



Waiting of Billy

Martin Healy

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Martin Healy was a young man when he died, but he wrote with a breadth of insight and sympathy that few writers ever achieve. The twelve stories gathered here represent the best work of his too-short career. They are set in the city, suburbs and countryside, and they are peopled by the young, the middle-aged and the old. He did not set out, as so many writers do, to chronicle the life of any single place, or generation, or demi-monde. He was, simply, a great storyteller. Through characters from the lonely old couple in the title story to the lecherous house-painter in 'A Fish in Pinstripes', Healy paints a world of longing - for the visit of a nephew, the touch of a distant spouse, the day's first drink. He writes with wit, and with uncommon gravity and compassion. With the publication of this collection, the Irish literary world will come to know what it lost when Martin Healy died so prematurely in 1997. 'Searingly effective and moving... It is the unadorned clarity of Healy's writing that gives the stories their rare originality. It is Irish writing's tragedy that such a hugely talented writer died before anyone knew what he was truly capable of... this collection stands as a powerful testament to an eminently gifted writer.' - Antonia Logue, The Times 'An original and assured debut. His work is always revealing, surprising and frequently crammed with tiny incendiary details that turn a story around... they contain moments that many writers will spend a lifetime trying to capture. Buy it, celebrate what is already here and wonder at just what might have been.' - Dermot Bolger, Sunday Tribune

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