

# Summer 2005: The Ramble, Central Park

Tim Sinclair



Image Gary Haigh

*Beady eyes constantly reappraise me for threat. Ears twitch. Calmly alert, working over the acorn between his paws. Green water lapping just inches from my feet. Somewhere behind us a singer starts warbling ...*

I'm on paths I don't recognise yet, huge stones and small hills blocking the sounds of the city.

Third visit. Oaks and ashes and poplars close in overhead.

The stream completes the illusion. You are a long way from home. Breathe deeply.

A beat in the seventies, says the guidebook. Now a popular bird-watching site.

Twitterings up ahead: a flock of at least twelve. Tracksuits and grey hair, cameras and twitterings.

They focus their attention, their monoculars, their oversized zooms on something on the other side of the stream. A bird. They are very excited by what they see.

They bob their heads eagerly up and down.

I skirt around, and around the corner, to where the man in cycle shorts is fellating his companion.

Just a glimpse, between boulder and tree. A tiny clearing. The fallen bike, the fellater on his knees in blue and white lycra, his helmeted head bobbing back and forth.

Momentum.

My legs take me down to the lakeshore.

Sunlight sparkles off rowing-boat ripples. Green water and golden light. My companion chews his acorn, calmly eyes me over.