

PART ONEAll My Loving (With The Beatles 1963)

He was tall for his age, lanky, with a long nose and piercing eyes. His thin lips could bend and shape into innumerable expressions to suit his comical and always droll character. It was as he bounded out the frosted glass front door and down the path towards his cousin and best friend, Stan, that his mouth contorted into an impersonation of his Aunt Milly who was yelling at him from the opened door.

“Winston!” she screamed.

Winston rolled his eyes, making Stan chuckle.

“Winston!” she insisted, “Glasses!”

“Glasses!” Winston mouthed with his eyes crossed and his tongue sticking out before turning around to run up the path and retrieve the round spectacles from his Aunt’s hand. He placed them on the tip of his nose and grinned at her before taking a running jump over the hedge to join his friend on the path. He slapped Stan on the back and they both started walking towards Quarrybank Grammar. As they turned the corner, Winston took a cigarette packet from his jacket pocket and offered one to Stan who refused. Winston placed a cigarette between his lips, lit it and took a long, sweet drag. He ripped his glasses from his eyes.

“I bloody hate these things,” he said scornfully. His wiry glasses were desperately dated, clashing with the leather jacket and school tie ensemble he

was wearing. Stan was unusually quiet.

“You ‘right, lad?” Winston asked.

“Yeah, fine, it’s jus’...” Stan began.

“C’mon, spit it out then!”

“I found yer Mum,” Stan blurted before staring at the pavement in front of him.

Winston stopped, lost for words. His Mum.

“Where?” His response barely audible.

“Just up pas’ Strawberry Fields,” Stan replied, pointing absentmindedly.

“What? That close?” he fumed. He knew his Mum lived in Liverpool but just around the corner? And Milly never told him? With that, he left Stan, standing on the pavement, and ran. He ran all the way to Strawberry Fields and, as he ran, his anger boiled. He punched the fences that lined the park and finally collapsed outside the gate to the Fields. There was nobody else around; only him, surrounded by the dense blanket of trees. The path that snaked through the park, and alongside Strawberry Fields Orphanage, was a well-known shortcut to the tip that Winston frequented, trading smokes and old records. It was also where the most questions were asked.

“So you live with yer aunt...” many would begin, “but yer Mum lives in Liverpool?”

“Why don’t you live with ‘er?”

“What do you mean ‘You don’t know’?”

It was confusing for others to comprehend and even more confusing for Winston to explain. His confusion often erupted into violence, which accounted for many a bloodied nose and broken tooth.

He could still remember his Mum; most vividly when she came to Milly’s

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banging on the door, screaming his name, her flaming red hair the only thing distinguishable through the frosted glass, shimmering and blurry. He remembered crying back and Milly scooping him up in her arms.

“Go away, Julia! He doesn’t want you!”

He had been five.

He could not remember how long he stayed in the park but it was dark when he got back to Milly’s house. Throwing open the door, he charged inside red-faced.

“Why didn’t you tell me?” he accused.

“Winston, calm down,” Milly replied, maintaining an air of composure as she peered over the top of her novel, her reading glasses accentuating her vulture-like semblance. This only infuriated him more.

“What’s her address?” he asked, striding towards her, fists clenching.

“Whose address?” she asked, placing her book down on her lap and glaring at Winston.

“You know whose!” he shrieked.

“Winston, it doesn’t matter. She doesn’t want you...”

“It does! She does!” He remembered the glass door, her screams.

“It won’t do any good, you know!” She stood up now, arms crossed, an image of defiance.

“I don’t care! I want to see her!” He cried. Milly rolled her eyes, used to his outbursts, and walked past him.

“Dinner will be another ten minutes. I’d appreciate it if you would calm down before then.”

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Winston slammed his fist into the wall but Milly stood with her back facing him, unmoved. Winston growled and stormed outside into the night.

He found himself once again in the park outside Strawberry Fields except this time he marched angrily along the path, wiping tears from his cheeks. Soon, he arrived on a tree-lined street with uniform brick townhouses on either side, warmth glowing from their windows. He took a deep breath and knocked on the first door, then the next, asking for her.

“Sorry, not here.”

“Who? No one by that name here.”

He was at the end of the road, his efforts had gone unrewarded but he knew deep down that finding his mother was never going to be that easy. Winston walked defeated, head bowed, across the street to sit on a bench with his hands in his pockets and breath steaming from his mouth in the cold night air.

A door opened and a woman emerged lighting a cigarette. Winston sat up, instantly alert. She was not facing him but he knew who she was. Her thick red hair fell over her shoulders and she was holding herself tightly with her arms in vain resistance to the cold. Winston hurried across the street, emboldened by this recognition.

“Mum?” he called, “Is that you, Mum?”

The woman turned, her face reflecting an inner incredulity. She was silent but her tears spoke for her. It took her a moment but she began to walk towards him. She butted her cigarette on the brick wall and reached out to touch his face. He let her run her fingers over his forehead; his cheeks and all the way down his long nose.

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“Winston,” she said and pulled him into her arms.

From then on, Winston regularly skived off school to visit his mum without Milly knowing. He spent hours in her living room, listening to all the new American rock ‘n roll, occasionally yielding to her pleas for a dance. She was in love with Elvis and she and Winston constantly tried to dance like ‘the King’, knees bent and twisting their hips.

She taught him to play the banjo, humming the notes for Winston to play. .

Before long, they played together. Winston was singing as his mother played when Milly appeared at the door, dressed primly in black with her lips pursed. She said nothing; she just pulled Winston out of the room by his arm, ignoring Julia’s protests. She did not let him go until they got home.

Days later, Milly walked to the front door after hearing a polite rapping on the frosted glass. The silhouette was unmistakable.

“Julia,” she said curtly as the door swung open.

“Milly, I need to see him,” Julia said, her eyes pleading.

Milly saw her sister’s pain but she could not let Winston get hurt again. If she had loved him, she would have married his father.

“Mum?” Winston appeared at Milly’s shoulder and Julia’s face lit up.

“Darling!” She said and Milly was pushed aside by Winston who embraced his mother.

“You may as well come in then,” Milly mumbled, retreating to the kitchen.

“Oh, Milly, thank you! Thank you!” Julia said and walked into the living room with Winston.

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In the hours that followed, Milly sat in the kitchen sipping a cup of tea and attempting to listen to the conversation in the next room. Winston and Julia sat on the sofa, arms around each other, talking and laughing. It was mid afternoon when Julia looked at her watch and explained that she should probably be getting home.

“Yes, that’s probably for the best,” Milly said sharply, appearing at the doorway.

Julia sighed.

“Ok,” she gathered up her cardigan and bag before turning to Winston and kissing his forehead.

“I love you,” she said.

“Love you too, Mum,” he replied, smiling.

Milly and Winston watched as Julia walked down the garden path and around the corner back towards home; one with contempt and the other with love and anticipation at the next time he would see her.

As she walks along the paved footpath, her knee-length skirt sways in the warm breeze. It is unusual weather for Liverpool at this time of year and she is enjoying the radiance of the sun as it hits her pale face. She inhales the sweet, spring scent of pollen and finds relief in the shade of the trees that ease the balminess of the afternoon. She lifts her eyes to the trees above her, squinting as the sun’s rays attempt to penetrate the intertwined foliage. She smiles to herself as she reflects on the events of the afternoon and a surge of

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anxious excitement wells up inside her as she anticipates the next time she will see him. Her hair bounces on her shoulders as she passes by the uniform, redbrick council houses that line the street on either side.

The kids are enjoying the rare warmth, playing and picnicking together in the park up ahead. She listens to their shrieks of excitement as she approaches the corner. She pauses at the kerb; her house is just a short stroll through the park. Her throat is dry. She will enjoy a tall glass of home-made lemonade when she gets home. She hooks her handbag on her left elbow, she glances, as she always does, left and right, before she steps down onto the cobbled road.

A few minutes before... an off-duty policeman is finishing off his fifth pint of bitter in the Cavern. As the frothy liquid slides down his throat he looks around the club. It's claustrophobic. The low ceilings, blackened brickwork, dim, artificial light and the ever present cigarette haze cause his heart to beat a little faster and a sheen of sweat to develop on his brow. The noise is numbing. Chairs scraping against the concrete floor and the mindless babble between punters and barmaids are surmounted by the clunking guitar chords and the discordant wails of the amateur rock 'n roll band which occupies the miniature stage at the rear of the dark room. It is all whining to him.

He dismounts the wooden barstool, knocking it over in the process, and stumbles towards the staircase that will lead him out to the street above. He ascends clumsily, pushing people out of his way, until he steps out into the glaring sunlight. The street is busy. The record shop across the road is blaring out the latest Elvis Presley song and the young Teddy Boys, with their tight

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jeans and quiffed hairstyles, have congregated outside the window to listen to their idol.

He grunts and shakes his head as he fumbles his keys into the car door.

Hastily lowering himself into the driver's seat, he slams the door, blocking out the distasteful warbling of the so-called 'King'. He ignites the engine and the smooth sounds of classical piano fill the cabin. This calms him and he pulls away from the kerb.

His house is just a few minutes from the city centre, on the other side of the Mersey but he knows that his wife will not be there. He could remember her tear-stained face, mascara running down her cheeks, as she punched him feebly in desperation, her blonde hair flying across her face. She left the morning after with anger and a suitcase, the bruises on her delicate neck still visible. She would not be back, this he knew.

The gold band on his left hand teases him, twinkling in the afternoon sun. Fury rises like a disturbed animal and he presses down on the accelerator. The houses fly past him at speed and he takes the corner, his body leaning violently to the left.

The impact makes him stop.

She flies gracefully and slams into the cobbles. One arm is curved above her head and the other rests on her stomach. Her handbag, contents strewn across the street, lies a couple of metres from her.

Her rose-coloured lips are slightly parted and wisps of hair dance playfully in the gentle breeze. Her cotton skirt lifts in the summer air and falls to drape the disjointed shape of her slender legs. Her head lulls heavily to the left and her

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glassy eyes stare as the car slowly edges its way around her and drives into the distance.

The woman with the red hair lies on the cobbled street. The blood, beginning its journey, trickles over the rise and fall of her curls onto the street beneath her.

Winston sighed and pushed his spectacles further up his nose, surveying his room one last time for anything he may have forgotten to pack. His eyes traced over memories of this room, his posters of Elvis and Brigitte Bardot and the window under which he and the lads would play their guitars and write. His sketchbook lay on his desk surrounded by music and cartoons of various people, one of which was a caricature of his maths teacher back at Quarrybank. The man consistently wore an undersized shirt, the buttons straining against the bulge of his gut. Winston had drawn him with a pig's snout and trotters and pinned it to the wall above the desk. He smirked and tucked the curled piece of note paper into the cover of his sketchbook. Winston brought down the lid of his suitcase and fastened the clasps. He grabbed his leather jacket from over the door and eased his arms into it, playfully winking at himself in the mirror above his dresser.

"Lookin' good."

He picked up his suitcase and sketchbook and walked out of his room. As he clunked heavily down the narrow staircase, his suitcase banged against the walls.

"Winston!" his aunt yelled. "Walk! Or you'll take the wallpaper off!"

"Yes, Milly," he mumbled.

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He dumped his case in the foyer and his glasses on the side table. It was a fine day outside and the sunlight pierced the glass window of the front door, shining in Winston's eyes as he walked into the kitchen. Milly was peeling vegetables. Winston had always marvelled at her intensity. As he watched her now, her jaw was clenched and her hands moved with such force that the knife gouged deep into the vegetables as she tried to peel. She was fierce. Fierce with her actions and fierce with her words.

"Have you got everything?" she asked without looking at him.

"Sure do, Mil," he replied, leaning over her and taking a piece of carrot.

She placed the knife and carrot down and turned to face Winston. For a moment, he saw her face soften but it returned to its normal severity within seconds. She placed her hands on his shoulders and pulled him towards her. Winston crunched on his carrot, becoming uneasy as he felt his aunt's head on his shoulder. Never once could he remember her embracing him. He placed his hands on her back but she pulled away.

"Alright then, you better get going," she said, patting Winston awkwardly on the shoulders.

"Goodbye, Aunt Milly," Winston said to her, kissing her gently on the cheek. He left his Aunt Milly standing in the kitchen. She was a solitary woman, independent, but he knew it hurt her to see him go.

Picking up his suitcase, Winston tucked his sketchbook under his arm so he could fix his hair with his free hand. Once satisfied, he turned the doorknob and walked down the immaculate garden path. As he turned the corner to walk towards the bus stop, he heard the front door open and the brisk tapping of Milly's low-heeled black shoes.

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“Winston!” she called. He turned around. “Glasses!”

She had his spectacles dangling from her fingers, waving them around for effect; her expression a strange mixture of irritation and affection.

Milly began to sob and Winston rushed towards her, concerned. He had never seen her cry. She hadn’t even cried when Julia died three years ago. Three years since Milly sat him down in the living room and told him. He had cried, he was distraught. He had tried to find comfort in his aunt but she had pushed him away, saying, “Come on now, that’s enough of this silly business,” through stoic lips.

Now, he held his aunt as she tried to control herself.

“Come on, Mil,” he began, smiling. “They’re only glasses, like,” He pulled away and looked at his aunt who playfully hit him on the arm. He could imagine his mum standing behind her, winking at Winston’s wit and laughing. Always laughing.

He took his glasses and placed them on the end of his nose. He kissed Milly on the forehead and glanced behind her, seeing his mother; her vibrant hair, colourful cardigans, bright eyes and flowery dresses. She was smiling at him and swaying on her heels like she always did, never able to stay still.

He felt Milly place her hands in his.

“You must ring me,” she insisted.

Winston nodded and squeezed her small hands reassuringly. As he walked away, he glanced back and saw Milly and his mother. Milly was waving and crying. His mum was waving excitedly, her face lit up with one of her electric grins. He smiled and waved back at them both before lifting up his suitcase and continuing the two-block walk to wait for the bus. He would ring Milly

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tonight.

And he did.

And he continued to call her every week, from wherever he was, just to say
hello.

*-“And then while I’m away, I’ll write home every day, And I’ll send all my loving
to you.”-*

PART TWOWhat You're Doing (Beatles For Sale 1964)

James Carney burst from the back room of his piano shop, a forced smile on his face and delivery papers at the ready. On his way, he reached over the counter to grab a pen and brushed past his brother, Mike, as they both hurried to serve the sudden rush of customers that had entered the shop.

"Here you go, Sir," James said as he placed the papers and pen down on the lid of the grand he had just sold. "Just need a delivery address and a signature, please."

As the customer was writing, James leaned against the piano to take advantage of the moment and take a breath. He was flustered by the number of customers in today. It had taken a good year since his father had died for business to pick up again and, even then, Carney&Sons was teetering on the edge of bankruptcy. Every night, when James did the books, he tried to ignore the stack of overdue bills that was growing as the weeks went by. He stayed in that back room, sitting in his father's leather chair, for hours trying to figure out the numbers. They'd stopped making sense.

"Thank you, Sir," he took the forms from the customer, a tired smile on his face, "You can expect delivery within the next week or so."

"Excellent. Thanks for all your help," the customer replied, leading his family out of the store.

"Have a lovely evening, now," James called after them.

He looked up at the clock above the counter. The minute hand was just ticking over, making it, at long last, half-past-five. Mike was finishing up with his last

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customer, shaking hands with the older man after reaching a deal to buy his old upright and selling him a stack of new music.

“Good to see you back on your feet, boys!” the man said as he walked out the door with his newly purchased sheet music. Mike closed it behind him with a friendly wave, flipping the ‘open’ sign to ‘closed’ with a sigh.

“Geez, that was a busy one,” he said, walking towards James behind the counter.

“Tell me about it,” James agreed as he leaned on the counter, chin resting in his palm.

They began to count the till, too tired to talk to one another, when the silence was broken by a tentative rapping on the door.

“I’ll get it,” Mike said, grudgingly as James continued putting the small change in little bags.

“Sorry, we’re closed,” he heard Mike say.

“I won’t be long, I swear!”

James looked up. She was a slender girl, dressed in jeans and a dark knitted sweater. She caught James staring and smiled pleadingly, a strand of auburn hair drifting across her eyes. James returned the smile.

“You can let her in,” he said to Mike, walking towards the door to greet her.

Mike stepped aside, rolling his eyes. Of course it would be up to James to let a pretty girl in after hours. She thanked Mike as she stepped inside, walking straight past James’ outstretched hand, to a wooden upright piano at the back of the shop. Tucking her hair behind her ears, she began to play a few random chords, testing the sound. Mike stifled a laugh at the sight of James who still had his hand stretched out in a vain midair greeting.

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"Shut up, you," James whispered, shaking his head at his brother. Gathering himself, he walked towards the girl. "Yes, that's a 1953 Wilkinson," he began.

"I know," she replied, still playing.

"Right," was all he could manage, blushing. Mike snorted in the corner. "Go away!" James mouthed, gesturing for Mike to go upstairs to the flat. Mike obliged, bounding up the stairs so he could disengage a full belly laugh. James walked towards the piano, leaning against the lid, his chin in his hand, to watch her play.

"We need this by tomorrow night," she said, still playing. "Is that possible?"

"That depends," James began, trying his luck.

She looked up, confused. "Depends?"

"On whether you agree to let me take you out tonight."

"I don't think so," she sniggered, one eyebrow raised. "You're not really my type," she peered at his nametag, "James." She crossed her arms and cocked her head to the side.

"And, what is this type of yours?" James mirrored her expression.

"Intelligent," she began, closing the lid, "handsome," she stood up, "Artistic," she stood in James' face. He could smell her musky perfume. He walked around her and sat down on the wooden stool. He lifted the lid and began playing,

"*When I get older, losing my hair,*" he sang, looking up at the girl playfully. She was stationary, with her eyebrows raised, throughout the whole song.

"*when I'm sixty-four,*" he finished, flourishing his fingers on the last chord.

"Mm," she mumbled, in mock consideration, "That was cute."

"Cute?" he accused, "It's a work of art!"

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Laughing, she reached into her satchel. "So you'll have this delivered tomorrow, then?"

"Well, we're a bit run off our feet at the moment," James stammered, following her as she walked towards the door. She extracted a small flyer, handing it to him.

"This is the address," she said, "We start at eight."

"Hold on a min..." James started, but she was already crossing the road. He looked down at the piece of paper in his hand,

Molly and the Diamonds

Ronnie's

Frith St, London

8pm til late

The following evening, Mike and James were hoisting the piano into the back of their delivery truck.

"Ok, three, two, one," Mike counted before the piano clunked onto the trailer floor.

"I don't know why this girl's getting special treatment," he began, a sly smile playing on his lips. "Anyone'd think you had a bit of a crush, eh, Jim?"

James pushed ahead with the ropes, refusing to acknowledge Mike's wise cracks.

"Have you showered?" Mike quipped. James punched his arm. "Got clean underwear on, eh?"

"Shut up, Mike," James jumped down from the trailer. It was only when he was

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sitting in the front seat that he made sure his shirt was tucked in and analysed his reflection in the rear vision mirror. He caught sight of Mike imitating him through the passenger window, blowing kisses and twirling his hair. James shook his head, extending his middle finger and drove away from his brother. James knew Frith Street quite well, having lived in London's city centre all his adult life but he had never heard of 'Ronnie's' before. The lights were just coming on as he rounded the corner into the well-known street; flashing neon and bright streetlamps. James peered out the windscreen, looking for a sign or something, when he noticed a girl waving out to him from the footpath. He pulled up to the kerb, took a deep breath, and stepped down from the truck, smoothing his hair as he walked towards her.

"You're cutting it a bit fine, aren't you, James?" she said as she lead two burly men to the back of the truck, brushing past him, "It's just gone 7.30 and I still need to get ready."

James hurried to the back of the truck, fumbling his keys to open it.

"Sorry, haven't stopped all day..." he called as he followed her and the piano into the club, just catching a glimpse of Molly as she rushed backstage. His stomach sank and he silently cursed himself for making a less than ordinary second impression.

As he walked to the bar, the wooden floors of the ramshackle club creaked and the lights buzzed and flickered. Seating himself on a barstool, he gestured for a pint, which was placed promptly before him. He took a long, satisfying gulp and spun around to watch the two men hauling the piano onstage. People began filling the booths and the round, wooden tables in front of the stage and, before long, the club was heaving.

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The lights dimmed and the chatter died down as James ordered another beer, turning to face the stage. The crowd cheered and whistled as the girls took their places onstage; Molly seating herself on the piano stool and adjusting the microphone to her level. The other girls, dressed in short skirts and stockings, like Molly, strummed their guitars once or twice, gesturing to Molly who then cleared her throat and placed her lips on the microphone, her husky voice echoing throughout the club.

“Evening,” she began, flicking her hair over her shoulder, “I’m Molly Scott. These are my diamonds,” she caught James’ eye, “You’re in for a great show tonight.”

James sat captivated as Molly lead the band through a series of jazz arrangements, some silky and others powerfully intense. Her energy was infectious as she played, shared jokes with the audience and sang with an irrepressible passion.

“Alright, ladies and gentlemen,” she said, “The final song.” Molly laughed at the audience’s protests and looked at James.

“Oh c’mon, I saved the best ‘til last!”

With that, she turned to the piano, letting her hair fall over her face, and played a singular, clunky chord before, accompanied by the guitars, she leaned into the microphone,

“Oh! Darling, please believe me. I’ll never do you no harm,” she wailed and the audience erupted. James cheered and nodded his head along to the beat, keeping his eyes on the Molly who stared right back at him as she sang; singing only to him. The tempo rose with his heartbeat. Molly stood, bashing the chords on the piano and belting out the fiery lyrics. As the song came to an

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end, Molly took the microphone from the stand. The music stopped and she fixed her eyes on James as she sang the last lines. James leaned forward towards her; attempting to calm himself, as Molly winked at him.

The audience thundered its acclamation, applauding wildly as the band left the stage. James turned to the barman who passed him a pint, observing his shortness of breath. James nodded in thanks and raised the glass to quell his dry throat. A tap on his shoulder made him turn to find her standing before him. He smiled, unconsciously smoothing his hair, making her giggle.

"H-hey," he said, extending his hand before retracting it and shaking his head in frustration. Molly observed his awkwardness with a smirk, lifting herself up onto a barstool.

"Now that," she began, resting her head on her hand and facing James, "that was what I call a piece of art."

"Yeah, wasn't bad, I suppose," James joked.

Molly playfully nudged James on the arm. As the hours passed, Molly and James laughed and drank until the club had emptied. They grabbed their drinks and went to sit at the piano.

James watched as she downed her pint, wiping away the residue and turning to him with a satisfied sigh. She sat with her legs on either side of the stool.

"Thirsty work show business," she said with a giggle, falling towards James. He laughed.

"Looks like it," he replied, leaning over to push her hair out of her face, "You really were great tonight."

He kept his hand behind her head, knocking her off guard for a moment as he scrutinised her face. She lowered her eyes, flushing, and placed a hand on his

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knee, moving herself closer to him. She leaned towards his face, closing her eyes and parting her lips. James traced her mouth before placing his near her ear. He felt for the piano, caressing the keys as he sang to her...

- "... and should you need a love that's true, it's me"-

PART THREEOctopus' Garden (Abbey Road 1969)

Lucy sat outside her mother's house, legs dangling over the side of the porch, chin resting in her hand. She sighed. She heard her mum in the kitchen preparing dinner, pleasantly humming to the classical music on the wireless. Lucy had lived in this uninspiring, isolated country town all her life; surrounded by retired sixty-somethings wanting their taste of the fresh country air. She had friends, forty-five miles away at high school, but the school day was filled with endless gossip about their escapades in town or catching a movie at the cinema. She boarded the bus home one afternoon and walked through her front door as the sun was setting. Usually, to find her conservative mother scoffing at the various Vietnam War protesters on the wireless and lecturing Lucy against "getting involved with those long-haired, drug addicted, communists."

The wind began to pick up around her. She shivered and her blonde hair whipped across her face. She lifted her legs up to her chest and wrapped her arms around herself.

The bus flew past and stopped with a screech at the end of her road. She watched the bus in disbelief as it slowly turned and made its way back towards her. From a distance, it was brightly multicoloured but as it came closer to Lucy she saw that it was a fusion of painted flowers and spirals. A giant peace sign was displayed on the front. Its yellow wheels rolled to a halt on the lawn, just in front of Lucy.

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The rickety doors swung open and the strangest looking man ambled down the stairs, his bell-bottom pants swinging around his ankles. Teetering on his head was an exaggerated top hat which miraculously stayed in place as he ducked under the low door frame. He jumped onto the grass, the gold chains around his neck jangling in protest. He raised his head and, from behind round, blue glasses, began scrutinising his surroundings. Shaking his head, his eyes rested on Lucy. His mouth opened into a broad smile; his thick handlebar moustache flicking in the wind. He raised his arms. The rings on his fingers glinted under the last rays of the afternoon sun. Lucy thought for a moment that he was going to hug her.

“They say the world should be seen through rose coloured glasses,” His voice was breathy, distant. But his stare had purpose and bore deep into Lucy’s eyes. “Child, mine are blue,” he leaned close to her face, lowering his glasses. “And my world,” His eyes swam with kaleidoscopic colour. “My world, Lucy, is truly wonderful”.

He spun around and, with his hands floating above his head, began to walk back up the stairs of the bus. He sat in the bouncy driver’s seat, swaying and staring out the windscreen.

“C’mon, Lucy, we’re on a tight schedule.”

A bus, covered in bright flowers had just sped up her dusty street in the middle of nowhere. The driver knew her name and it seemed now that he wanted her to climb aboard. There was something in those eyes that intrigued Lucy. She imagined his world and the possibility of escaping hers.

“That’s right, Lucy, get onboard. We’ve got to go or we won’t get there on time.”

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Lucy stood and looked behind her into the house. Her mother was still humming along to the music, the rest of the houses on the street were quiet, boring.

She blinked a few times and rubbed her eyes, just to make sure. The man sat grinning at her. Lucy sighed, shrugged and climbed aboard.

The cabin was dark. The walls were a mossy green and up against them were long sofas piled with plump cushions. Pinned on the walls were pictures of places Lucy had never seen before. She walked along the aisle and tentatively sat down next to a boy, similar to her in age. He was smoking a cigarette that burned blue, exhaling a cloud that spiralled out in front of him. He then turned to Lucy, reclining and placing his arms behind his head. He kept his cigarette caught between his teeth as he grinned at her, inspecting the newcomer.

"I'm Lucy," she said, offering her hand, her confidence surprising her.

"Rocky," he replied through his teeth, his leather jacket squeaking as he shook her hand. "We haven't had a visitor in a while," he said, taking a drag and leaning back into the sofa to make smoke rings that floated and expanded in the air.

"You should be glad Prue's not awake..." he began.

"I heard my name!" a delicate voice accused from across the aisle.

A small Asian girl wearing a bright pink jumper sat across from Lucy, curled up into the corner of the couch. She opened her eyes drowsily, spied Lucy and immediately sat bolt upright.

"A visitor!" she exclaimed.

"She gets a little overexcited," Rocky whispered in Lucy's ear.

Prue hurried over and sat down on Lucy's other side, completing the

sandwich.

"I'm Prue!" she said, eagerly shaking Lucy's hand.

"H-hello," Lucy replied.

"Oh, it's just so great that you're here!" she gushed, "We'll have such fun!"

"Prue, calm down," Rocky said wearily.

Lucy giggled anxiously and leaned back towards Rocky who was chuckling to himself.

"Who's the driver?" she asked him, curiously.

"We call him the Doc," he replied.

"He takes us to the most wonderful places!" Prue added, nodding.

"We're going to the sea!" the Doc enthused from the front seat, making Lucy jump.

"I love the sea!" Prue said. "Have you been to the sea, Lucy?"

"Sure, I've been to the beach before."

Rocky chuckled as the Doc spoke.

"To the sea, Lucy! To the sea! You haven't been to the sea like this before, Lucy."

He turned around to look at her. Lucy glanced out the windscreen and for the first time she realised it was the dead of night. She could see street lamps rush past as the bus sped along the road. She had no idea what direction they were going in. Suddenly, the Doc rose from the driver's seat. Lucy panicked but the bus continued confidently at the same pace. She stared flabbergasted as the steering wheel turned on its own to keep the bus en route. The Doc made his way down the aisle and sat opposite the others, reclining on the sofa with a contented sigh and his arms outstretched behind him.

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“Well, we’re almost there,” he said, his glasses were a bright shade of yellow.

“I can tell you Lucy, that the place we are headed will relax you, baffle you and blow your mind,” He leaned in towards her. “We’re going to visit a very good friend of mine,” He removed his glasses, his eyes swimming. “He’s a... “ he spun his glasses around as he searched for the right word, “a horticulturalist, I suppose you could say.”

Rocky laughed and took a long drag from his seemingly neverending cigarette. “Ah!” the Doc exclaimed. He closed his eyes and lifted his hands up as he had done when he met Lucy. His eyes flicked open. “We’re here!”

The windows suddenly blazed with sunlight. Impossible. It was daytime and the bus had stopped on a beach. Lucy could hear the crash of the foaming waves and watched as they descended onto the sand, sparkling under the sun. Lucy began to stand, eager to smell the salty air, but Rocky and Prue both pulled her back down.

“You’re gonna want to stay on board for this part,” Rocky whispered in her ear. Lucy heard Prue giggle in excitement. The Doc hurried back to his seat and put the bus into gear. They lurched forward as the bus negotiated its way over the sand before fearlessly entering the water. Lucy instinctively put her feet up on the seat. The water level rose, completely submerging the bus in seconds. They were underwater!

Rocky butted his cigarette and walked over to kneel on the sofa. Prue followed and both of them peered out of the window, searching expectantly. The Doc remained in the driver’s seat, arms and legs busily pressing buttons and pulling levers as he manoeuvred the vehicle through the water.

“There it is!” Prue exclaimed, pointing. Lucy hurried to the window to see what

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had captured their attention. At first she could see nothing, just a great expanse of blue, and then something came into focus. It began as a tiny speck but slowly it took shape and form. She saw trees and a white wooden house surrounded by full and flourishing flowerbeds. People filled the garden, lounging under the shade of the trees or sitting at the picnic tables piled high with assorted cakes and ice creams. Children careered across the lawns and jumped daringly over the flowerbeds. Some were sailing miniature boats in the lake in front of the house, laughing as they playfully splashed each other. They came to a stop just outside the fence and were greeted by a jolly man with a grand moustache and a brightly bulging waistcoat who introduced himself as Mr Walrus, the proprietor of this wonderland. He was a large man with cherry-red cheeks that glowed when he chuckled. He and the Doc greeted each other with a bear hug that grunted in easy familiarity before wandering off into the house, leaving Lucy with Rocky and Prue. Rocky had somehow found another cigarette and was smoking it contentedly. He drowsily waved goodbye to the girls and wandered off towards a group of young men who were similarly engaged. The group sent laughter and bright billows of multicoloured smoke into the sky.

The garden was dry yet, as Lucy looked towards the sky, it floated and converged like water. Prue took hold of her arm and pulled her towards the open window of the house which was set up much like an ice cream parlour. Prue ordered a concoction of green apple and daffodil, while Lucy opted for good old-fashioned vanilla.

“Don’t forget the performance in ten minutes, ladies!” the man in the striped apron said as he passed the ice-creams to the girls.

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“Oh, yes, Lucy, we can’t miss that!” Prue giggled, grabbing Lucy’s arm.

As she turned, licking her ice-cream, Lucy gasped. There, across the lake, was a great wooden stage, complete with a thick, velvet curtain and whimsical paintings. Prue pulled Lucy’s hand and the two girls ran towards a tree, climbing to the topmost branch to get the best view. As it grew dark, the girls could see perfectly across the lake and onto the spotlit edifice.

Once everyone had taken their seats, the curtain slid open and Lucy found herself bouncing along to the jovial circus organ tune. Cheers erupted as a stout man plastered with white makeup and rouged cheeks appeared on stage. The brass buttons on his jacket threatened to pop as he bowed low. “Welcome to Mr. Kite’s circus show spectacular!” he boomed, “A splendid time is guaranteed for all!”

Mr Kite glided off stage gesturing to a horse balancing on its hind legs. Lucy and Prue laughed with the audience as the clowns bumbled across the stage, clapped for the acrobats who somersaulted high in the air and gasped as the fire breather sent a blast of ferocious flame into the sky. As the audience celebrated the final act, the crackling sound of fireworks assaulted the air. Lucy looked behind her to see a glittering array of lights bursting into the night sky and fizzling as they drifted back.

The organ music began again, as did the excited babble of the audience. Lucy sat in stunned silence, elation bubbling in her stomach. She heard Prue squealing as she hung upside down on the branches before she was shaken from her daze by the Doc’s gentle voice below,

“C’mon, girls, time to hit the road.”

Prue dropped from the tree, still buzzing, but Lucy took her time, her desire to

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stay in the garden fused with her disappointment that she would soon be back at home.

She boarded the bus to find Rocky already seated as he had been before with another cigarette occupying his mouth, this one lit up silver, and Prue dangling from the rails as if she were still in the tree. Lucy lay on the sofa, her head resting on a pile of cushions. She replayed Mr Kite's circus in her head as the Doc sang them a song about the underwater land.

Lucy woke to Prue gently nudging her.

"It's your stop, Lucy."

Lucy rose, rubbing her eyes and taking in the familiar dusty surroundings of her street at dawn.

"Well, this is it then," she sighed, moving to give Prue a hug.

"What are you doing, silly?" Prue joked, "We're coming with you!"

Lucy stared at her, confused.

"C'mon, guys, the Doc's getting distracted," Rocky urged, calling through the opened window. Lucy laughed as she saw the Doc fiddling curiously with her letterbox. She took Prue's hand and they alighted from the bus.

Lucy began to walk up the stairs to her porch but stopped when she noticed the others following the Doc up her street.

"Hey!" she yelled, running down the stairs, "My house is here!"

Rocky turned and gestured for her to follow. Lucy sighed and ran to catch up with them.

Lucy, Rocky and Prue followed the Doc into the woods at the end of Lucy's street. They wound through the trees, following a path that Lucy had never noticed before.

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“Ah!” the Doc suddenly declared, “Here we are!

A grassy meadow had appeared before them with a large pond in its centre.

Around the water were patches of wild flowers which Prue skipped towards to pick. Rocky smiled to himself and went to sit on the water’s edge. The sun began to rise over the trees, light dappling on the water. Lucy felt the Doc’s hand on her shoulder,

“All you need is a little imagination, Lucy.”

–“I’d like to be, under the sea, in an Octopus’ Garden with you.”–

PART FOURTomorrow Never Knows (Revolver 1966)

The forest is dense. He can smell the woody fragrance of the trees and the freshness of the water, hear the rushing stream and feel his legs pumping rhythmically beneath him as he follows the girl.

Her hair trails all the way down to her knees and her legs are cloaked in a long skirt. Her feet bare. She wears a long-sleeved cotton shirt. She is alone and he follows her without betraying himself. He observes as she pauses on moss-covered rocks to

feel the softness between her toes.

They continue deeper into the trees. He feels the heat of the sun dappling on his face. There is a slight breeze that whispers through his light clothing electrifying his skin.

She begins to run. Her long hair rushes out behind her in a fluid wave, pulsing in the wind. She moves effortlessly, her legs floating below her as she jumps and glides over the forest floor, coming to a stop on the pebbly banks of a stream.

He stops behind her, his body alive, tingling from running. She knows he is behind her now but there is no acknowledgement. Instead, she gathers her hair into one hand and rolls it over her shoulder to her chest, exposing the nape of her neck. She can feel his warm breath on her skin as she begins to undress. The paleness of her bare skin reflects the sunlight.

She glows,

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the water rushing over her bare feet.

She turns and faces him, her dark eyes drowning in his. She steps into the shallow stream and lays down,

the water continues to flow over and around her.

Her hair splays out around her head, dancing in the water.

Her eyes close and the water cascades over her face, occasionally splashing up as it hits her nose.

*She is still,
serene.*

He surveys the forest that envelops them. He lowers himself into the water beside her. A sharp cold shatters the heat of the day. He shivers as water travels over his chest. He feels the goose bumps rising over his skin and closes his eyes. His arms float, rising and falling with the current of the stream. Rays of sunlight penetrate the veils of his eyelids. Colours, shapes, moving and diverging.

They

are shapes,

yet

shapeless.

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She takes his hand and the water carries them downstream. His eyes remain softly closed. Shadows cast by the trees move past them, blurring and distorting. They stop.

He feels a hand on his forehead but is not startled. It presses gently on his head and he sees her dressed completely in white. She speaks to him, soothing him, and he opens his mouth in reply.

He whispers

and takes her hand. They sit cross-legged before each other,

eyes closed,

heads bowed,

fingertips touching.

He can feel something growing inside him, an awareness of himself. He no longer feels physical.

He floats,

transcending between

body and soul.

He watches himself and the girl, his vision flickering, the images he sees surreal and distorted.

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REFLECTION STATEMENT

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"I am not the Beatles. I'm me. Paul isn't the Beatles...The Beatles are the Beatles. Separately, they are separate." -Paul McCartney

Beats introduces readers to the unique worlds of the Beatles. As an exploration of each member of the Beatles through examination of the events that impacted on their lives and their perspectives of the world, Beats aims to portray their distinctive and truly individual personalities. My composition acts as an extension of the Advanced English module 'Belonging' as through investigating the lives of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr and George Harrison, I have been able to identify and portray differing senses of belonging in terms of personal convictions, relationships and connections to the greater world. The varied nature of the collection allows for my major work to be appreciated across a wide range of audiences. However, it will most resonate with an older audience as they will be able to recognise the underlying references to particular Beatles songs through character and plot parallels. This specific audience will additionally have an appreciation for my purpose; to move away from the public perspective of the Beatles and offer an insight into the true nature of their individual characters.

Upon commencing this course, I had a very clear concept that has grown and developed to form the final product. Originally, I wanted to create one singular narrative that incorporated the characters found in Beatles songs, this

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developed into a four-part narrative where the characters' lives intertwined, until finally, I decided that the personalities of each Beatle were so diverse that they each deserved their own narrative. I have found throughout the drafting process that each of the stories have emerged stylistically different from each other. From Part One to Part Four, the stories progress from realism to surrealism. These stylistic differences, combined with unique plots, have contributed to my objective of creating pieces that reflect the individualities of the Beatles. Thus, four stories that are unique in their own right, just like the Beatles.

My major work is unique as a whole in that its primary inspiration is music. I have found this a challenge in terms of form as it is imperative to the purpose and desired outcome of my work that the sense of musicality and lyricism is present throughout. After adopting the advice of Julie Taymor, director of the film **Across The Universe**, (2007), to use music to "forward the action" not hinder it, lyricism in my piece is achieved through treating the music as a nuance, underlying the plotlines of each part. However, in order to more explicitly align my major work to the music of the Beatles I have chosen to title each part with the song that inspired it, ending the respective parts with a lyric from the song that I believe encapsulates the narrative. This will give the audience a sense of closure and provide them with a clearer connection with the Beatles.

The impact of the independent investigation on my major work has been significant, as through analysing and reflecting on a variety of written, visual

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and audio texts I have been able to incorporate a different and experimental approach to style, gather important factual information and draw inspiration from key events in the lives of the Beatles as the basis for each narrative.

The aim with Part One is to represent John Lennon's unique, yet tragic, adolescent experiences as being formative of his adulthood. The dual losses that Lennon experienced through the separation from and death of his mother had deep emotional impacts that would eventually culminate in the creation of some of the best songs in history.

Through close analysis of the film **Nowhere Boy**, *Sam Taylor-Wood* (2007) and the autobiography **Imagine This**, *Julia Baird* (2008), I have been able to additionally treat this piece as a representation of the birth of the Beatles through the chosen location and time settings. The inclusion of Elvis Presley and "the window under which he and the lads would play their guitars and write," are factually accurate representations of the sessions Lennon and Paul McCartney would spend together. These texts have also provided an insight into Lennon's youth and family dynamic which has been invaluable in creating an accurate narrative and understanding Lennon as a character. I have attempted to capture the essence of the Liverpool culture through the use of Scouse slang in the dialogue, characterisation and also through the description of the Cavern Club in the middle section.

The switch to the present tense in the middle section in which Julia walks home from Milly's house, is intended to create a more confronting impact on the reader as she is hit by the car. The absence of dialogue and the focus on lyrical description also adds to this impact as the horrific nature of the act is

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presented in an oddly beautiful fashion.

The final section, in which Winston leaves for college, causes the piece to become more cyclic and offers respite to the readers as they realise the love both Milly and Julia had for Winston. *All My Loving*, **With the Beatles** (1963) was chosen as the title for this piece with this in mind, as John Lennon maintained a deep connection to Liverpool, his Aunt Milly, and his mother until his death in 1980.

Paul McCartney, the overconfident, flirtatious leader of the Beatles, is represented in Part Two. This narrative not only explores the aforementioned side of McCartney's personality, but his belief in the importance of love and family. I discovered much about McCartney's life and personality through the close study of the biography **FAB: An Intimate Life of Paul McCartney**, *Howard Sounes* (2010); most particularly, his familial values and love of jazz music.

These two values fused to become Carney&Sons, a family-run jazz piano shop. Jazz runs throughout the piece as an underlying theme through the inclusion of the additional songs, *When I'm Sixty-Four*, **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** (1967) and *Oh! Darling*, **Abbey Road** (1969). These two very different songs both fall under the genre of jazz and act to represent the progressive nature of McCartney's music over the course of his career. Unlike Part One, Part Two is not set in any particular time period, further encapsulating the enduring nature of music.

Emphasising familial values, the character of Molly was taken from the song *Ob-la-di, Ob-la-da*, the '**White Album**' (1968) which paints a picture of easy

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domestic comfort

What You're Doing, **Beatles for Sale** (1964) reflects perfectly the desperation of the protagonist, James, as a man infatuated by the alluring Molly. Despite being a flirtatious song, it also presents the potential for a more meaningful relationship, elucidated through the chosen lyric "...should you need a love that's true, it's me."

Part Three, the whimsical underwater bus tour, was inspired by the Ringo Starr masterpiece, *Octopus' Garden*, **Abbey Road** (1969), as it truly captures Starr's love for all things fantastical. His highly imaginative compositions allowed listeners to suspend reality for a moment; a sentiment I have tried to recreate throughout the narrative. The piece focuses on the rejuvenating power of the imagination as a means of discovering a sense of belonging. Though the setting is heavily inspired by *Octopus' Garden*, the plot is based on the film, **Magical Mystery Tour**, *the Beatles* (1967), in which passengers embark on an eccentric bus trip throughout the English countryside. The bus particularly resembles the one in the film.

The Doc is centred on Starr himself, the leader of atypical creative thought. His unusual behaviour represents the inner workings of Starr's mind in his ability to imagine the extraordinary.

Part Four required a more poetic approach to style as I attempted to represent George Harrison's fascination in Eastern religion and the power of meditation. This aim of creating a meditative tone inspired me in terms of formatting. I included the italicised intervals to further evoke the senses; with the

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accumulation of these intervals representing the depth of the meditative journey the characters are taking. The audience response that I am aiming to induce is a reflection of their own state of mind and spirituality as they read the piece.

In creating this piece, I drew inspiration from a range of songs including, *Within You, Without You*, **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** (1967) and *Blue Jay Way*, **Magical Mystery Tour** (1967), for their experimental composition and Eastern influences. The lyric for this narrative, "*Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream,*" has double meaning as it acts to represent the literal journey the characters take in the narrative and as a set of metaphorical instructions for the reader in responding to the piece.

Having drafted, proofed and edited numerous times, I am proud of the final product. This course has been challenging, yet rewarding as I have been required to extend my abilities as a writer and apply a large degree of discipline to achieve what I have produced. I hope that you have enjoyed my work just as much as I have enjoyed creating it for you. Finally, and quite rightly, a word from the men who inspired me,

"You can have our love, you can have our smiles. Forget the bad parts... Just take the music, the goodness, because it's the very best, and it's the part we give most willingly"

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The hand on his head gently persuades him to lie down.

He breathes

and is calm once more.

*He hears her singing softly. Her voice travelling from his ear to far away, her
song only distantly audible.*

-“Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream.”-