

## **Waters Roger**

### **"The Story"**

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Benny is a Welsh coal miner. He is a radio ham. He is 23 years old, married to Molly. They have a son, young Ben, aged 4, and a new baby. They look after Benny's twin brother Billy, who is apparently a vegetable. The mine is closed by the market forces. The Male Voice Choir stops singing, the village is dying.

One night Benny takes Billy on a pub crawl. Drunk in a brightly-lit shopping mall, Benny vents his anger on a shop window full of multiple TV images of Margaret Thatcher's mocking condescension. In defiance, he steals a cordless 'phone. Later that night, Benny cavorts dangerously on the parapet of a motorway footbridge, in theatrical protest at the tabloid press. That same night, a cab driver is killed by a concrete block dropped off a similar bridge. The police come to question Benny; he hides the cordless 'phone under the cushion of Billy's wheelchair. Billy is different, he can receive radio waves directly without the aid of a tuner; he explores the cordless 'phone, recognizing its radioness. Benny is sent to prison. Billy feels as if half of him has been cut off. He misses Benny's nightly conversations with radio hams in foreign parts. Molly, unable to cope, sends Billy to stay with his Great Uncle David, who had emigrated to the USA during the war. Much as Billy likes Uncle David and the sunshine and all the new radio in LA, he cannot adjust to the cultural upheaval and the loss of Benny, who for him is 'home'. Uncle David, now an old man, is haunted by having worked on the Manhattan

project during World War II, designing the Atom Bomb,  
and seeks to atone. He  
also is a radio ham; he often talks to other hams about  
the Black Hills of his  
youth, the Male Voice Choir, about home. He is  
saddened by the use of  
telecommunication to trivialise important issues, the  
soap opera of state.  
However, Live Aid has decynicised him to an extent.  
Billy listens to David and  
hears the truth the old man speaks.  
Billy experiments with his cordless 'phone, he learns to  
make calls. He  
accesses computers and speech synthesizers, he  
learns to speak.  
Billy makes contact with Jim a DJ at Radio KAOS, a  
renegade rock station  
fighting a lone rear guard action against format radio.  
Billy and Jim become  
radio friends, Reagan and Thatcher bomb Lybia. Billy  
perceives this as an act  
of political "entertainment" fireworks to focus attention  
away from problems at  
"home".  
Billy has developed his expertise with the cordless  
'phone to the point where  
he can now control the most powerful computers in the  
world. He plans an  
"entertainment" of his own. He simulates nuclear  
attack everywhere, but  
de-activates the military capability of "the powers that  
be" to retaliate.  
In extremes perceptions change, Panic, comedy,  
compassion. In a SAC bunker a  
soldier in a white cravat turns a key to launch the  
counter attack. Nothing  
happens; impotently he kicks the console, hurting his  
foot. He watches the  
approaching blips on the radar screen. As impact  
approaches, he thinks of his  
wife and kids, he puts his fingers in his ears.  
Silence. White out. Black out. Lights out. It didn't  
happen, we're still  
alive. Billy has drained the earth of power to create his  
illusion.  
All over the dark side of the earth, candles are lit. In the  
pub in Billy's  
home village in Wales one man starts to sing; the other  
men join in.  
The tide is turning.  
Billy is home.

Jim: This is K.A.O.S. You and I are listening to KAOS in  
Los Angeles. Let's  
go to the telephones now and take a request.

Billy: Hello, I'm Billy.

Jim: Yes?

Billy: I hear radio waves in my head.

Jim: You hear radio waves in your head? Ah! Is there a  
request that you have  
tonight for KAOS?

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