

## Nice Cup of Tea

I could see him through the drizzle

'This is the man you are going to marry, you mark my words', whispered into one of my ears

'Oh, I remember when you two first met, when you first met Alex' said another friend only recently

'You two sitting on the swings, gently swinging,  
gazing into each other's eyes'

The rain came down as we first kissed

in the middle of the football field

But then made way for a clear sky sunset as we later kissed on the Thames Path near The Angel

Could I quite believe that I had found mine?

'Did you see the smile on his face?' said a friend when Alex said goodbye 'How happy was he'

'Yes', happy me replied

Alex's smile kept me smiling the rest of the night

And all the way into the following morning as I got the 453 for our first date

Packed onto the bus like sardines

Sweat not just from the heat but from my anticipation in seeing him again

And there he was just before midday as planned

sitting in Little Italy Café just off Leicester Square

smoking a cigarette and drinking a cup of tea

New memories about to be made in spaces so familiar and historied to me

Now reconfigured and reimagined through cups of tea

First to The Poetry Cafe on Betterton Street

for a nice cup of tea

Then to Foyles Cafe on Charing Cross Road

for another cup of tea

Walking down The Mall holding each other's hand

Our first photo of us together on the grass in Green Park

Then to The Retro Bar, George Court off The Strand

for a final cup of tea

Sitting together in the black two-seater sofa

in the late afternoon as a welcome cool breeze

came through the open front door

Felt strange being here not chatting up some bloke

Eyeing up talent whilst out for a smoke

Bet the barman thought I was having a joke

When I asked for tea not my usual whiskey and coke

Me stone cold sober not passed out on the floor

Were those days now over and a new me in store?

The barman remarked,

'He's a keeper, you'll see'

Did he have foresight? Had he read the leaves in our tea?

Yes he must have been psychic in the forces greater

As I'm now engaged to Alex my sidekick eleven years later

The bar was half empty but for me was full of memories  
as the bar I had been too many times drunk in  
disco danced in  
smoked roll-ups in  
had my heartbroken three or more times in  
had a date where the guy spent most of the time talking  
about washing powder in  
and where another guy with tattoos of stars on his arms  
was the one who had got away in  
as I could not see what was in front in me  
This bar that I self-reflected in  
in amongst the jukebox playing New Order  
and fairy lights wrapped around the portraits of pop stars spread across the walls like a salon of the  
electro-pop elite

And now, here I was in the bar again  
The smoky haze  
of past drunken nights and morning after hungover days  
replaced by an indescribable feeling of self-peace  
just by being with Alex sitting in the pub  
sharing a nice cup of tea