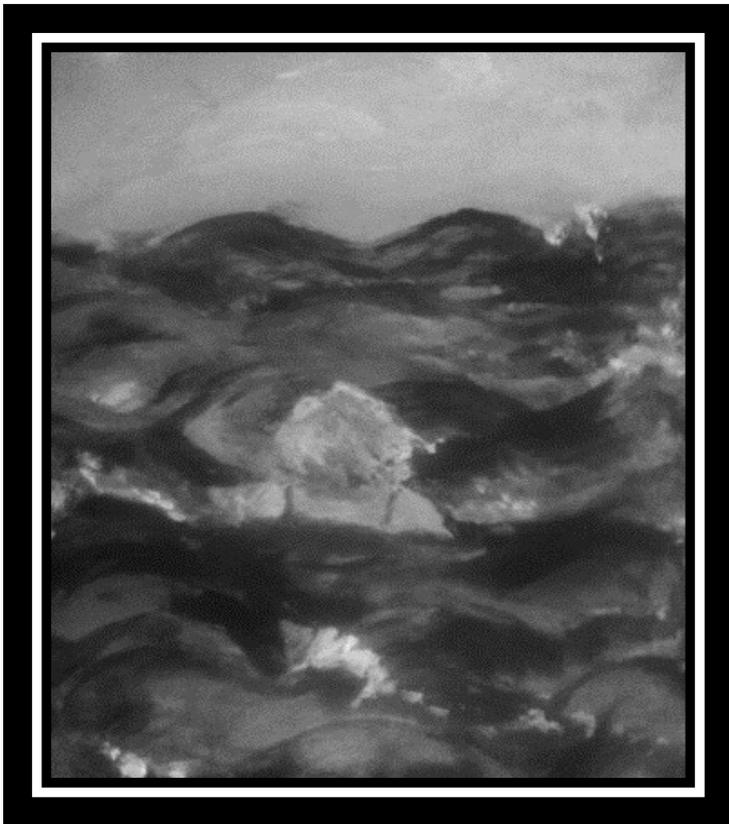


Swimming with Endorphins

Fran Isherwood



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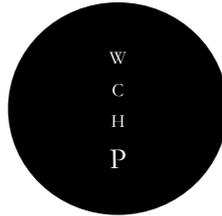
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**Second Chance.
You may need it next**

Dedicated to the memory of my wonderful dad Gordon
Isherwood March 1933- December 2013

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Fran Isherwood

Mine's A Pint

In a mill town in a monochromatic nation,
she was born in between the publication
of Cat In The Hat and Kathy Kirby's first EP.
Her Dad, in a name book, was pleased to see
that Frances meant “Free” and Mary, “Bitter”
thus wetting the head of this first of the litter.

A Long Time Ago In Manchester

I had a student holiday job as an usherette.
One matinee, when the day was grey and wet
I was inanely indulging in a vigorous swing
of my spike- ended, ticket collecting string
to punctuate my boredom-induced stupor.
Out of the blue, in walked Tommy Cooper
to watch American Werewolf by Jon Landis
He towered over me, this huge man, this
bear of a man with dark, untidy, greasy hair.
I leapt right off my uncomfy, fold up chair.
This famous face wasn't wearing his famous fez
but when I took his ticket this is what he sez:
"Thank you very much. Ah ha ha ha ha".
And he was puffing away at a huge cigar.
I said, "There's no smoking on the right hand side."
He echoed, "No smoking on the right hand side".
but that was exactly where he went and sat,
smoking and laughing loudly. Just like that!

Ash Friday

To the left, blue sky crowned with a meringue of white
but, if you tilt your head back to unsteady position
you see someone's flicked their fag out on the top.

To the right and ahead brooding clouds swirl above the flats.

A bird's nest of nebulous grey hovers above the phalanges
of what could be an Ash tree, pointing at the ashtray sky.

I swear I hear a pigeon coughing like a 40 a day user.

There are no planes to paint white lines across the sky

So today, Mum's not gone to Iceland

But that's ok- a bit of it came here instead.

Garden As Circus

Windy Autumn day, overgrown lawn stands
diagonally on end like teenage pop star's haircut.
In dancing tree, a blackbird snaffles precious,
remaining orange berries in yellow beak,
balancing, fluttering, almost falling off fragile
branch that flutters in its turn, intermittently
tickling the washing line. I stare and silently dare
the blackbird (let's call him Cedric) to tightrope-walk
along the washing line. Alas, he refuses.
Chicken. Not as if it would matter if he fell.
No skin off his beak.

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