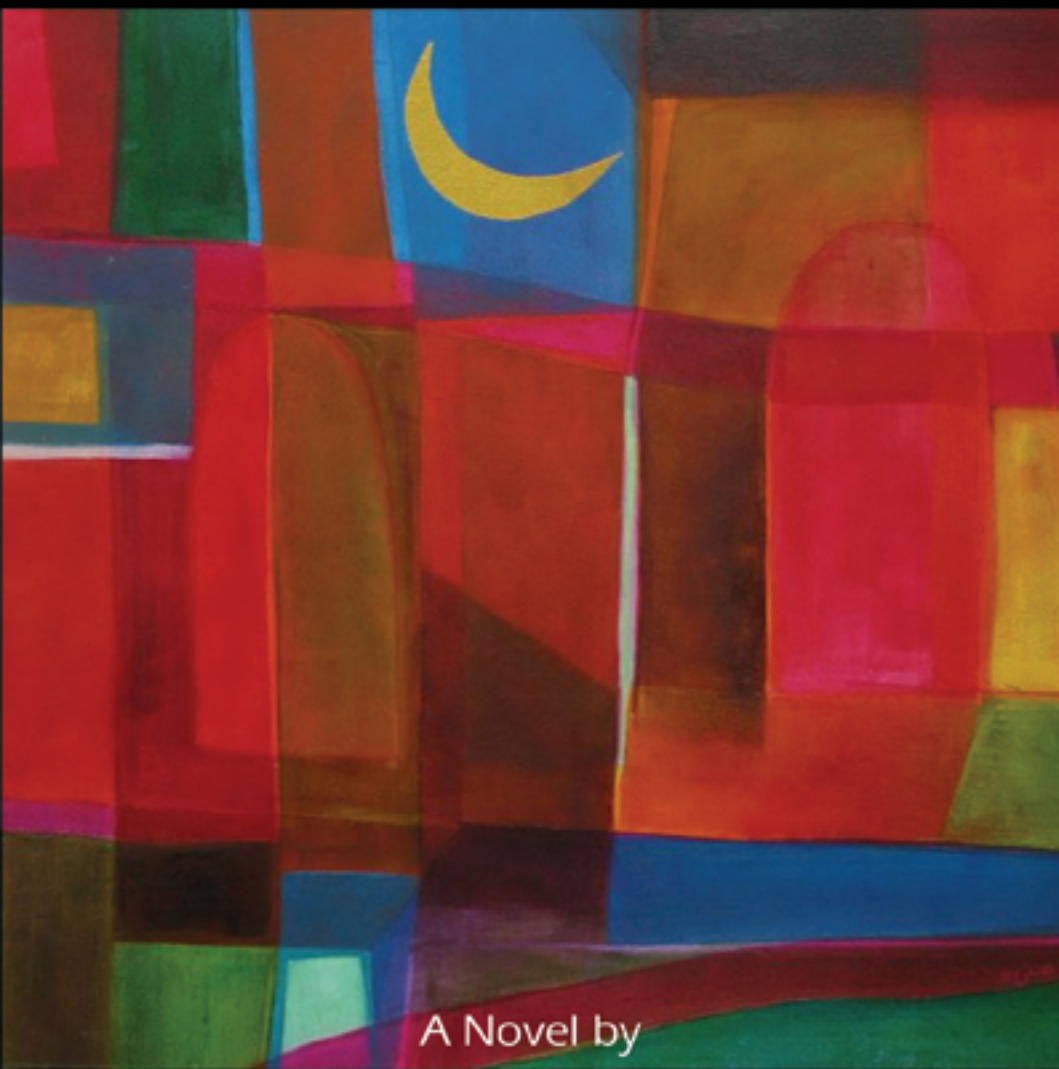


# Midnight Tango



A Novel by

Edward Fotheringill

*Dick Byron is back! In this sequel to **Lanterns in the Mist**, the mystical, excommunicated priest is tracking the whereabouts of a friend, Jacob Frobisher, who has gone missing. Byron's odyssey is both geographic and spiritual as he navigates his way through the northeast United States, visiting the strange, iconoclastic friends with whom Jacob has confided in the past. The journey culminates in the surreal coastal desert of Baja, Mexico.*

## Midnight Tango

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# *Midnight Tango*

*Edward Fotheringill*

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*Kennebunkport, Maine*

The cold and silent stillness of daybreak enveloped the old man like a frozen cocoon. Huddled on the beach in a heavy, hooded parka, he drew hard on his cigarette, a plume of whiteness billowing from his dry, cracked lips. Seagulls cawed overhead and arced their way through the blue-gray light as sandpipers skittered across the snow-dusted shore, leaving skeletal markings suggestive of hieroglyphic messages from some unknown hand. He gazed into the gray horizon weighing heavy on the surface of the churning chop, his tired eyes moving slowly yet searchingly in their moist sockets, and saw as if in a discordant dream a severely misplaced image—an embattled yacht careening aimlessly in the ocean’s frothy roil—a discarded toy in a world that has forgotten the meaningfulness of things.

*Woodstock, Vermont*

Arthur Frobisher sipped his hot coffee and unconsciously drummed the fingers of his right hand on the surface of the butcher-block table. He stared out the kitchen window, his mind trolling in disquietude.

“What are we going to do?” queried Alice Frobisher, her bright lime green turtleneck sweater flashing the Ralph Lauren icon as she turned in the morning light.

Arthur stared solemnly at his wife of forty years. “I don’t know, Alice. It’s been two weeks since Jacob’s disappearance. And the police don’t seem to be of much help.”

“Kennebunkport’s a small town. I don’t think they have the resources...”

“Hell, Alice, *we* are the resources. If we don’t do something on our own, nothing’s going to be resolved.” Arthur stared out the window, snow silently falling, a plump blue jay perched in stillness on a low branch of a tall white poplar. “I think we need to hire a private investigator.”

*Midnight Tango*

Alice swept a strand of gray hair away from her temple, her blue eyes strikingly sad. "It's like we never knew him."

"What?"

"It's like we never knew Jacob. It's a sad commentary, isn't it?"

Arthur shrugged. "I used to stare at that boy across the dining room table and wonder where in hell he came from. I never did see any of you or me in him." He sighed. "But I was there when you gave birth to him, so I guess he was ours."

Alice shook her head despondently. "Our only son. And we never knew him. And now he's gone. Vanished into thin air."



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