

## NOTES FOR POEM

### Family Holiday at Osea Island, Essex

Why didn't somebody  
Give Osea to me?

From Condé Nast:

'... Weatherboarded cottages  
White picket fences  
Hollyhocks  
Jetsam  
Cow parsley  
Foamy hedgerows. . . '

### Arrival

On the way out to the causeway the fun-looking static caravans, away from the sea breeze, not stuck on the island waiting for the tide to go out, shopping in town anytime, going on trips, but a different sort of people to us.  
The Range Rover with the Estate Manager in it, younger than us, with blue eyes, knowing nothing of London – Maldon yes.  
The big house and the holiday cottages  
The island lanes hardened with seashells and gravel  
The grey broad river under the Essex sky

The tide is waiting  
The wind is waiting  
The swimming pool is waiting  
The lawn is waiting  
The overnight tent, the wet football, the croquet set, the motor dingy

Mum: don't everybody disappear, don't all rush off.  
Dad: who wants to come sailing? The wind's perfect for a reach to Northey.  
'Come on Uncle Nick, we want to go swimming. Will you watch?'  
'Yes, as long as I can read my book.'  
I'd rather take a stroll, see if I can walk the whole island around the tideline.  
'Let's go and find that mud slide from last year. The tide's just right.'

Bladderwrack and samphire, blackberry bushes,  
hexagonal pillboxes, the knotted rope swinging over the tidal pool

Joel chases a fox on his mono-cycle

Ziggy's football explodes on his shoe  
Milo drops his guitar and discovers an interesting chord  
Alfie runs ahead of the Peugeot under a tunnel of lime trees  
Billie eats samphire and turns green  
Saul hits a tennis ball all the way to Bradwell Power Station

### Mum

We go because of the Coles.  
And because there's no awful trip to Heathrow  
People can sail their boats here.  
Local friends can visit

Somewhere here I think you found love for Essex  
Not in the water, not in the field  
In the broad sky over the estuary maybe

Not your brothers, not your sister mother or father,  
Yourself, giving the rest of us Osea year by year

### The middle generation

Under the roof of parents again  
With brothers and sisters  
fifteen it seems and old enough to know  
some dynamics will never change  
So by all means let us accept that  
in nostalgia

Jonathan, triathlete dad  
Joanna, Essex wife  
Jenny, sitting with a cup of tea  
D'Arcy of Smoked Salmon Cove