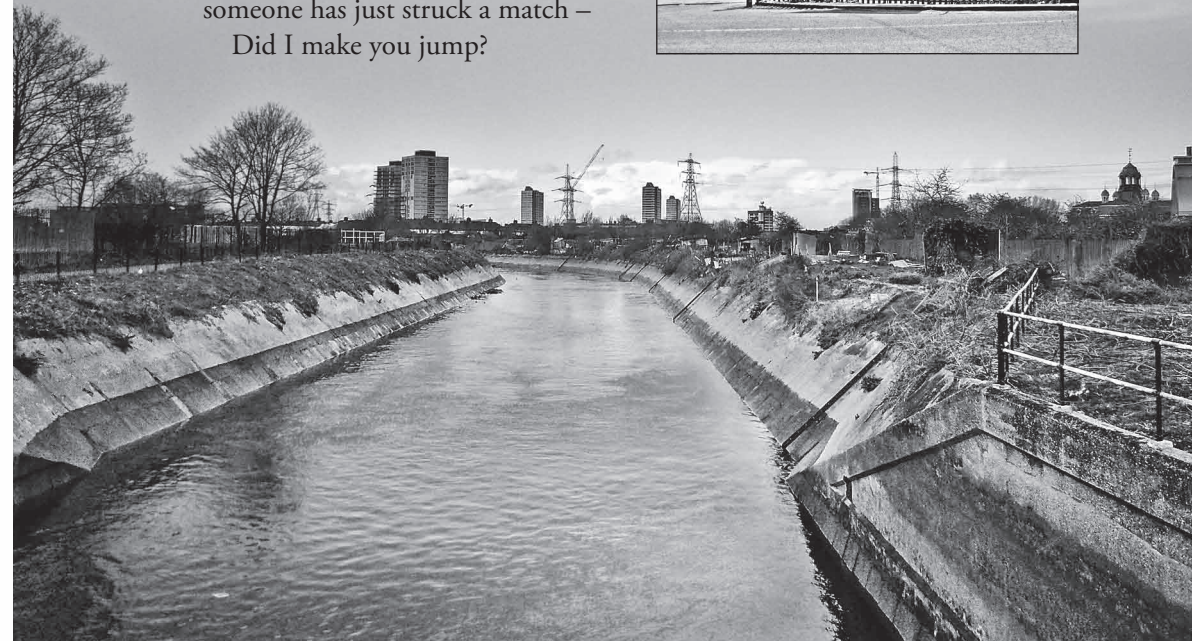
## PHOSPHORUS

THE YEAR OF THE STRIKE was the year I died. 1888, I was sixteen, and already used to the iron taste of spit in my mouth, but when I lost my first tooth, I cried. Then one day my boy Tom said, "Annie, I can see your bones, it's like there's a candle inside you" – and it was true: I glowed in the dark, like a ghost, like a ghost...

From the factory tower on Sundays I watched my father fishing, growing old without me. And I watched my little brother's children, George and Samuel, the nephews whose cheeks I'd never kiss, walk beside him on the path to Marshgate Lane, where Sam, who came home from Passchendaele, built his first print works. Last week, after the diggers moved in, the old enamel sign stuck out of the earth like a flag or a bone on a battlefield: *Samuel Seares & Sons*.

At night now I drift through smart new flats where us girls used to lick the white phosphorus. That sudden flare in the corner of your eye, like someone has just struck a match –

Did I make you jump?





Across the canal, it begins again, its opening bars echo  
the raindrops bouncing on the water.

Bah-bah-bah-baaaaaah.

Bah-bah-bah-baaaaaah.

Here on Fish Island, we can see the stadium's bulk, but not what's happening inside, beyond that wet, white rim. We can hear the secrets of these final rehearsals, though, those mantras from the deep.

Lager  
Lager  
Lager

the stadium is telling us.

Shouting

mega

Lager

mega

Lager

white

thing

Dusky's cough syrup was a transparent pale pink liquid with the consistency of thick honey and a peculiar floral taste. The Lea Valley Rose petals that were suspended in the mixture made a slow, downward migration from the neck of the bottle that could take months.

When the last one reached the bottom you were meant to throw the bottle away.

Mark Sadler: The Ringers (excerpt)





A spokesman for LOCOG today insisted that athletes from all nations would feel at home in the Olympic Village, especially those from outlying suburbs of Magnitogorsk.

*[excerpt from Victoria Wood and the Big Purple Horse]*

Another week, another letter from the council. This one comes from Victoria Wood. Not that Victoria Wood, sadly, but her namesake in (deep breath) Development Control at the Directorate of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills – I’ve no idea what that is, but I’m guessing it’s where Greenwich Council stores all its recently repossessed nouns. Anyway; Victoria wants to inform me, sadly not through the medium of comic song, that I have 21 days to object to the erection of a temporary sign, 15 foot by 15 foot, round the back of Greenwich station.

It is, suffice to say, the first I’ve heard of this. And usually when a woman draws your attention to a large and unexpected temporary erection, your best bet is to smile awkwardly and shuffle behind the sofa; unless you’re at a party and she’s simply trying to break the ice, in which case suggesting she finds a steak mallet or small hammer generally makes more sense. Clearly, though, neither response is appropriate here. But what is? Vicky’s letter really doesn’t give me too much to go on, and my immediate thought is that we’re about to get something like...







the building on your  
right is magnificent,  
but it is not the station.



le bâtiment à droite,  
c'est magnifique, mais  
ce n'est pas la gare.

... meanwhile,  
residents of  
Leyton are  
warned that  
Ruckholt Road  
is 574 metres  
away from  
something.



[excerpt from The Song of the Olympic Binman]

*I am a binman for the council  
And I walk the back roads,  
Searchin' in the dark for another bag to load.*

*I hear we mustn't use our bin lifts,  
I hear you will not like their whine;  
And the SE10 binman must be gone by nine.*

*You can't get into Greenwich station;  
Hippophiles are constrained  
And, if they know our carts are out,  
Won't ever leave their trains.*

*And you need us more than want us,  
And you don't want us at this time;  
But the SE10 binman is on good overtime...*



**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Thanks to all my fans. I'm now a living legend for sure!  
9 Aug 23:01

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Going to get out of the digs. Who's comin'?  
9 Aug 23:01

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Check it - an "English bus" #69 #heyladiees #whatswalthamstow  
9 Aug 23:32

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
I'm out - this Ale is REAL #notguinness  
10 Aug 00:02

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Hey Leyton Girl!!!! What is "pop-up"?  
10 Aug 00:19

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Check out my men Sam + Dave at KEBABISH!!!! #knobhead  
10 Aug 01:29

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
BEER  
10 Aug 01:52

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
i was lost but now i'm FOUND at my main football GROUND. enuff this running shit #brokenin #saynuthin  
10 Aug 02:04

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
This Emirates mighty small - can of Lech my BALL #leytonminimarket #gooooaal  
10 Aug 02:19

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
PartyPoker? This ain't dope #donttellybransonman #whereisarsene  
10 Aug 02:12

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Now in CHANGING room!!! #signthebolt #druuuuunk  
10 Aug 02:28

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
oh  
10 Aug 02:41

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
I've found an animals head... oh god #alewasnotreal #siiiiiick  
10 Aug 02:49

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
I've put it on. The Lech's in front of the goal. I can't see throug this mask man #aggggggh  
10 Aug 02:53

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
I'm wanderin. Dude just called me Theo. WHERE AM I ##whatisawyvem  
10 Aug 03:21

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Grass, man - ohhhhhhmydayyys #sickinanimalhead  
10 Aug 04:21

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Woke up in a maze. Head gone. Magic come - 69 bus - Leyton GIRL!! #coronationgardenscleaner #usavedmylife  
10 Aug 07:21

**You Sane Bolt @yousanebolt**  
Just ran 4x100 relay practice in 9.4 seconds! #sweet #poweroftheorient #zzzzz  
10 Aug 10:00



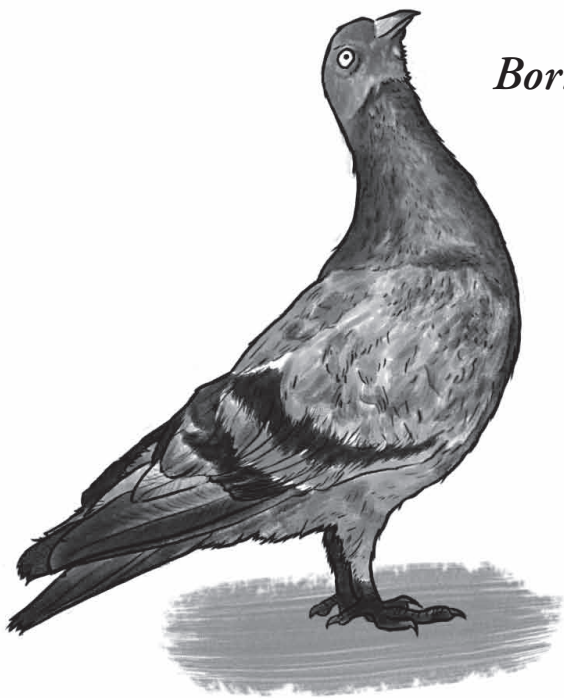


According to Radio Kent, the last person  
to see Boris Johnson alive was Arthur  
Culpepper, a retired postman from  
Gravesend, who'd been walking his  
dog Trevor along the river at the time.  
Mr Culpepper, however, remains unsure:  
his initial thought, he reminds everyone  
who asks, had been simply that it was a  
very odd sort of design for a kite.

excerpt from

*Boris and the Banshees*

by **Thomas McColl**



It's JUST BEFORE NOON, and I'm standing in the cold on the bridge by the station. Two years ago, I moved here to Leyton with the boy I was with on the day of the bombs. We came here before the High Road was painted like a rainbow, before the streets were paved and cleaned for the few people that made it this far. Along with the locals who welcomed us, and the grit that never went away, my husband and I are still here.

Today, before I turn into the ticket hall, ice biting at the air, I see the Lea Valley, as always, stretching mistily into the West. Gone are the pink lips of temporary stands; soon, the Basketball Arena's pillowy swells of white PVC will go too. Left behind will be a curve of golden wood and a few fading silver signs that barely make an impact on the eye any more.

I think of summer, and a certain sound and tension moving through the air, of the things that have changed in seven years, and the things that haven't; of the things that went wrong, and the things that didn't. I think back to the day before that day in July 2005, to my former colleague and his grouchy complaints, and how his mind buckled, and his soul melted, after Danny Boyle's opening ceremony. I remember how easy it seemed to think beyond the sycophantic slogans, the politicking, the physical feats, and watch a different world emerging at the end of our high road. I remember how that peculiar Emerald City drew our gaze to it so wonderfully, and how it brought us together in genuine ways – graciously, warmly, collectively, inclusively. I hold my scarf about the knot, trying to hang onto that thought, as I move on.



# FROM THE SLOPES OF OLYMPUS TO THE BANKS OF THE LEA

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*these are just a few representative excerpts – the book itself  
contains 208 pages of text and photos.*

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