

## 64a Princedale Rd

### *Dennis Haskell*

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Through the thudding underground  
and its crouched, dusty stations, forty years on  
I didn't really remember  
the platform, or how you climb to the street  
from the dark, and the name  
"Holland Park Avenue" I had wrong  
in my head, though you walked down it  
so often, and I walked with you so often  
all those years ago. The street I'm pretty sure  
has changed completely, now more swish,  
more flash, more contemporary  
so, going solely on memory, no map  
in my hand, I thought I must  
have got it wrong, when suddenly  
there was the name,

"Princedale Rd". Childishly thrilled,  
I turned and walked along  
towards the flat you once had,  
my own Castle Boterel,

my step and heart quickening  
until I reached 64a. I have a photo  
of you seated in its window

and somehow, of all the photos  
over all the years, it's these,  
of you in London, young, full of hope,  
full of adventure, the future  
piling up in your pretty smile,  
that razor wire my throat.  
Somehow I can't credit  
that it has all gone,  
is sealed over now  
in death, in all time's mystery  
and menace, and I stood opposite the door  
a pathetic figure in an ordinary street  
on an ordinary day, if a sunny day  
in London can be thought ordinary,  
and tried to hold it all in to me  
uncontrollably.