

AIT

Hermetic Drift: Lateral surfing through correspondences that often happens when thinking about esoteric ideas. Connections can be made which are symbolic or poetic and not based necessarily on logic or science.

He winds his way across London, sticking to B roads and backstreets, going ever more southerly, ever more west. He knows the way well, has done this walk a million times, and does not look up until he catches his first glimpse of the Thames. The pavement opens out into wide shelves that drop down in stages to where shady figures populate the banks. The doggers and the dogged. The river is tame this far out. Not like in the east, where churning undercurrents do the job bricks in pockets should; embed debris in silt. He recalls that bloke found under Blackfriars' Bridge. GOD'S OWN BANKER SIGNS LAST CHEQUE, the papers read.

City planners force him away from the river and onto a pedestrianised high street for a spell. He walks with his face to the floor, ignoring garish neon logos and gormless window displays; averting his gaze from everything but the shoppers' shoes whose rhythm he uses to keep pace, so as not to stand out.

You spot him as he disappears up an unlit and unpaved alley running between an Argos and a Waterstones, leaving a trail of black footsteps smudged in the mud in his wake.

If you follow him, go to No. 5

If are glad to see the back of the suicidal old loon, go to No. 3

∞
No. 1

Chiswick Ait is an island at high tide but when the waters are out, you can just make it walking. If you are planning to stay (and so mind getting wet), use bin bags, one wrapped over each foot and held up to the top of each thigh. There won't be a wet spot deeper than that, though doubling them up might be a good idea.

If your limbs begin dissolving in the water you tread, go to No. 4

If you reach the other side safely, go to No. 6

∞
No. 2

Use your hands and feet. When you get to the top, you should be able to hear a hollow ring, what a burp might sound like inside a stomach.

If you lose your balance, go to No. 1

If you feel hungry, go to No. 4

∞
No. 3

You saunter into Waterstones and wandering the aisles, spot a small volume tucked between another Hitler biography and a chick-lit, soft-porn slavery romp. *The Gentle Art of Tramping*. There is a note tucked inside. "Please freely distribute this book," it reads. 'Ave it.

Go to any number you choose.

∞
No. 4

Don't worry. You die in most endings anyway.

∞
No. 5

The air smells like diesel. The river looks like a dead snake. But you can't get to it. The way is blocked. Boulders of smashed pebbledash, dazzling with damp; broken concrete with thick steel wiring sticking out.

If you clamber straight across, go to No. 2

If you look to try and find an easier way, go to No. 4

∞
No. 6

Once you reach the other side, you find a stone staircase covered with moss. You begin walking up it.

If you edge up on all fours, go to No. 4.

If you slither up on your belly, go to No. 7

∞
No. 7

The size of Chiswick Ait is deceptive. A dense copse of cedars survives there. Their debris covers the island's floor, twigs float in the churning water at its edges. Fallen branches hang from the trees, and all the time, more keep falling. Straight as arrows. Or are they* being thrown? Each time you hear laughter. Where the - And what was that? A stone aimed for your head. And another. You swing yourself up into the low branches of the closest tree, to hide and to get a better look. Up there is a man. Pale and dishevelled. Jacketless and shoeless. You can find him here any day, face turned to the sky, in habitual conversation with the angels.

∞

LET

GOD

GO

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