

I did agree to collect him from his first Idler session, and he doesn't look too bad, all the previous moaning considered, but he's decided that my fur hat is the answer to some as yet undisclosed question and people are beginning to stare. They might be staring because the weather is a little warm for such a hat, or because I do look rather pretty in it, but I suspect they're staring at a two metre tall man taking a somewhat vigorous interest in my headwear.

"OK, Dad, what are you doing?". I am patient.

"Senses, Em. I've got to write a piece on the senses and I've said you will be the recipient".

One time flattered! Normally, Mum would get it. Sibling is in the wilderness having extracted so much attention for her wedding she has no chance of acquiring any more any time soon. The fur. OK. One down.

He wants to nail it between here and the car. He's not even trained but he knows the Montessori quote: *The senses, being explorers of the world, open the way to knowledge*. So we walk, looking for knowledge, he on the road side; he always walks on the road side when he walks with me.

School road sign: hmmm, not really that interesting, but fitting I suppose, and I can hear the little ones up ahead. This is better: the Cow Pub. What a dreadful name. The board shows "organic" but "Spicy tuna tartare" and "Porchetta" sound more interesting. I ask him what Porchetta is.

"Knowledge, Em, knowledge" and we look it up on Wikipedia: savoury, fatty, moist, boneless pork roast, salted with garlic, rosemary and wild herbs. Yum, yum. He won't buy me lunch, though: "Got to get on, Em".

And then he's taking notes. Nogs Super Market. Wow, that is worth looking at. We could be in Mombasa. Even the separated Super and Market remind me of Uchumi, as does the very large woman at the counter with her gauze head-covering, kanga, multi-coloured shawl and flip flops for goodness sake. This woman is feeling no pain, and no cold either, her laughter bubbling up from some very deep place. I bet they sell goat meat. Louis **loves** goat meat curry. Louis will eat goat meat curry for breakfast. I am going to marry Louis, once he's finished processing the concept.

Maybe this large lady has children at St Stephens Church of England Primary School but I don't think so. I heard about St Stephens when I did work experience at Thomas Jones and I don't think it's good enough to trade Islam for an education. "Thomas Jones' backs", the head would say in Assembly. Thomas Jones is not outstanding for just any old reason. St Stephens' backs? I don't think so. St Stephens' din, oh yes.

"My God, Em, this is not exactly Phil Spector", Dad shouts, as we approach the playground. I don't need Google to tell me that in Dad's eyes, Phil Spector equals *wall of sound*, nor is it remotely possible to discuss the concept such is the shouting and shrieking that blasts directly at us.

"Was it like that at Fox or Thomas Jones?", Dad asks once we've passed.

I have to say it probably was because whether it's the precious middle classes at Fox or the rainbow nation at Thomas Jones, children need to, and will, make noise in the playground. Pity about my tinnitus, though: too much time spent in the mosh pit.

"Did you nail it, Dad?", I ask when we reach the car.

"Smell, Em. I'm still searching for smell".

"Get in, Dad, I'll buy you a cigar".

Word count: 610