

Bourne
toWrite...
creative writing
workshops

Last Night

by Ivor John

Last night, I dreamt I went to Folkestone again. I was aware of a change from before, the streets were crowded dark and uncontrolled to the precinct, where I saw the graffitied concrete block walls of the Mandalay Road medical centre. Sombre in the streetlight of my dream. I could swear the house lived and breathed as it had done in the old days, but a cloud came over the moon, and the house reverted to what I knew it really was, as soul less and desolate as a morgue. Memories of my youthful fear and suffering lay in its desolation, there could be no resurrection.

I wake up from my dream.

A thread, hanging from the stitching of my trousers, was annoying me and had somehow become of the highest importance. I picked at it, in an irritated manner, as I sat on an orange plastic chair in the GP waiting room. I had been there for what seemed ages, but looking at my watch it had only been twenty minutes. Now it had passed the time of my appointment with Dr Baker. There was a pile of magazines on a low table in the middle of the rectangle of chairs. I picked up a copy of Take A Break, 'I found my long lost sister at the Bingo' the banner line declared in vibrant pink 'Isadora Sans'. Turning through the pages quickly, to see if anything caught my intention. Tossing the magazine back onto the pile, and looking at my watch again. Only three minutes since I last looked.

The ping of the public address system interrupted the local radio drive time show which was playing on a wireless speaker. 'Mr Manvers to room 2.' A red LED display fixed above the gray painted double doors leading into the short corridor graphically imparted the same information.

Walking through, I could see a small amber light flashing above one of doors lined along each side of the corridor. The name Dr Baker was printed on a card slotted into a door sign. I imagined it could be changed if a different person was using the office.

I hadn't met Dr Baker before. He was a fit man probably in his early forties. Tanned and sporty looking. He had his jacket off, which was on the back of his chair, his shirt sleeves were rolled above his elbows. I expect its a hygiene thing, washing their hands all the time. He had strong forearms, the hairs on them bleached by the sun. Playing cricket or sailing I imagined.

He was typing notes into a computer as I entered his room. 'Mr Manvers ?' he said, in a rising intonation, which invited me to correct him. Without looking up from he instructed that I sit in the chair to the left of his desk. Various pieces of medical equipment were scattered across his desk, an old fashioned sphygmomanometer, a special torch for looking in ear canals, he wore a stethoscope hanging around his neck. He still hadn't looked at me when he told me to take my jacket off. Standing up now, he looped an sleeve around my armed and pumped it quickly a few times.

'Mmm, rather high' he stated, though not clearly to me, as he looked at the blood pressure reading. 'Any headaches? feeling light headed? Do you do any vigorous exercise ever?'

He looked at his computer again, and then looked back at me.

'So, I see that you are concerned about thoughts you have been having. Could you describe this too me?'

I told him then, that I could not even explain it to myself. I had noticed, that I would have a thought about something, perhaps in considerable detail. Often it would be an idea for something I would like to do. A plan. I would then find that sometimes, even minutes later, I was unable to remember even what I had been thinking about. It would have completely evaporated, except that I would remember that I had thought something. A metamemory, but the thoughts had gone. Disappeared somewhere. A few times, this had even been while I had been speaking and my thoughts had drained out of my head, even as I was speaking. It had been easy to dismiss this as having a moment. But now, I was becoming quite concerned. Dr Baker had gone back to looking at his computer screen.

'Probably it's anxiety,' he said, as he typed on his keyboard, 'I will give you some citalopram, its quite safe. Make an appointment at reception for two weeks and we'll see if that has helped. If not, I will book you into a memory clinic. I think you also need to think about your blood pressure. The citalopram will probably help with that, but I will start you on losartin to be sure. I'll see you again in two weeks.'