

# These Foolish Things

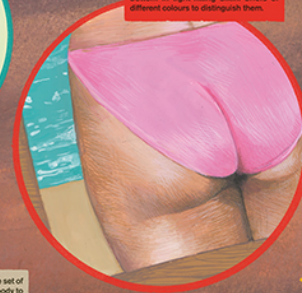
When my mother died, her house was emptied suddenly and without warning by her love John. The charity shops of Bedfordshire dispersed the rare and precious things of Lilac Walk, a lost hoard never to be retrieved.



Hung on wire hooks above the Sony hi-fi on the BTI hallway, an incomplete collection of Coatsport decorative side plates featuring different breeds of cat.



In the second drawer to the left of the sideboard, a set of cork-bottomed place mats with matching coasters depicting varieties of garden birds. Mine was the Cardinal Finch.



The Greatest Hits of the Beach Boys in 2 LP volumes, each featuring a close-cropped photograph of a sun-kissed bottom in tight-fitting bikini briefs of different colours to distinguish them.



A white mug printed with a horse's head and the name 'Melanie', stored in a kitchen cupboard in my grandfather's burglarize amongst other personalised mugs reserved for the use of the grandchildren.



In a box in the loft, an incomplete set of collectible piggy banks, from Woody to Lady Hilary, issued to encourage young savers by the National Bank, one pig for every 25 pounds deposited.



A tapestry of John Constable's 'Haywain', handstitched by my mother, mounted in a surprisingly gaudy gold-painted frame hung next to the uPVC sliding patio doors in the dining room.



On a corner shelving unit with recessed spot lighting, a blue Wedgwood Jasperware souvenir mug commemorating the doomed marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981.



In the sideboard next to 6 miniature bottles of Baby Cham untouched throughout my childhood, a 'Daily Memorial' dinner service brought piece by piece, and used only at Christmas.



In a blue and white plastic wicker-effect saving box next to the magazine rack, a small white ceramic dog with a red felt tongue protruding through a slot, attached to an interior retractable measuring tape.



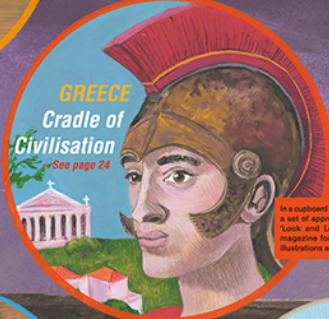
Displayed variously about the electric fireplace, a miniature brass teapot and trolley, an unused 'antique' brass fireside tool set comprising poker, brush and shovel, and several horse brasses on leather martingales, all vigorously Brassed to a high shine.



On the window ledge above the casters of the downstairs toilet, an oversized red brandy glass with a small porcelain cat hanging from the rim, fed at the paws with blue-tick.



Along a trail of occasional tables, a flat-bottomed Waterford crystal ship's decanter, always empty, in a blue lacquered tray with 2 matching tumblers.



GREECE  
Cradle of Civilisation  
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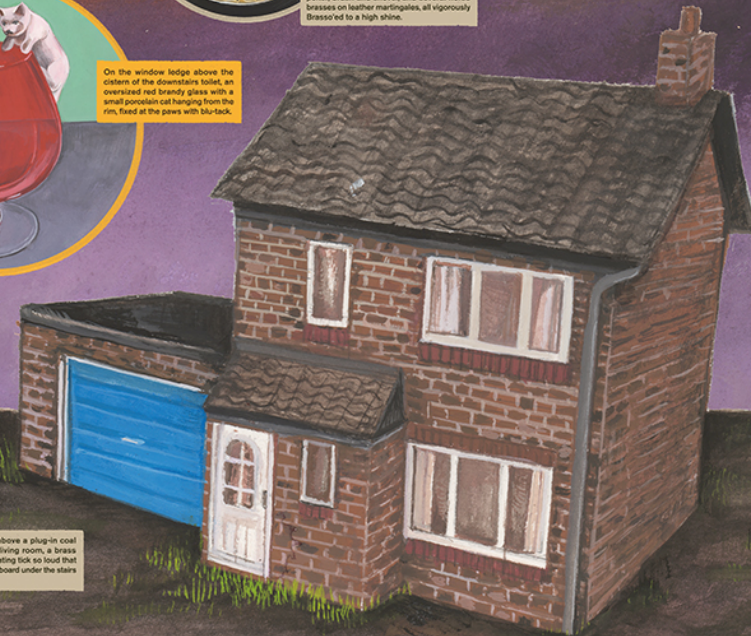
In a cupboard by the bathroom on the landing, a set of approximately 180 back issues of 'Look and Learn', a weekly educational magazine for children featuring beautiful illustrations and cutaway diagrams.



Wrapped in crumpled pink tissue paper, a miniature bible, no larger than my palm, with onion-skin pages bound in intricately carved mother-of-pearl covers. Inside, a dried, pressed leaf from the Garden of Gethsemane.



On a wooden mantel above a plug-in coal effect fireplace in the living room, a brass carriage clock with a grating tick so loud that I would stow it in the cupboard under the stairs when home alone.



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