

# Village Life Brochure

*by* loulou pollen

I live in a small fishing village where small people fish and others gossip or invent bizarre methods by which to irritate each other. During our weekly power cuts I go outside and cross the street, sitting on the pharmacy steps to watch myself not be at home in the dark. The pharmacist believes that I dye my hair and has called me a vampire, to my face, in uncommon sunlight (see opening sentence — ignore fishing reference). His mind is manifestly not connected to his pleasant yet mobile face. My house is centuries old, resolutely mildewed and farcically haunted. Frequently and copiously, oftentimes by several pushy souls at once who either commune with me, ignore me, voyeurise me, create further draughts or sometimes try to press onto me when I am carrying hot liquids. I am used to this now. They will be aware that I do not dye my hair or bite people. Sometimes I do bite people but not critically or without consent; just close enough to taste. My landlady lives upstairs and urinates twice daily, like a literal horse, overhead and wakes me every morning, come rain, hell or shit-storm. I think I will move house but worry about the dead, lost tourists once I'm gone. Live gypsies come to my home and ask me to bless their babies. I am used to this now. That's a responsibility to consider also. They leave anonymous glossy magazines on my doorstep and small bunches of flowers or pastel tubs of perfumed powder puffs at proper intervals. They are weathered like beautiful wood and nod, favourably, at me from their horse-led carts in the street. Locals eye me prunishly as I nod back, the gracious gossip-mulch in the pursed maw of local solidarity. The gypsies return next month and will expect me to be here. As do I. I can't leave chilled, unblessed, gypsy babies with all these ghosts around. Maybe the gypsies could curse my landlady. Or her bladder. I could ask them, perhaps. The ghosts are rubbish and too lazy to haunt above head-height.

