



Francis Michael Clancy: Alias Frank

If you want to know the meaning of the word "metaphor," go by Frank Clancy's office sometime. On the door is a "Most Wanted" picture of Clancy glaring Gaelically at you, teasing, welcoming, daring the world to enter. Surrounding this Celtic riddle is a cornucopia of wild and witty slogans, farside cartoons, playbills, greening shamrocks (left by some wee folk no doubt), comical newsmisprints, and the mocking sobriquet "The last great Aristotleian." Learn to hope all who enter here.

Inside, the walls are peacocked with pictures of grim and grinning runners -- winning and losing, weeping and hugging -- eyes bright with pain and glory. The Irish writers leap at you -- Yeats, O'Neill, Joyce and Donleavy, Joyce and Becket, O'Connor, Christy Brown, and Joyce. William Tecumseh Sherman, shaggy and grim, staring from a tailored, ebony-frame picture, jaw muscles fanned firmly under his ear reminding the world what hell is. Brendan Behan, handsome and porcine, in his cups and grandeur. Dylan Thomas, the angel garg@yle of Wales and Poetry. Tom Wolfe, the wise pixie, smirking sagely in white linens and polkadots. Woody Allen, impish and owlish, childish and Jewish, assessing the scene.

Crazy-eyed Janis Jopkin, her voice barely silent, James Dean haunting, Arthur Miller, Faulkner, her sultriness: Marlene Dietrich, Hemingway, Styron, Thomas Wolfe, sad-eyed and paunchy in a frozen galumph somewhere outside Ashville -- an anonymous, alert black child forlorn a city scape. Everything haunting, fiery, scrappy, witty, crackling, laughing, fierce, bright, and memorable.

Complete the metaphor. Sit down now and blarney with Frank: listen to him talk. You see and hear Yeats and the leprechaun, Becket and the Gingerman, Hart Crane and Lenny Bruce, James Joyce and Henry Youngman in the ecumenical Irishness of Francis Michael Clancy. Take Frank Clancy, Please!

Bob Strozier *BS*
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