



LOOKING OUT OF
YOUR WINDOW

a story of time in
BRADFORD to LONDON
with love xXx

London

I went to London and it was amazing.

i met this guy called Yusuf outside Harmondsworth and Colnbrook detention centres and now i find myself feeling that i really do like him and although i set out to take the opportunity to go somewhere i'd never been before and have some fun now am in the position where i want to go to london to see him.

i went once in march, but the second ~~time~~ time was a time which meant so much to me and there were moments where i felt flooded with a feeling of beauty and wonder and amazement that were of a sort that i had never experienced before. the whole thing just blew me away with the complete freedom i felt.

i caught the coach to london victoria early in the morning from interchange and arrived in London with the fear that i would go home disappointed because the last trip had been so amazing, how could it be beaten?

i decided to hang out in London town for a while and this resulted in me wandering around the city aimlessly and becoming very frustrated. turned out that yusuf didn't even know i was in london but after going to Bang Bang clothing exchange and the comic museum i headed to catch the 38 to clapton pond and Filey Ave.

after getting completely lost and spending what seemed like forever on the bus i decided to get off and catch the bus the other way... i eventually found clapton common and chilled out there for a while with reggae and ruit and a great carrot and hummous sandwich. yusuf was out and about on his bike so i waited for him but we soon found he didn't know where i was. after a short wander i found Filey Ave by complete chance and walked to his house. he told me to go in but i didn't want to due to fear of people ~~in~~ i didn't know and also wasting a beautiful sun ~~in~~ set. i hung out by the jewish school at the end of the road and watched the sky bleed red until yusuf rode past me. i took the bike and we headed to 87.

i didn't know what was coming or entirely what to expect, last time i was there there were fewer people and i didn't know what any of it had meant to yusuf. i knew i had cared about him a lot and fuck it, yeh i love him. of course i do, i slept with him, i don;t just go around doing that. i meant something to me, i don't think i knew what though. we put stuff away and headed to the kitchen where there were many faces including two i had met earlier outside the house, when looking for yusuf. a gorgeous australasian called roxanna and some mental french guy. adam, who i met last time through squat-sitting duties, was there aswell. quiet though. yusuf hunted through

the shit he;d found. there were old photographs and some wierd kitchen stuff. the excitement in him was clear but no one else seemed so bothered. i liked that.

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i liked how immensely bothered he was. how excited he was, going through the bins bags of random stuff. the same way i would be if it was me. he disappeared for a bit. alex came in, he was friendly and polite, the reason i liked him, so so so nice and willing to make an effort, hugely quietly confident. he seemed pleased i was there, it made me wonder about the whole concept of

travelling to these people. where as i can sometimes see it as quite pointless. time passed, we talked about things, including bradford, the 1 in 12, some political shit that i forget. the french mental was quite, mental, happy in an overly happy way, like he was making up for nervousness.

i think i eventually looked for yusuf, he was upstairs with the new foreign guy whose name i didn't know but who was riding with yusuf when he arrived. he was sorting out the computer in yusuf's room. i think yusuf had found it all.

it's madness what people throw away. new foreign guy left and i sat on the chair that i'd been sitting on the whole time i'd been in there. yusuf came over and bent down next to me. "i haven't had chance to talk to you alone yet" and kissed me. downstairs things were getting rowdy as Roxanna started them all off on another round of tequila for her birthday on tuesday (it was thursday today)

we went out to the terrace on the first floor from the kitchen to ~~xxx~~ spend some time outside, in the dark of the night and the light of the city. it was nice.

yusuf's plants sit in a last row along the white lop-sided make-shift shelving at the edge of the balcony. lemon balm grew in boots and thyme in milk cartons.

the dog kennel had gone. we reminisced the dog vs. rabbit theory. people kept popping in and out of us. i think bruce came at one point, he seemed happy enough to see me. i had really taken to him last time, a real doing person, plumbing in sinks etc.

the darkness and our solitude sent most people away swiftly, parting with an invite to the festivities downstairs. yusuf went down a couple of times. i don't remember the details. some how we were both in his room and the moon was orange it was somethin i kept looking at. the computer was a music device and we listened to stuff untill we ended up with sigur ros. i don't know if he did that on purpose, but after a while it is clarifying and consuming at the same time. he locked the door and lit candles, there was lot of effort and hell maybe even rom romance, but ~~hell~~ it wasn't a bad thing. the flicker of the flames danced round the room as we kissed. sigur ros went over and around and exposed and wrapped us up. the most amazing feelings came over me and didn't leave as we undressed each other and passed the energy between us. the power of the sounds i was hearing made it even more powerful. it made me feel that this was a special occurrence, not an everyday thing. we slept all tangled and grasping at each other until the morning. i felt loved and i felt desire.

the next day we got up and i realised i needed to work in some way or risk making life

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difficult for myself later. we ate bread - there was a lot of it - and i read outside in the sun. yusuf asked what i wanted to do today as we lay on the floor that morning "i don't know" "shall we go to millenium mills?" i was scared but knew this opportunity wouldn't come again.

in the sun i read about scotland and tired myself out with the reading and the effort of it all. yusuf reads poetry. sylvia plath. he shouted to me from the terrace. romeo. his efforts at being like that somehow bypass me and i process him as unmeaning.

but who knows what he means, ~~it~~ isn't that the fun of it? not knowing what we mean and the game of guessing. i'm having a lot of fun.

yusuf washed up the random shit he'd found ~~x~~ and i sat out. it was nice to be visited and kissed after the night before and knowing what had happened.

we got some stuff together and ~~xxxx~~ headed out to the docklands

and millenium mills. the trains were sporadic fr m clapton,

we got the bus. and the tube and the bus again, and the train.

jumping barriers and pretendin g to have the right ticket.

yusuf thought it would be a gthrill, but i was just scared. loser.

that was the time i felt like maybe i somehow didn't fit with some sort of model, but i didn't care, i like me and if other people like me then that's a bonus.

but i did it and it was ok. i didn't feel like i'd achieved anything though, it was just normalised. we made it to pontoon dock and admired the amazing being that is millenium mills. somehow there was symbolism in the fact that we were above it at pontoon dock station looking down on this enormity. but we were big enough to conquer it.

we found the break in the fence and weaved through the trees and branches, catching hair and hoods on all the

obstructions. the mill seemed a long way from the fence and so big, how were we going to beat that?

i knew that we couldn't beat this, we had to be part of it,

Darting, as fast as someone as unfit and easily out of breath as i can, from bush to tree to mound of some shit we made our way to the internal fence barricading off the docklands waterway. a blank canvas of white wooden fence left little for the imagination, and my hands, the grab onto. yusuf had to help me up but then i was ok, i felt good for getting over a fence, albeit incredibly awkwardly. but the challenges didn't end there. at the outside wall of the central building of the mill we looked up at a window ledge and 2 loose bolts on the boarding on the window above it. it was high, for a brick wall ~~xxx~~ it wasn't something i would usually assume to be something i could climb. he went first and made it look as easy as could be expected. a smashed in window was at waist height from the outside but translated as floor level inside. the water stopcock was all for hands and the window frame 30cm below it all there was for feet. i made it and found myself looking at the sky high window now in my face.

the wooden boarding sprang like a ruler on a primary school desk. while yusuf's slender frame slide right through i found myself wedged by the wood at my waist, a woman's figure isn't the same as the bland straight-up outline of this man.

i put a lot of fuckin' effort in here, i would have felt stupid if only i'd cared but more than this boy i wanted this building. my belt caught and i thought i wouldn't get my hefty weight in, but i proved that i can do it, i did it.

inside it was dusty and dark. we celebrated and yeh i felt good, really good for getting in, doing something i hadn't bargained on, something that had scared me. it felt pretty good.

the dark open spaces found my fear but the adrenalin over rode it all for now. the huge columns holding up the building. any other time place and person and the only thing on my mind would have been the creatures behind it. but we were too far in to the race to the sunset at the top. the stairs were heavy concrete and heavy going. he watched me struggle without reluctance and looked incredulous at the fact he'd brought "a girl on a date here" but i loved it and couldn't believe he hadn't done it before. at the top there is a garden, trees and pussy willow and a pond. nature takes it's hold on what it wants, not where it's told. i put his hand on the soft furnishings of that tree and meowed like a cat. there was a window he wanted me to see, and with his enthusiasm i could hardly keep up but wanted to. the place was empty of clues up there. jumping over water and reeds and rotting wood we went up again. the ~~xxxxxx~~ steps were like a ladder. we still weren't there. up out in the open and we were there. we weren't there entirely physically., we were there for us and because of the time, i start to ask the question 'where is millenium mills' - it's not just where, it's when and how and with who. how we got there meant more than being in that physical space. i felt like i'd travelled all the way from h rmondsworth on a mission that i never knew i would go on and never thought i could complete.

the cranes somehow made the sunset more beautiful through their industrialisation of the place. c nary harf sc rred the skyline but made it so much easier to appreciate the wonder of what was there compared to 'normality'. blood orange tasted like raspberries. star jumps to keep me warm made him laugh. reggae let us dance. "where were you four years ago jen" . we celebrated our journey and achievement and i felt free and consumed all at once.

we sat as the sunset, i stood up and was blown away by the scene that had evolved in that short time. the light of london city airport, the dwarfed cruise ship. the orange neon of the city. fiarground rides on the horizon. he joked. i didn't laugh, but i loved it. we ran around the roof to keep warm. planted alfalfa and broccoli in the garden and threw orange peel everywhere.

in the mill we explored and i feared every thing except him. a pigeon flapped and freaked me out. the machinery fascinated him, and would have me, if it wasn't pitch black. i hung onto him like a kid, or a puppy, either one. shadows danced about and flour threatened to explode. we took no souvenirs. we ended in the bathroom. he had been obsessed with electrics for so long but graffiti covered tiles culminated. '1978 makes 1979 look like 1984' i trusted the author as i wasn't alive at the time

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green, blue, turquoise tiles and a strangely un-broken mirror. all the exits were bricked up.

claustrophobia skipped about a bit, but logic won because we came. IN ~~some~~ we must go OUT. he couldn't remeber the way, it was dark, we were lost because adrenalin got us there, no framework was created to get us out. but we found the window. i wanted to le ave. the place was amazing but the dark started to get into me and i wanted out. yusuf said he'd go first to show me how, but any rational-scared-of-the-dark-person would say no to that. violence ran round in blood because of fear. i wouldn't be left h er on my own to go mad. to be shown was like to be denied my logic, what was i, am i? stupid? he went first. i didn't know how i was going to get down, it looked high. it was. i was up here and down there was broken glass and thorns. and god-knows what else. i found myself stood on the ledge on the outside of the building, with nothing to move to no way to move down, i ended up re-tracing my steps through the window to get down. logic doesn't work when you c n't see your feet. i thought that i might fall, i might've, but i wasn't scared. how can you be scared when yo u've just acheived so much? my feet hung down and my reletively weak arms held me alive. i got angry, he wasn't being helpful in as ar as i wanted him to be. but that is what got me through it, being angry, having soe passion for once. "fuck it, I'm going down" i jumped down and it all orked out. perfe ct. if that is a word that c n ever apply to reality. he passed the bags through the smashed window to me and i watched him leave. the water of the docklands sounded eerie, like ~~murder~~ murder. but then i just needed a wee. fucks sake. the fence was our next step, but we took time to admire the place that had welcomed us and held t is time and been our jorney. it really was beautiful. the red letters of 'SPILLER'S' so high i could hardly believe we had been up there. we alked towards the fence. there wa a ar. "Car!" we ran and my eyes searched and my brain clunked about trying to hide myself. half behind a bush, half exposed we kneal t down and i covered up my leopard print flashed at my waist. it didn't know it but i cut my hands. the car went. he lost something. "if you had to leave right now what are the things you couldn't leave with out?" he'd played the harmonica as we went down t ose heavy stairs and jumped over scaffolding. not that, couldn't leave that. he had it. torch was gone. i watched for the car, he looked for it, couldn't be found. we decided to leave as this was probably a good time to not et caught.

"have you got any ID on you?" bank card, why? i wa too scared to leave without it, yusuf lives without money and i can't live without taking it somewhere for secirity. that small piece of plastic makes me feel dsafe. the fence was harder but easier to climb. our bl ack bodies against the whitewash amused me. but in all seriousness we were trying to evade capture. the open space seemed blank, the bushes and trees so small and ucking un helpful. off the fence i rolled into gravel, over my head and laughed, i wanted him but we had to leave. we looked for the car took a detour considered jumping a compltely different fence and ran. hiding was hard, i felt exposed but my logic kept telling me that there was nothing they could do. but t en i always think police don't want to hurt you. i think i am naive. or was. we squeezed through a bent fence like the one at the back of the new cinema when i was 15. he said it was narrow. i'm not that 'womanly'. fucking biology and gender fucking arg. we ran. we were so close to the fence now that if they saw us it would be too late. i could see the cars headlights b ehind us. my eyes were wide and desperate, like they had been looking for the headlightless car as we jumped the white fence and looke for lost shit. he didn't have a process for leaving. i felt prous of my logical fucking mind. hell yeh. it was near the corner, on the left. find t e corner, go right until we hit prison. the outside felt like that. prison. fucking myndane and carbon copy. that's why i felt so free in that place, with this person, there wasn't a city plan or a shopping-centre mentality to be seen. obviously, as i wasn't in a shopping centre. but life has become one big photocopy of a photocopy of a photocopy. dull. so out we went. back to our cells. but semantics and symbolism followed us home as a fox stood in front of us and stared. it was beautiful. i'd never seen a fox before. it was beautiful. it trotted won the path and we followed it. later it walked towards us and we pray

prayed for it to get close. it crossed the road. sly.
 we got the train back and the journey was on all over again. it aahur.
 i was sick of transportation. my legs cried out to be used. fuck.
 we got off at hackney and walked to pogo. little did we realise it was gone 11pm.
 no on in. obviously.
 we found a speaker. we carried it home. people looked at us because i was female
 and carrying something heavy and yusuf was male and not. hat-fucking bollocks.
 fuck. i was back in my cell.
 on the roof we'd listened to the postal service and not had bars like out here.
 how can out be a cell? lon don.
 he wound me up about walking "you're so fucking lazy!" i love my legs and my
 feet, i love their freedom that they give me, don't go tht way today, go faster bda
 go fater, go twice, go when you want, dont sit at a bus stop with it't orang neon
 bus updates. hell, don't tell me when it's coming i want it to be a surprise.
 fuck. london.
 at 87 no one answered, it made me smile a nervous smile. this girl was beautiful,
 you could tell instantly that she was a beautiful person. her smile was like
 what this detention is missing so often.
 "shall we have a bath when we et back?" "yeh" we didn't. i wish didn't wasn't
 so negative. it wasn't bad, it's just the event.
 am zing food awaited us. all that freedom makes a girl hungry.
 and a guy i guess.
 we were tired. that didn't stop us communicating in it was, that's what it is.
 like a telephone but more personal.

i was determined not to miss my bus. but i did. funny fucking story.
 but not my journey, just part of the prison system.
 fuck. fucking cellmates on crack and 7 lloves of bread on the bus and
 ticket men getting on both ends of the bus to check my non-existent ticket.

i would never hav. made it anyhow.
 i went to euston but no trains to brum or rugby.
 went to marlybone to catch a train to brum for only £9.50. good things.

then i was 'home' and i quickly remebered that these bars are transparent and full
 of t traps.

the dream wa n't over until i told the world. but the journey was on hiatus.



Yusuf lived at 78 filey Avenue in London for a bit. I visited him in 2007. The house had been abandoned for some time and could have happily housed 6 or more people. The next time I visited Yusuf he was no longer living there. I have so many more amazing stories from my time with him, I just don't seem to be able to write them down. I have since lost touch with Yusuf and thought maybe I should block out his name, but this story is about him, not an anonymous silhouette and anyone who knows him should read this happy to know how happy he made me.

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The dream is over, now I've told the world.