

Appendix 4

Suzanne Moore writing in the Guardian

All I ever wanted to do was leave my hometown. A recent trip started to change my mind about it – until I visited my old house.

It is a long time since I went to the place where I was born. I have avoided it since my mother died. Maybe if you had grown up in Ipswich you would have avoided it, too. Please don't lecture me on the beauties of Suffolk as the bourgeois are wont to do. All I ever wanted to do was leave; to me, it was a stifling small town and the only thing to do was drugs.

But I did go back to show my youngest – and the wonderful Spill arts festival was on. At dusk on each of the 10 nights of the festival, a sonic event, Clarion Call, takes place at the harbour. Hundreds of female voices emerge from 500 speakers as a helicopter looms into view. It is strangely moving and a revelation. The docks used to be filthy, nothing but rotting boats, dead dogs and oily water. Now they have been revived into somewhere you might want to hang out. So many towns have understood that the waterside is magical; this part of the gentrification process is one I love. We also revisited a museum I went to as a child, a veritable palace of taxidermy, complete with a woolly mammoth and a pangolin.

Just as it was all getting rather chichi, I decided to take my youngest back to the house in which I was born and raised, my grandparents' house. It turned out that another house had been built in the garden – and an extension. It is now a footcare clinic treating fungal infections, verrucas and ingrown toenails. How glamorous.

As I took a picture outside, a lady who worked there asked if I would like to go inside, which was kind of her. But I didn't. The dull reality of my smalltown childhood had flooded back ... and the spell was broken.