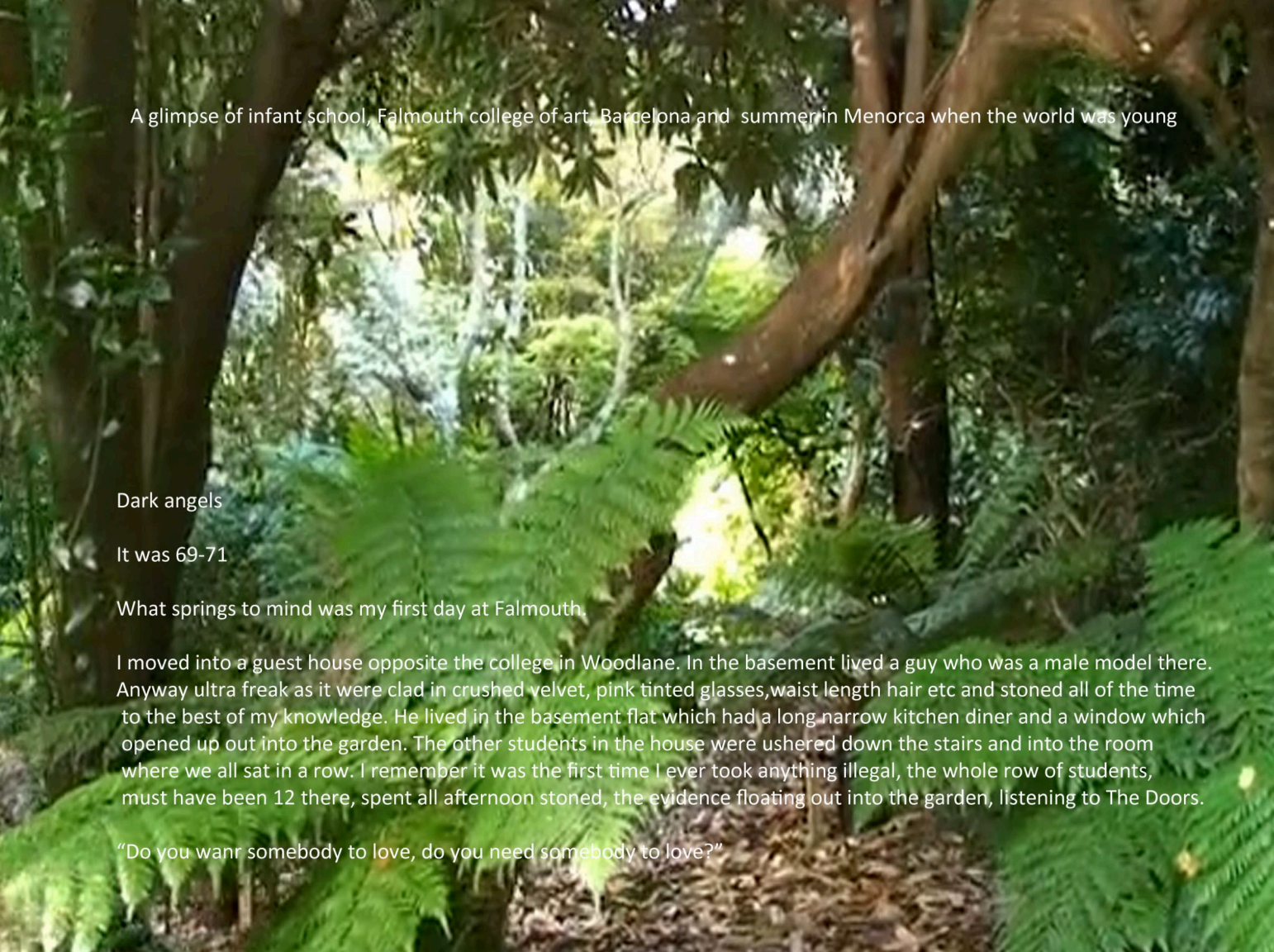


*Dark Angels*



A glimpse of infant school, Falmouth college of art, Barcelona and summer in Menorca when the world was young

Dark angels

It was 69-71

What springs to mind was my first day at Falmouth.

I moved into a guest house opposite the college in Woodlane. In the basement lived a guy who was a male model there. Anyway ultra freak as it were clad in crushed velvet, pink tinted glasses, waist length hair etc and stoned all of the time to the best of my knowledge. He lived in the basement flat which had a long narrow kitchen diner and a window which opened up out into the garden. The other students in the house were ushered down the stairs and into the room where we all sat in a row. I remember it was the first time I ever took anything illegal, the whole row of students, must have been 12 there, spent all afternoon stoned, the evidence floating out into the garden, listening to The Doors.

“Do you want somebody to love, do you need somebody to love?”

# Chapter 1

The sun shone through the broken skies of an April day. A young man sat at the end of a bus. A large grey folio and a yellowish painting blocked the aisle.  
Broken skies and broken days had passed.

Sat on a hard station bench in Geneva, smelling of Swiss bread and blackcurrant jam, wondering about the milky coffee served in large white china bowls. There is a bridge in Geneva, very old and wooden. It is decorated with medieval paintings of soldiers, saints and sinners. There are hard wooden benches and long Swiss nights. The train doesn't come until the morning. The cold is numbing, it freezes the waiting children through cotton jackets and jeans. An adolescent glory, a new watch with jewels ticks upon a wrist. Switzerland is a large country with blue skies, cheese and mountains. Children steal postcards and hang over the edge of their bunks in the dark.

One boy steals clocks.

Mr Weston is everybody's favourite. Mr Weston simply flies around the classroom. Mr Weston has the art class. In all the little world of Junior School full of smells and white paint wrapped in childish joy, Mr Weston is the favourite. There are clay animals to make. Grey greasy stuff that sticks to newspaper clings to desktops. A bear with long polka dots sits on a shelf at home. All children are gregarious wet little animals that crowd into morning assembly. Each moment is sweet.

A time of travel into the West, a ribbon swaying across the hills to the sea.  
Each day I stood waiting.

I sat with the book I took from my brother. There were rivers of jewels and trees of diamonds in an impossible land. I sat with a sister of a friend. It was a green wooden bench with black metal arms. I touched her arm.

All my drawings had been seen and were lying on their backs, feet up and were waiting for sentence. I spent the night in a sea captain's house and ate breakfast at the best table.

Raphael I loved with scenes of angels and swooning.

I lived in shelters built at the end of the war I had not seen. Soldiers grew old in them and died. Black tugs far in the distance took ships to the waiting lorries. I was a figure of joy.

A letter came I was standing in a grey kitchen in Torquay, the family had gone, the letter opened my life. I sat in the park and drew the plants by the stream, I sat in the greenhouse and in the hot sun copied a Millais; a spider jumped in the corner.

We assembled in one of the large studios, young men and women. John was thin, Louis was a pirate, Anthea was beautiful. Sleeping in the back room of a sea captain's house, I ate spaghetti and cabbage with boiled tomatoes. I threw leaves over her bed and Paul arrived. An iris bathed in twilight lost its glistening flowers, my nails were made of chalk. Cheap houses, little, full, private, creaking. Voices, over, boat, rise, perpetual, eyes, gods, hands and red.

Phoenicians still look for tin in this ancient land. Slicing the waters, echoed by night, palms whistle fringing the jewelled churches.

The gulls fly by

There is a long dark wood full of crevices that sits under the white moon of summer. A long tarmac road runs its inky course whilst all the tin monsters lie asleep at their roadside curbs. I lie awake at the top of the sea captains house. From the sea there are bands of swaying vegetation. First among the rocks on the shore lie the wet tangled seaweeds. Then the sparse coarse grass of the houses. Behind the bracken full of rabbits lie tropical woods. Rich hairy trees smell of gum and blossom with unholy flowers.

Two children walk late at night from the shore through the woods. They lie together in a basement flat, a tree grows through the floor up into a cupboard.

Tiny crabs glisten in the moonlight haze. Warm water swirls amongst the sandy rocks. Invisible shrimps pinch each other in incredible tiny ponds. Limpets follow the moon with blind eyes tight shut. One body moved deep in sleep. Sea horses fan the clear waters. A mountain of little creatures stir and rustle in the night whilst owls hoot.

Daytime on the gory sea and scurrying rabbits. Centuries of hooded monks emerge from stone cells. Anemones reach out red tentacles into the surf, dogs lick biscuits, children drink milk, fathers shut doors, mothers cut bread. Figures step like ghosts from wooden doors.

In the harbour the big ship lifts its red bulk and clears its giant white throat. Chains fall and clang against a rusty hull.

Daily bread and pimply boys are spat out in bar rooms amongst glasses of falling froth.

“Do the Locomotion”



Pushing through sets of turned tables and chairs draped with beer mats, hung with letters, covered in carpets. The wind blows from the sea over the holiday palms and across the hot beach cafe warming black vinyl in record sleeves.

A Chinese picture book hid in a library. Towns set amongst granite cliffs warming in the drizzle. Men rush to mate, women to spawn. Bar rooms and fish are all swimming by the lobster baskets hung from the pier.

Elliot Ness unwatched on TV because of the warm pub full of friends.  
Under a giant moon Raphael's angel rose to great heights. In the sea captains attic she whispered to me. My hands ran with gold, jewels stabbed the air, crystals swam in my footprints.



She slept where the high cliffs met the long sandy shore running wildly around the coast. Tintagel stood above the waves pounding beneath the white cliff paths. Upon a path I met the boy who played upon a trumpet.

A small town nestles at the end of the river Fal. Medieval traders once stood clothed in grey, wool swayed up the tide in creaking wooden boats. On a busy quayside, farm boys unloaded bales swung out from musty holds. Mules and horses twitched in the sun, flies swarmed upon their flanks. Streets were of mud whilst servants ran through the alleys.

I lived in a half-timbered house full of ancient chests. Outside lay the dark clock tower round which the road parted. A pointed copper roof had gone green in the rain, the large yellowed clock ticked. A kitchen was built on stilts above a grassy yard where an ugly woman hung her washing. Across the valley the woods of Maenporth hid the estuary ponds. Her husband slept between clean white sheets and loved her. One night the heavens opened and all the water in the world fell on Penryn. All the scents in the world rose up to heaven in response and the night became day.

People move like shadows that speak of dark angels. My shirt was black and my jeans were faded; I sat upon a step in the sun and listened to the Kinks. Black flies speckled and buzzing sat on my arm. In the pub we watched the Cornishmen drink.

There is a picture of silver, blue and green. A blossom of shining petals set upon a swath of black, lights upon its edge. There is a picture of orange, blue and pink. A ball of fire in a landscape from Tibet.

A newspaper nude sat in the gardeners shed. Palm fringed blue skies, long fingers of white blossom sat upon a carpet laced with yellow buttercups.

The cafe was a place of beauty, a gate house to a forgotten mansion. Trellised windows painted black opened against coffee tables.

Anselm was ugly. His hair was cropped, his feet were huge, his teeth were huge, he was painted with huge freckles. Anselm loved pyramids.

Patricia was painted by Raphael. She slept in a gingerbread house at Mylor amongst the rhododendrons. A fat poet clothed in black chewed upon his pencil.

I stood in my kitchen and swallowed oysters. A squid lay dead and wrapped in newspaper stained bright green. Christoph arrived.

The train moved from Falmouth to Totnes. Sheep grazed the green hillsides, so obvious, sheep and grass, there is a god.

Mount Pleasant slumbered in the August sun, Raphaels angel came to see me. Men were landing on the moon behind the black piano on the TV. I lost her.

The bird fell between the kitchen top and the glass and lay dead. Christoph sat; Paul new him as a boy, but now he sat. His hair was never combed and grew past his waist. His nails grew like talons, his feet blue, his eyes shone. Most of the world went about its business. Sun and Moon staggered by. Stars wheeled around the courses of heaven. Ants and birds cried, fish swam, men built cities, Christoph sat. I could see in the dark. A cup, a plate, a saucer, sun, the trees.



A legion of angels lost in dark places.

Above the harbour wall, a flaming sword in my hand, the nations of earth at my feet.

I sang in a heavenly choir and frightened people, I sat in a darkened room and saw pale violet beams from Christophs eyes leap from his empty shape. I heard the sun crack and felt it roar from around the great bulk of the earth. I gazed at the moon and out into our solar system. I sat in the eternal chamber of the gods and played the divine sitar. White fire flew from my fingers, lightening shot through my palm which opened and streaked out into the heavens. Upon the brink of existence the horses of oblivion were poised.

The seasons turned, March winds blew and made patterns. Land beneath a Phoenicians sandal waiting for an angel on a gate, in a lane, on a road.

Majorca and pigs jostle in a sty. Tom and Robin live in a villa miles from the nearest village. Sometimes in the camper we drive the dusty streets past the single shop where a woman in black sells ripe melons. The sun sparkles all along the coast, phosphorescent creatures in every splash, the moon paving a broad highway across the harbour mouth. Tom was Eros, Robin was Flora, both angels of Titian. Men of the earth were beasts. They loved Jean and I.

The lizard sits on the wall in the broad daylight. Poised, an arrow, a dinosaur, it flicks a pink tongue and blinks a scaly eye. Heat from the day lingers in thick stone walls; crickets chirp in unison in the valleys of black night. Galois smoke hangs in the air. Black coffee dregs in the cups. Tom brushes back his long dark hair. Tomorrow we go to Mahon where our ship landed. To walk upon the cool grey stones and clatter amongst the alleys. A small cafe with white tables and Martini ashtrays. Spanish boys love Vespas. Drinks and Spanish waiters, cool shafts of Spanish sun.



Robin takes Jean up winding flights of stairs to buy old Spanish lace. Jean blossomed and grew beautiful. Spanish people stare at a Chinese girl.

We bought clothes in Kings Road where angels walked. Enemies of all mankind we passed among them. In Majorca to grow our hair, buy sandals made from tyres, eat, lie on a bed, kaftans and suncream, cooking and eating, watching the ants.

Jean was an emerald, long green doe eyes shaped like almonds, a frail body wrapped in African cotton. Spain twinkled in the sun. A black holy church lay in the village, a sheath of conquistadors steel, the bleeding heart of Spain and bells, forgiveness in the holy virgin. Doors opened and closed.

A road drifted amongst the sparse hills and we visited a gallery run by English people. To float in the sun you must have wings like locusts; we floated in the sun.

Barcelona was a cruel city smelling of drains and taxis. The cathedral soared with life yet Spaniards put faeces on the steps. Guns and tortillas crying out in pain.

The ship docked at six in the morning, we walked in the dusk by the airport fencing, Spanish castles in the air. Marooned by time a pilgrimage homeward.

Moorish temples besieged by bands of ragged gypsies, long brown legs and eyes of flashing steel their hair caught in the wind.

In the valley of black night farmers gather beneath the moon of a poverty stricken day. Long grey dogs with unchained legs hang lolling heads. Warm brown hares twitched and trembled in their burrows. The ancient god appeared among them and terror like quicksilver swam over their fields. A long procession broke and ran over ancient walls of stone. Insane black ants through the silver gloom running towards distance glinting summer waves in summer moonlight and night mists.

Robin sat bathed in warm yellow summer sun and spoke. Her flaming red hair and large brown eyes described the world to children. Long forgotten ages past her mothers mother saw the great standing stones of Ireland raised anew. Her people knew the magic of starlight. She floated like a corpuscle of sunlight glimpsed through watery eyes in a sunlit room; two thousand years too late.

The bus bounced back between Spanish castles and parked in a lay-by lined with blind rabbits. We slept in the camper and bought bread in Paris. Jean trembled in an ambulance whilst women in rayon zipped open bags. We sat in the Louvre and watched expensive galleries open and shut, people, paintings like money. September bites after the warm air of summer; the camp site has hard beds.

Cornishmen wandered in and picked up stones from dead harbours. Saint John came to Saint Just but Paul picked up the cross of Saint John and like the enigma of da Vinci pointed up to heaven. He picked up the book of revelations and wrapped up in piety sat between the four walls of a granite house.

Tea was with the ancient Chinese describing the blue skies of a beautiful December.

The cliff paths opened up other mysteries. We walked up past the cliffs at Maenporth and followed the headland round. After Tolkien we called a seat of seeing.

Anselm wandered in and made love to Anthea much to our surprise.

Over more stiles the path zigzagged to Saint Just waiting for a summers day.

Hendrix yelled into a million microphones and visions of American cities appeared in the west. Taxis, cars, buses, ships and aeroplanes doing breaststroke through a piece of watery time. All along the watchtower ran visions of night and blue ribbons of electricity. Along the yellow brick road ran the mothers of invention and the breath of America. Cities looking like art.

When people are young love falls from their eyes. His head hung with wisps of hair and the gaze of two eyes behind a bushy beard. They married beneath the white orbs of the moon, the silver stars shone all night, wrapped in green velvet.

## Theology

The artist is a monster that eats up the ruins of belief. A ravaging beast devouring the heart of time. Nobody is the slightest bit interested in theology, in you, in the world, in the hereafter. Every one is hellbent on destruction, on nemesis, on disappearing, on ageing, on decomposing. Every second, every instant, every heartbeat, every breath. The infinite pains of a person sat in the raging torrent of time, his gestures, his mannerisms.

An angel sat in my room in Falmouth.

An angel guided through terror by lysergic acid.  
Into the hearts of all mankind comes the world.

Jimmy Hendrix picked up his guitar. Shaped like steel and dripping with notes like diamonds it cut into the heart of a boy filled with holy terror.

Look the bottomless pit and the void.

## Chapter 2

All things are white. The air of Cornwall, the beach, the waves, the sand, the air, the earth, the people.  
All things are painted white.

Walking down the high street, sitting in the Kings Head, eating potato and onion pie, looking at new yellow raincoats. Talking to Jenny, laughing with Charlie, taking the dogs for a walk, painting everything white. Drinking at the Green Man, arguing with Peter, drinking more beer at the Green Man.

Falling in love with Jenny and Jean, painting them white. Sat in the summer grass a picnic between the four of us. Francis and Liz, laughing with their daughters. Holding Jennys hand, running down the street with Jean, Vera on the lead with Charlie, all white. Jacobs ladder with bags full of shopping and Bob Dylan in the house raided in the papers. Jam and newspapers, a room full of students, love at first sight, all white. An antique shop, long black flowing hair, all white.

The sea is never far off. I love the sea it never rests or stops. I love the air blowing and howling it is never still. I love the music it never lasts but always changes. I love the silence in the world it lasts for ever.

A mass of human cells cast loose into this insatiable world full of impossible places.

I lay awake one night in the silent gloom of a hidden bed behind the woven curtains. Silent and sentient wrapped in flesh and blood. The metropolis of life between me and the moon and the thoughts that stray over grey fields.

Everything is white. White paintings are hung in corners.



Rays cast dark shadows over sandy floors and dense waters. Surface waves break up into salty triangles and swells; eels and fish slither corrupt amongst slimy weeds. The air from the sea blows over lichen spotted granite walls and bobs the harbour boats lined in fairground colours against sheltered walls.

Village cafes painted white, each year clutch cloth covered tables and dirty metal ashtrays. Cheap pasties fill the street with smells. Gulls in yellow webbed feet flit into the human world and whirl above anxious shoppers. Paul strides amongst the Gentiles on the beach and holds communion with himself in the salty air.

Hard backbreaking work on the beach at Maenporth. The summer wind blows through the green leaves of the shady avenue.



In the summer air we lie on the front grass taking our pleasure with the poor daises and drinking from mugs.

The gloom of a Victorian house is broken by the large wooden shutters that stay open deep into the evening. Bob Dylan turns on a Dansette and tells of time to come. I talked to a girl who had a small child. We passed through and out to eat in the canteen where Cornishwomen worked and Tony dates the supervisor. Tony was such a gentle soul, drank too much and loved music. We loved to paint. We loved to paint and took our pleasure with pictures of the past. Angels of the Renaissance painted by a mathematician. Dark angels we were then.

Dead but in flowing clothes and long hair we lived for the pure air that came from beauty. We swam in the sea of life full of people like fish that pass in the murky waters.

Bob was black, medieval, passionate for buildings. Francis was an English country gentleman full of wit and humour. Peter talked of literature that nobody could ever hope to understand. Michael was the hapless principal, the captain of a ship without a wheel, a fighter pilot behind a desk. Hid in the wild land of Cornwall behind the fringed palms and wild lotus flowers of the grounds.

I lay in the ruins of my disbelief. Crabs climbed the pointed towers of my imagination in a gothic land of fantasy. My thoughts were like green emeralds glinting underwater in the warm sun and shallow sea. I could not paint the world; the world dies.

I could not be a monk; I have no belief.

I could not die; I am afraid of death.

I could not live in the human world; everything is vanity.

Angels walked amongst the town invisible to men.

Unafraid of their bodies they love each other and have sex with a thousand wives.

They stand in the streams of life and are clothed in gold.

They hold the wheel of life in their hands as a harp which fills the world with celestial excitement. They grow wings and fly to the sun and beyond out into the limitless creation. They bow their heads towards the creator of all and live in His thoughts.

Churches become the temple of their love and perch like birds on the glowing pinnacles. Jelly fish glisten in the evenings rays cast ruby red into the waters amongst the shore. Hammers ring in workshops making sculpture behind palm trees. A hanger full of white plaster shapes is testimony to one of Michelangelo's tormented souls.

No one loves the sinner. The poor of mankind that has no hope in the world of heaven. All mankind rushes to build the dark tower of despair, love and power.

Men turn into angels.

Sins don't come too soon. They learn to wait and hover around a life,

The day was grey and it was late summer. We put up our tent in the field on a hill, draped in army surplus chaplains stores. An alter cloth, some tasselled cushions and a new storm lamp sat upon a book. Into my piece of heaven came Jean, beautiful and oriental and upon my Afghan coat we slept.

The cathedral rose like a song from the green meadows of Wells, a ship of mystery. Around the hot day we climbed over hills and meadows, sweet hot breath of summer gently blowing across the scorched grass.

Ancient stone walls sweet with incense and as the day grew we went to evensong in all its Catholic glory.  
Adolescent choirs hid in the vaults, dead sins begin to rise to life again through the catacomb of my mind.  
Transfixed I could not look to left or right

Transfixed I could not cry for help as I clung to my life,  
It struggled to escape from my body.

Meanness, baseness, cruelty came to gaze back at me and I at them.

As my death approached they jumped free.  
Floating, floating, floating out jumped my soul its taste and its vision the same.

Exquisiteness floating between the air; it touched the metal cross hung from my neck and destroyed the  
burden of my sins.

I gazed upon the world again and beauty was my friend.  
I filled myself with breath and walked out into the world.  
The world looked back at me and from the clouds came a parting beam of sunlight that was speaking just to  
me.

The catholic white lily, the Tibetan golden rose they grew from my spine and little petals of bliss uncurled  
scented flowers that day sat outside my tent.







The entrance to Woodlane Falmouth College of Art 1969



# Dark Angels

lost but not forgotten



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*Dark Angels*