

*"Out to sea to the west of Spain,  
There is a land that we call Cockaygne,  
No place on earth compares to this,  
For sheer delightfulness and bliss,  
Though paradise is fair and bright,  
Cockaygne is a fairer sight.*

*In paradise what's to be seen  
But grass and flowers and branches green?  
Though paradisaic joys are sweet  
There's nothing there but fruit to eat;  
No bench, no chamber and no hall,  
No alcoholic drink at all.*

*Its inhabitants are few. Elijah, Enoch,  
Just the two.  
They must find it boring there,  
Without more company to share.*

*But Cockaygne offers better fayre,  
And without worry work, or care;  
The food is good, the drink flows free,  
At lunchtime, suppertime and at tea.*

*There are rivers, great and fine,  
of oil and milk, honey and wine  
Water's uses there are few,  
For washing in, and for the view."*

I didn't write that. That was from the beginning of a poem about the Land of Cockaygne, which was a utopia imagined by peasants across medieval Europe. It was a widespread myth and it appears in all sorts of literature from that period, of which that poem is a little example.

Being old, this mythical land has appeared under a variety of different spellings, including "cockney". Land of Cockney. Because of this, London has long been associated with this utopia of peasants.

So here we are, on mud island, downstream from the cockneys, next stop after the land of cocaine in Canary Wharf, in a place known only for what it was for 200 years. Factories and docks, hard work and toil, creating vast amounts of wealth, that never stuck around.

But what if we're meant to be the Land of Cockaygne? The land of the cockneys, the paradise down the river, where cockneys wash up when they fall in the Thames.

What if there was no work and food and drink followed us around? The Royal Docks would be full of mango lassi, the Thames turns into custard as it flows past us. The Woolwich Ferry, made of cake, brings in people from south Woolwich looking for a better life.

At Roz Cafe, Hassan won't be behind the counter, he'll be sitting at the front in the sun tea that's poured into his mouth by a little flying teapot.

Meanwhile all the punters are in there lounging about on comfy chairs while fried eggs and toast fly out of the kitchen and into their mouths.

The bookies next door to the caff has closed, one of the few casualties but there's no need for money anymore. It's a maternity ward, it's pretty small coz childbirth is a simple business down here, the babies just slide right out and toddle off down to the docks to get themselves some lassi.

Next one down is King's Chinese and fish and chips, those guys are outside playing cards and chatting while chips and noodles fly out over their heads seeking out hungry mouths across the island. A fat crispy duck waddles out the door, with a sackful of pancakes and a flask full of plum sauce.

All the old pubs are open again, open to everyone, not just to 'gentlemen over the age of 21'. The doors and windows are flung open in the perpetual warm weather, there's no bar or bar staff, just fountains of beer and wine and juices that flow all around the building and gardens in ornate guttering. So all you have to do is put yer lips to it, and have your fill.

You might think me ridiculous, that this could never happen here. But, I'll remind you, the trains already drive themselves.