



i wanted to write this piece inspired by the prose of some books i really like including *in the Dream House* by *Carmen Maria Machado* and *Paradise Rot* by *Jenny Hval* and *The Reactor* by *Nick Blackburn* and the freeform reviews by *The White Pube*. i am learning that everything is a relationship so here are some stories, all of which are true but maybe not in this order.

Hope u enjoy - Efea x

1. London as Gravitational Pull

i am part of something because something is always happening here even when im not doing anything i am part of this big something every musician who is something plays here right and every sports person and every artist who has actually made it and if you work in finance then you are definitely here so like what else is there i guess if you work in like manufacturing but does that even happen in the uk anymore like what factories are there so we are all working in third sector jobs or in hospitality or events catering to the disposable income of the third sector jobs so it makes sense to be here

Things happen in other places but this where the things that happen happen more than in other places and maybe the things that happen here matter more because they are happening here

And this is where i grew up anyway so i wouldnt like anywhere else really because there is so much here there are so many amenities right that i am used to that would be disappointing if i were anywhere else like different food and shops and like banks that are open at different times and its hard enough being mixed race and gay here so it would be worse somewhere else right if someone is going to shout at me for holding my girlfriends hand it might as well be while i go to morrisons at 10pm on wood green high street where lots of other people are watching because if it happened when it was just us on the street that would be more dangerous right like bystander effect vs actually having witnesses which is better



2. London as Decay

i take the stairs at a tube station one hundred and forty-nine steps and they are wet and dripping and the drips cut through the black grime and leave sharp streaks on the walls and the same kind of mushroom that is growing through the floor of my bathroom and the walls outside my flat grow here too

its weird because any leaves that fall from trees are bagged up and taken to the dump but sometimes its like the buildings are the rotten things how can dealing with black mould be such a unifying experience how can it feel like there is no insulation in this home like when they made this structure they knew it was a wet and cold country and i watched a youtube video which said that that was why pebble-dashed exteriors became a thing for insulation and condensation but that doesnt stop the texture from giving me the ick

if my grandad came here because the streets were paved with gold its like that fake gold plated where you take off the ring you thought looked so pretty and shinny and now there is a green mark on your finger that wont come of and the gemstone has fallen out and when you look back at the ring its now mostly brass which isnt inherently bad its just not what you expected



3. London as Compulsion

i went to my cousins house and they used to live in south london on that road where the child died and the death was linked to pollution and since their little boy has asthma they moved further out now they dont really live in london at all but of course it still counts anyway i went to their new house and let me tell you i didnt feel like i should sit on that sofa with my trousers that had been on the tube and overground so i borrowed some joggers and swapped my ratty trainers for a pair of their spare slides and then i used their hand sanitizer and i washed my hands and my cousin had some raw cocoa butter which was nice she is trying to use more natural products i mean she is already vegetarian and its not like supermarkets have good black hair products and when i look at the skin on her hands its a bit raw too but she washes her hands so often and has so many allergies im not that surprised just more at how suddenly red they look compared to her white sofa

Another one of my cousins tells me she hoovers every day and painted all her walls white and to match in her living room she has lots of white candles but she never burns them but back when it was her brothers flat he had the whole of the bedroom painted black with a blackout blind so he could sleep



4. London as Dissociation

i cant smell properly i cant remember what i had for dinner yesterday i cant remember the last time i saw my friend who i have known since we were 12 so we are definitely still friends but i cant remember when i last texted her does she know that i prefer different pronouns now do i even know that i do or am i just avoiding all labels its hard because i dont want any expectations i dont want to be womand or mand i dont want to be perceived

im wearing my black stud uniform which consists of a pair of carhart trousers and a black long sleeved shirt under a black oversized t-shirt with gold earrings in all the piercings in my ears and two chains

i am going to go to the barbers then maybe they will cut my hair right and not talk to me too much because i will feel embarrassed about how high pitched my voice is and how i dont really even know what haircut i want i just know that i dont really recognise myself when i look in the mirror like i know that its me but does it really feel like me and when i pass a group of 16 yo boys and realise i have the exact same haircut i dont know if i am supposed to smile at them or not



5. London as Ego

is there such thing as success without the gratification of my peers like it does feel really good to be recognised and to recognise i feel like i am in the right place and i am recognising the names people are saying and the places that are worth going to

me and some pals are planning to go to a rave on saturday and im thinking about what to wear everyone in the pictures on the instagram page look so cool like they definitely are trying but very coherent aesthetics i kind of wish i was a goth or something because then i would have an Outfit TM but i have so many choices

im drinking cheap wine at a dazed and confused under 30s party and there is a meal deal getting squashed in my bag and im not sure anyone would notice if i left except of course i am working its not like i was invited to this event so people would notice because there would be no one to remember where they put their coat or to tell them its really time to leave now please my feet are starting to ache and its going to take me an hour to get home because its a week day and i live in zone 5

omg we found the pictures of us and we look completely out of it they are hilarious but like when did people learn to pose so they look so fab like i thought my outfit was good someone who was wearing leak.nyc lingerie told me i looked nice but in the pictures i have such hunched shoulders and my eyes are way too open i suppose i am overcompensating because i didnt want to look high but like i thought people were being candid and i definitely was so why do i look so awkward maybe i need to learn to pose i mean my friends look really good in some of the pictures of them but it doesnt count because he literally used to be a model and im never going to be a skinny white girl so maybe i need to go back and pay more attention to how people are standing



6. London as Personal Failure

i mean there are so many exhibition s here its really exciting how many ideas there are really i can never go to enough! Or see enough! i just have to go see this before it closes let me just check instagram because this gallery doesnt have a website okay if i go quickly today i take the print out home with me i can read it later and ill keep the tab open from this QR code hahah yeah these are my 200 emotional support tabs that is such a relateable meme i will send it to my friend i dont know how i ended up on instagram i am supposed to be in this moment looking at this piece of art in front of me im not sure i understand what the artist is trying to say tho but thats probably because im not that familiar with their practice but thats okay i can go to the next show they have their instagram says they have a group show at hypha in kings cross coming up which makes sense and maybe it will be easier with the context of a common theme well i guess their friendship group but im sure there is more to the theme than that

i dont think i am seeing my friends enough maybe i dont have the right friends maybe i dont have enough friends or at least i am not supposed to feel this isolated and its nice that people want to flirt with me i think but only after they find out where i work and why dont they want to talk when they found out that i have a partner but its okay i totally know how to do this how to laugh in the right place and take advantage of the fact that people think im chill and spacey instead of somewhere else entirely but i couldnt tell you where i cant figure out why someone would like me so now ive ended up namedropping too

Connections and conversations are swirling and cigarette smoke and soot are getting up my nose and i just need to sneeze i wanted some air but its louder out here

i must be doing it wrong



7. London as Opaque Bubble

What does it mean to be british where do i come from do i actually identify with anything here not these paved over front gardens so there can be 2.5 cars per house and laurel hedging and calla lilies in the front garden

This doesnt feel like real life it doesnt feel special this backdrop to a hundred drunken walk homes at 3am accompanied by foxes hoping for a bit of my chip butty but this garlic mayo is just for me and my floor

ive done it past the m25 and suddenly i am actually in england the place ive been the whole time but that was different i was in london now i am in England where people actually live and love and probably laugh

i think i get it now there is beauty here to fight for so why are they trying to turn it into another metropole what the fuck is Rachel Reeves problem with the green belt what does she have a problem with fresh air and clear skin and endangered orchids and we need to make sure the people that grow the literal food we depend on are okay

i go for a walk and my trainers get all muddy i put them in the wash
with some vanish so the whites sparkle again because i will always be
a londoner at heart

