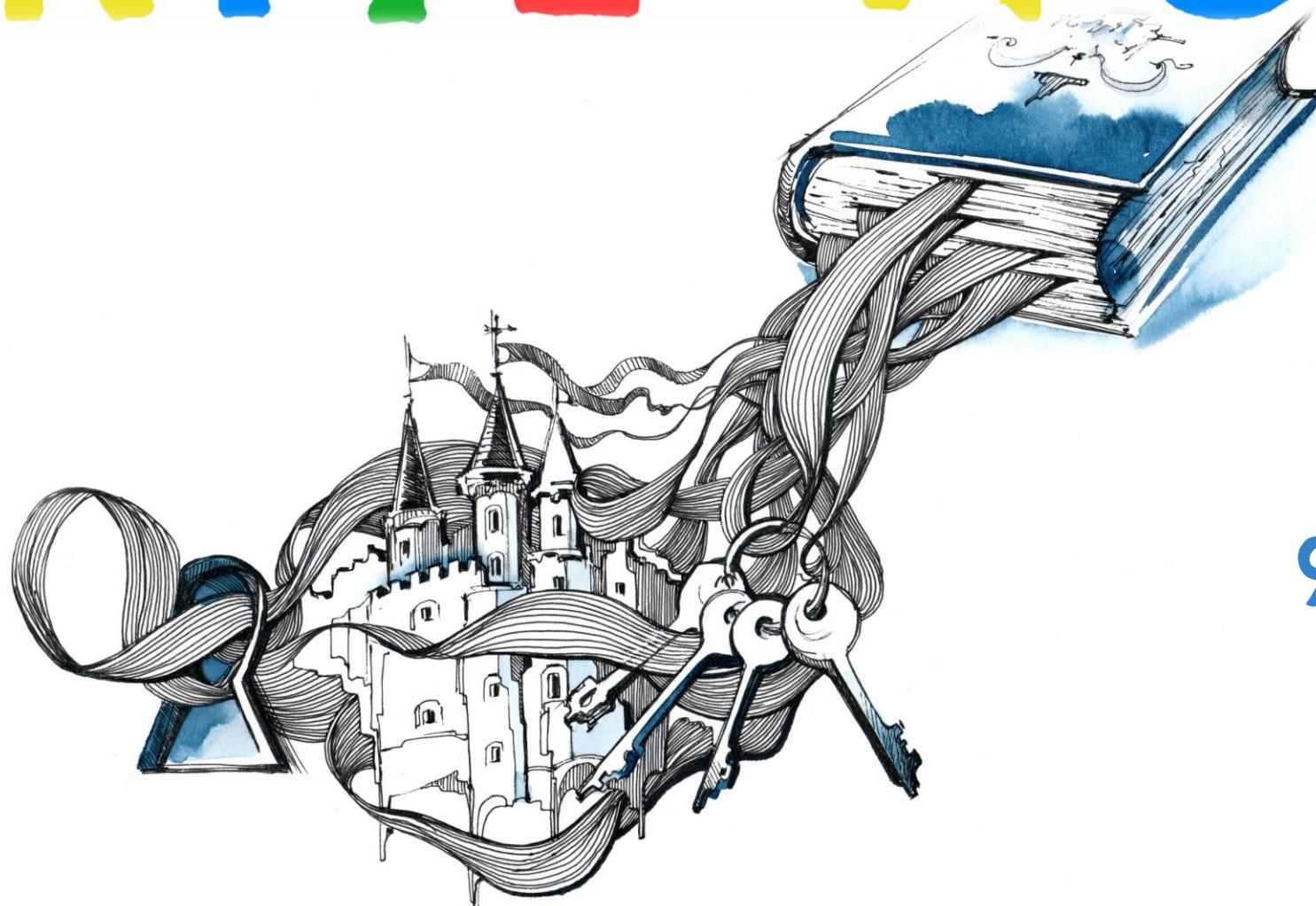


# WRITE NOW!



9: Extracts  
from  
Literature

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# **9. Journeys**

## **Extracts from Literature**

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## 1. Suggestions for how to use the extracts

In this booklet, you will find some literary extracts from various writers to help you think about journeys in interesting ways.

As you read them, think about:

1. How the writer has made places seem familiar, unusual, exciting or dangerous.
2. How the writer has included lots of details – attention to detail helps the reader also experience the place or places.
3. How the writer has used the journey to represent part of the character's development or self-discovery.

You should also pay attention to:

1. Use of detail – how much detail a writer puts into individual paragraphs
2. Vocabulary
3. Punctuation use
4. Use of objects, animals, things, colour, size, people, names etc.
5. Use of similes and metaphors

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## 2. Howl's Moving Castle – Diana Wynne Jones

In this extract, Sophie discovers the castle in which she is going to meet an angry wizard and go on her adventure of discovery. Wynne Jones uses descriptive language, especially weather and colour, to guide her reader's expectations.

The third encounter came towards the end of the afternoon when Sophie had worked her way quite high into the hills. A countryman came whistling down the lane toward her. A shepherd, Sophie thought, going home after seeing to his sheep. He was a well-set-up young fellow of forty or so.

"Gracious!" Sophie said to herself. "This morning I'd have seen him as an old man. How one's point of view does alter!"

When the shepherd saw Sophie mumbling to herself, he moved rather carefully over to the other side of the lane and called out with great heartiness, "Good evening to you, Mother! Where are you off to?"

"Mother?" said Sophie. "I'm not your mother, young man!"

"A manner of speaking," the shepherd said, edging along against the opposite hedge. "I was only meaning a polite inquiry, seeing you walk into the hills at the end of the day. You won't get down into Upper Folding before nightfall, will you?"

Sophie had not considered this. She stood in the road and thought about it. "It doesn't matter really," she said, half to herself. "You can't be fussy when you're off to seek your fortune."

"Can't you indeed, Mother?" said the shepherd. He had now edged himself downhill of Sophie and seemed to feel better for it. "Then I wish you good luck, Mother, provided your fortune don't have nothing to do with charming folks' cattle." And he took off down the road in great strides, almost running, but not quite.

Sophie stared after him indignantly. "He thought I was a witch!" she said to her stick. She had half a mind to scare the shepherd by shouting nasty things after him, but that seemed a little unkind.

She plugged on uphill, mumbling. Shortly, the hedges gave way to bare banks and the land beyond became heathery upland, with a lot of steepness beyond that covered with yellow, rattling grass. Sophie kept grimly on. By now her knobby old feet ached, and her back, and her knees. She became too tired to mumble and simply plugged on, panting, until the sun was quite low. And all at once it became quite clear to Sophie that she could not walk a step further. She collapsed onto a stone by the wayside, wondering what she would do now. "The only fortune I can think of is a comfortable chair!" she gasped.

The stone proved to be on a sort of headland, which gave Sophie a magnificent view of the way she had come. There was most of the valley spread out beneath her in the setting sun, all fields and walls and hedges, the winding of the river, and the fine mansions of rich people glowing over from clumps of trees, right down to blue mountains in the far distance. Just below her was Market Chipping. Sophie could look down into its well-known streets. There was Market Square and Cesari's. She could have tossed a stone down the chimney pots of the house next to the hat shop.

"How near it still is!" Sophie told her stick in dismay. "All that walking just to get above my own rooftop!"

It got cold on the stone as the sun went down. An unpleasant wind blew whichever way Sophie turned to avoid it. Now it no longer seemed so unimportant that she would be out on the hills during the night. She found herself thinking more and more of a comfortable chair and a fireside, and also of darkness and wild animals. But if she went back to Market Chipping, it would be the middle of the night before she got there. She might just as well go on. She sighed and stood up, creaking. It was awful. She ached all over.

"I never realized before what old people had to put up with!" she panted as she laboured uphill. "Still, I don't think wolves will eat me. I must be far too dry and tough. That's one comfort."

Night was coming down fast now and the heathery uplands were blue-gray. The wind was also sharper. Sophie's panting and the creaking of her limbs were so loud in her ears that it took

her a while to notice that some of the grinding and puffing was not coming from herself at all. She looked up blurrily.

Wizard Howl's castle was rumbling and bumping toward her across the moorland. Black smoke was blowing up in clouds from behind its black battlements. It looked tall and thin and heavy and ugly and very sinister indeed. Sophie leaned on her stick and watched it. She was not particularly frightened. She wondered how it moved. But the main thing in her mind was that all that smoke must mean a large fireside somewhere inside those tall black walls.

"Well, why not?" she said to her stick. "Wizard Howl is not likely to want my soul for his collection. He only takes young girls." She raised her stick and waved it imperiously at the castle. "Stop!" she shrieked.

The castle obediently came to a rumbling, grinding halt about fifty feet uphill from her. Sophie felt rather gratified as she hobbled toward it.

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## 3. Journey to The River Sea – Eva Ibbotson

This extract is taken from where Maia travels along the Amazon for the first time. This landscape is very different to anything she has ever seen before.

The journey down the Amazon was one that Maia never forgot. In places the river was so wide that she understood why it was called the River Sea and they sailed between distant lines of trees. But sometimes they made their way between islands and then, on the sandbanks, they saw some of the creatures that Maia had read about. Once a litter of capybaras lumbered after their mother and they were close enough to see their funny snouts and sandy fur. Once they passed a tree whose roots had been killed by the rise of the water, and its bare branches were full of scarlet and blue parakeets which flew up, screeching, when the boat came past. And once Maia saw a grey log lying in the shallows which suddenly came to life.

‘Oh look,’ she said, ‘A croc—I mean an alligator. My first one!’, and a man standing close by nodded, and said he was glad that she knew there were no crocodiles in this part of the world. ‘You’d be surprised how many people never learn.’

They passed plantations of rubber trees and Indian villages with the houses built on stilts to stop them being flooded when the river rose. The Indian children came out onto the landing stage

and waved and called out, and Maia waved back and didn't stop till they were out of sight.

Sometimes the boat went close enough to the shore for them to pass by old houses owned by the sugar planters or coffee exporters; they could see the verandas with the families taking tea, and dogs stretched out in the shade, and hanging baskets of scarlet flowers.

'Will it be like that?' Maia kept asking. 'They're sure to have a veranda, aren't they—perhaps we can do lessons looking out over the river?'

She was becoming more and more excited. The colour, the friendly waving Indians, the flashing birds, all delighted her, and she was not troubled by the heat. But at the centre of all her thoughts were the twins. She saw them in white dresses with coloured sashes like pictures in a book, laughing and welcoming and friendly. She imagined them getting ready for bed, brushing each other's hair, and lying in a hammock with a basket full of kittens on their laps, or picking flowers for the house.

'They'll have a big garden going down to the river, don't you think?' she asked Miss Minton, 'and a boat with a striped awning probably. I don't really like fishing because of the hooks but if they showed me . . . I suppose you can live off the land in a place like that.'

Since the letter the twins had written to her was only two sentences long, Maia was free to make up their lives, and she did this endlessly.

'I wonder if they've tamed a lot of animals? I should think they would have, wouldn't you? Coatis get very tame—or maybe they'll have a pet monkey? A little capuchin that sits on their shoulders? And a parakeet?' she asked Miss Minton, who told her to wait and see, and set her another exercise in her Portuguese grammar.

But whatever Miss Minton said made no difference. In Maia's head the twins paddled their boat between giant water lilies, trekked fearlessly through the jungle, and at night played piano duets, sending the music out into the velvet night.

'They'll know the names of everything too, won't they? Those orange lilies; no one seems to know what they're called,' said Maia.

'The names will be in a book,' said Miss Minton quellingly, but she might have spared her breath as Maia wandered further and further into the lives of Gwendolyn and Beatrice.

'They'll shorten their own names, do you think? Gwen perhaps? And Beattie?'

It occurred to Maia that Miss Minton knew quite a lot about the creatures they came across along the river, and when her governess pointed out fresh water dolphins swimming ahead of them, she plucked up courage to ask what had made her decide to come out to the Amazon.

Miss Minton stared out over the rails. At first she did not answer and Maia blushed, feeling she

had been impertinent. Then she said, 'I knew somebody once who came to live out here. He wrote to me once in a while. It made me want to see for myself.'

'Oh.' Maia was pleased. Perhaps Miss Minton had a friend here and would not be lonely. 'Is he still here, your friend?'

The pause this time was longer.

'No,' said Miss Minton. 'He died.'

After a week of sailing down the river they stopped at Santarem, a port where a big market had been set up. The passengers were allowed ashore and it was now that Maia heard the familiar 'snap' and saw that Miss Minton had opened her large black handbag.

'Mr Murray gave me some money for you to spend on the journey. Is there anything you want to buy?'

Maia's eyes shone. 'Presents for the twins. And perhaps for Mr and Mrs Carter. I should have done it in England, but it was all such a rush. Have I got enough?'

'Yes,' said Miss Minton drily, handing over a packet of notes. She would have been glad to earn in three months what Mr Murray had given Maia, yet she had to admit that Maia seemed to be quite unspoilt.

The market was dazzling. There were watermelons bigger than babies, and green bananas and yellow ones and some that were almost orange. There were piles of nuts heaped on barrows, and pineapples and peppers and freshly caught fish and fish that had been dried. There were animals tugging at their ropes, and delicate lacework and silverware and woven baskets and leather bags. And selling them, talking and laughing, were beautiful black women in brilliantly coloured bandannas, and Indians in European clothes and Indians with painted chests and feathers, and slender Brazilian girls with golden skins.

But buying presents for the twins was far from easy because Maia was sure that what they would really like were some fluffy baby chicks or a duckling or even a white mouse.

'Things that are alive are always the best presents,' she said, but Miss Minton was firm.

'You can't buy them animals till you know what pets they have already. You don't want to get your present eaten on the first day.'

So Maia bought two lace collars for the twins and an embroidered shawl for Mrs Carter, and for Mr Carter a leather wallet with a picture of a jaguar on it.

Then she disappeared and Miss Minton was just getting anxious when she came back, carrying a blue fringed parasol with a carved handle.

'Because you ruined your umbrella on Henry Hartington,' she said, 'and this will be better for the

sun.'

'And you, Maia? What did you get for yourself?'

But the only thing Maia wanted was a mongrel puppy scratching its fleas in a wicker basket, and once again Miss Minton was firm.

'They'll probably have a dog already, to guard the house,' she said. 'Several I dare say,'—and Maia had to be content with that.

They still had a few days to travel down the brown, leaf-stained river. Then a few hours before they were due to dock at Manaus, the passengers were called on deck by a loudspeaker and shown a famous sight.

They had come to the Wedding of the Waters, where the brown waters of the Amazon joined the black waters of the river Negro and they could see the two rivers flowing distinct and side by side.

Then as they steamed up the Negro, Maia saw the green and gold dome of the theatre; she saw church spires, and the yellow building of the customs house.

They had reached Manaus. They had arrived.

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## 4. Swallows and Amazons – Arthur Ransome

This extract is taken from where the children are preparing for their expedition to the island in the lake in their little boat. It is just across the water from the house in the Lake District, but they feel like explorers of an unknown land, and this is shown in the language.

There was very little room in the Swallow when they had finished loading her at the little jetty by the boathouse. Under the main thwart was a big tin box with the books and writing-paper and other things that had to be kept dry, like nightclothes. In this box was also a small aneroid barometer. John had won it as a prize at school and never went anywhere without it.

Underneath the forward thwart, on each side of the mast, were large biscuit tins, with bread, tea, sugar, salt, biscuits, tins of corned beef, tins of sardines, a lot of eggs, each one wrapped separately for fear of smashes, and a big seed cake. Right forward, in front of the mast, was a long coil of stout grass rope and the anchor, but it had been found by trying that there was room for the Boy Roger here in the bows as look-out man. Then there were the two ground-sheets in which were rolled up the tents, each with the rope that belonged to it. These were stowed just aft of the mast. The whole of the space that was left in the bottom of the boat was filled by two big sacks stuffed with blankets and rugs. Besides all these there were the things that could not be packed at all, but had to go loose, wedged in anyhow, things like the saucepan and frying-pan and kettle, and a big farm lantern. Then there was a basket full of mugs, plates, spoons, forks, and knives. There was no room for anything else big except the crew

and there on the jetty were four great haybags, stuffed with hay by Mr. Jackson, the farmer, which were to serve as beds and mattresses.

"We shall have to make two trips of it," said Captain John.

"Or three," said Mate Susan. "Even with Swallow empty we shall never be able to get more than three of the haybags into her at once."

Able-seaman Titty had an idea. "Couldn't we get a native to bring them in a native rowing boat?" she said.

John looked back into the boathouse at the big rowing boat belonging to the farm. He knew, because it had been privately arranged, that mother was to pay them a visit before night to see that all was well. He knew, too, that it had been arranged that Mr. Jackson, the farmer, should row her. Mr. Jackson was as good a native as anyone could wish.

Mother and nurse, carrying Vicky, were coming down the field.

John went to meet them. It was agreed that the natives would bring the haybags in a rowing boat.

"Are you sure you haven't forgotten anything?" mother asked, looking down from the jetty into the loaded Swallow. "It's very seldom people go on a long voyage without forgetting something."

“We’ve got everything that was on my list,” said Mate Susan.

“Everything?” said mother.

“Mother, what are you holding behind your back?” asked Titty, and mother held out a packet of a dozen boxes of matches.

“One might almost say, By Gum,” said John. “We could never have lit the fire without them.”

They said their farewells on the jetty.

“If you are ready, you’d better start,” said mother.

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## 5. The Road Not Taken – Robert Frost

Frost's poem is often considered to be about following your own path, but actually it is a poem about not looking back with regret – not trying to find out what other choices would have meant.

1. Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

2. Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

3. And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

4. I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I–  
I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

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## 6. Notes from a Small Island – Bill Bryson

Dharker's poem is a great example of using the contrast of power and fragility to expose the complexities of life.

My first sight of England was on a foggy March night in 1973 when I arrived on the midnight ferry from Calais. For twenty minutes, the terminal area was aswarm with activity as cars and lorries poured forth, customs people did their duties, and everyone made for the London road. Then abruptly all was silence and I wandered through sleeping, low-lit streets threaded with fog, just like in a Bulldog Drummond movie. It was rather wonderful having an English town all to myself.

The only mildly dismaying thing was that all the hotels and guesthouses appeared to be shut up for the night. I walked as far as the rail station, thinking I'd catch a train to London, but the station, too, was dark and shuttered. I was standing wondering what to do when I noticed a grey light of television filling an upstairs window of a guesthouse across the road. Hooray, I thought, someone awake, and hastened across, planning humble apologies to the kindly owner for the lateness of my arrival and imagining a cheery conversation which included the line, 'Oh, but I couldn't possibly ask you to feed me at this hour. No, honestly well, if you're quite sure it's no trouble, then perhaps just a roast beef sandwich and a large dill pickle with perhaps some

potato salad and a bottle of beer.' The front path was pitch dark and in my eagerness and unfamiliarity with British doorways, I tripped on a step, crashing face-first into the door and sending half a dozen empty milk bottles clattering. Almost immediately the upstairs window opened.

'Who's that?' came a sharp voice.

I stepped back, rubbing my nose, and peered up at a silhouette with hair curlers. 'Hello, I'm looking for a room,' I said.

'We're shut.'<sub>[L]</sub> 'Oh.' But what about my supper?<sub>[SEP]</sub> 'Try the Churchill. On the front.'<sub>[L]</sub> 'On the front of what?' I asked, but the window was already banging closed.<sub>[SEP]</sub> The Churchill was sumptuous and well lit and appeared ready to receive visitors. Through a window I could see people in suits in a bar, looking elegant and suave, like characters from a Noel Coward play. I hesitated in the shadows, feeling like a street urchin. I was socially and sartorially ill-suited for such an establishment and anyway it was clearly beyond my meagre budget. Only the previous day, I had handed over an exceptionally plump wad of colourful francs to a beady-eyed Picardy hotelier in payment for one night in a lumpy bed and a plate of mysterious chasseur containing the bones of assorted small animals, much of which had to be secreted away in a large napkin in order not to appear impolite, and had determined thenceforth to be more cautious with expenditures. So I turned reluctantly from the Churchill's beckoning warmth and trudged off into the darkness.

Further along Marine Parade stood a shelter, open to the elements but roofed, and I decided that this was as good as I was going to get. With my backpack for a pillow, I lay down and

drew my jacket tight around me. The bench was slatted and hard and studded with big roundheaded bolts that made reclining in comfort an impossibility ± doubt- less their intention. I lay for a long time listening to the sea washing over the shingle below, and eventually dropped off to a long, cold night of mumbled dreams in which I found myself being pursued over Arctic ice floes by a beady-eyed Frenchman with a catapult, a bag of bolts, and an uncanny aim, who thwacked me repeatedly in the buttocks and legs for stealing a linen napkin full of sleepy food and leaving it at the back of a dresser drawer of my hotel room. I awoke with a gasp about three, stiff all over and quivering from cold. The fog had gone. The air was now still and clear, and the sky was bright with stars. A beacon from the lighthouse at the far end of the breakwater swept endlessly over the sea. It was all most fetching, but I was far too cold to appreciate it. I dug shiveringly through my backpack and extracted every potentially warming item I could find a flannel shirt, two sweaters, an extra pair of jeans. I used some woollen socks as mittens and put a pair of flannel boxer shorts on my head as a kind of desperate headwarmer, then sank heavily back onto the bench and waited patiently for death's sweet kiss. Instead, I fell asleep.

I was awakened again by an abrupt bellow of foghorn, which nearly knocked me from my narrow perch, and sat up feeling wretched but fractionally less cold. The world was bathed in that milky pre-dawn light that seems to come from nowhere. Gulls wheeled and cried over the water. Beyond them, past the stone breakwater, a ferry, vast and well lit, slid regally out to sea. I sat there for some time, a young man with more on his mind than in it. Another booming moan from the ship's foghorn passed over the water, re-exciting the irksome gulls. I took off my sock mittens and looked at my watch. It was 5.55 a.m. I looked at the receding ferry and wondered

where anybody would be going at that hour. Where would I go at that hour? I picked up my backpack and shuffled off down the prom, to get some circulation going.

Near the Churchill, now itself peacefully sleeping, I came across an old guy walking a little dog. The dog was frantically trying to pee on every vertical surface and in consequence wasn't so much walking as being dragged along on three legs.

The man nodded a good-morning as I drew level. 'Might turn out nice,' he announced, gazing hopefully at a sky that looked like a pile of wet towels. I asked him if there was a restaurant anywhere that might be open. He knew of a place not far away and directed me to it. 'Best transport caff in Kent,' he said.

'Transport calf?' I repeated uncertainly, and retreated a couple of paces as I'd noticed his dog was straining desperately to moisten my leg.

'Very popular with the lorry drivers. They always know the best places, don't they?' He smiled amiably, then lowered his voice a fraction and leaned towards me as if about to share a confidence. 'You might want to take them pants off your head before you go in.'

I clutched my head 'Oh!' and removed the forgotten boxer shorts with a blush. I tried to think of a succinct explanation, but the man was scanning the sky again.

'Definitely brightening up,' he decided, and dragged his dog off in search of new uprights. I watched them go, then turned and walked off down the promenade as it began to spit with rain.

The cafe was outstanding lively and steamy and deliciously warm. I had a platter of eggs, beans, fried bread, bacon and sausage, with a side plate of bread and marge, and two cups of

tea, all for 22p. Afterwards, feeling a new man, I emerged with a toothpick and a burp, and sauntered happily through the streets, watching Dover come to life. It must be said that Dover was not vastly improved by daylight, but I liked it. I liked its small scale and cosy air, and the way everyone said 'Good-morning,' and 'Hello,' and 'Dreadful weather but it might brighten up,' to everyone else, and the sense that this was just one more in a very long series of fundamentally cheerful, well-ordered, pleasantly uneventful days. No-one in the whole of Dover would have any particular reason to remember 21 March 1973, except for me and a handful of children born that day and possibly one old guy with a dog who had encountered a young fellow with underpants on his head.

I didn't know how early one could decently begin asking for a room in England, so I thought I would leave it till mid-morning. With time on my hands, I made a thorough search for a guesthouse that looked attractive and quiet, but friendly and not too expensive, and at the stroke of ten o'clock presented myself on the doorstep of the one I had carefully selected, taking care not to discompose the milk bottles. It was a small hotel that was really a guesthouse, indeed was really a boarding-house. I don't remember its name, but I well recall the proprietress, a formidable creature of late middle years called Mrs Smegma, who showed me to a room, then gave me a tour of the facilities and outlined the many complicated rules for residing there ± when breakfast was served, how to turn on the heater for the bath, which hours of the day I would have to vacate the premises and during which brief period a bath was permitted (these seemed, oddly, to coincide), how much notice I should give if I intended to receive a phone call or remain out after 10 p.m., how to flush the loo and use the loo brush,

which materials were permitted in the bedroom waste- basket and which had to be carefully conveyed to the outside dustbin, where and how to wipe my feet at each point of entry, how to operate the three-bar fire in my bedroom and when that would be permitted (essentially, during an Ice Age). This was all bewilderingly new to me. Where I came from, you got a room in a motel, spent ten hours making a lavish and possibly irredeemable mess of it, and left early the next morning. This was like joining the Army.