

THE NEW GEORGE

you're soaked right through and with nowhere else to go you head towards the light head towards THE NEW GEORGE, £2.30 pints and a packet of crisps, the doors on its hinges, the card machine's on the fritz, it's just another day down at THE NEW GEORGE

Reginald doesn't trust chemtrails, doesn't trust remainers and doesn't trust your face, his nostrils flair as you take his place at the bar drowned out by MTV's top 50 hits of 1983, 1983, the same year Sally's husband won the pools, she says propping up the bar with a wine glass full of Vermouth, she sniffs your aftershave and chews her gum, you remind her of that husband when he was young, before he fucked off and left her with the kids and you start to wonder *where the fucks my drink?* as the new barman gets abused front and centre, for the way he pours a Guinness and the way he stut-utters, everyone thinks he's a bit too clever especially for the lot down at THE NEW GEORGE

you escape to the corner where the fruit flies whisper, the air is thick with the smell of Ginsters, there's a bug eyed man who looks you up and down and up and down again, your table's stained with cigarette ash and Old Speckled Hen, the floor's uneven and your chairs about to break, you feel uneasy and you start to shake, as the bug eyed man looks you up and down and up and down again, you wonder if you could do a runner out the door into the rain out THE NEW GEORGE

but wait just as you're about to head for the door here comes Terry the Landlord, he's got fire in his eyes and coke on his lips, he's got a shiny bald head and a pocket full of tips, and he looks at you dead straight and say's *next ones on me*, pours you a pint of Veltins completely free, you start to think maybe you could spend the whole night at THE NEW GEORGE

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Joe Luke Simpson