

RICHARD COOK

Saddleworth Road (14-16 August, 1970)

All that afternoon they drifted like strange incense
Up to Krumlin, to Barkisland's summer of love
You could even see Venus from up there
On a good night
Yet this was no climate for Woodstock
This was no Isle of Wight
Instead it blew a hooley, thrashed with rain
Guitars sparked electric shocks
Until they pulled the plug, left the stage.
Crowds sent packing in punishing sleet
Drenched, they flowed down Saddleworth Road
Fled in sandals, blistered feet and patchouli scented cagoules
Pissed through bell-bottoms, clinging, muddy
Passed through the viaduct's acoustics, echoing Sandy Denny
One lad whistling the tune to Pentangle's *Light Flight* -
Let's get away, you say, find a better place -
Washed away with his dreams for the previous night
Right down to the crossroads
Where they arrived at The Shears
Listened to locals as they necked Tetley beers
On this festival, folk feasted years and years and years.

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*That Calder's bin all colours wi' dye
From t' mills: deep purple
To a whiter bloody shade o' pale
They'll knock it up - Nature - I'm tellin' ye
First dead fish, now August
In t' middle o' a force nine gale.*