



San Fran '60s: Stories of San Francisco and the Birth of the Hippies

M. W. Jacobs

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"San Fran '60s"

San Francisco in the Sixties, the Summer of Love, the birth of the hippies, experience it for yourself in "San Fran '60s" and its sequel "More San Fran '60s," collections of autobiographical short stories. San Francisco in the Sixties was the epicenter of the Counter Culture, the biggest cultural transformation of the second half of the Twentieth Century. Of course, it has had its memoirs and histories, but this is the only time a participant has used the devices of literary fiction to put you there, living it.

"San Fran '60s" is darker, edgier, and more intimate than anything on the subject before. In addition to the requisite sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll, there is murder, madness, and God. One of the murders officially ended the Summer of Love. William Burroughs and Janis Joplin make an appearance, as does Jim Morrison in "More San Fran '60s." LSD and free love, Haight-Ashbury and the Hell's Angels, the Hip and the Straight, it's all in these stories.

And it all really happened. The stories are based on author M.W. Jacobs' journals and experiences and there is less invention than in most memoirs. He has lived in and around San Francisco since 1965 and presents myself, friends, and acquaintances as prime specimens. In the Sixties and Seventies, he was a free lance journalist, among other things.

The first story, "The Street," is a present-tense, stream-of-expanded-consciousness stroll the length of Haight Street at the height of the Summer of Love. In "Unlivable With," a college love affair beset by a outraged husband and a predatory junky culminates in a night of sex on LSD. In "Junkie Love," there's a legendary junkie burn artist and armed robbery between dealers, and it all culminates in a meeting with William Burroughs. In "Gilroy," three dealers are driving from San Francisco to LA in the middle of the night on LSD. They must contend with rednecks at a truck stop as well as demons of their own that emerge in their hurtling steal cage. "Summer of '66" follows four roommates and assorted crashers during the all important gestational summer before the Summer of Love.

The stories range in tone from comic to harrowing to lyrical. All are interconnected but each is self-contained so they can be read in any order. These collections could be thought of as a fractured novel in which even the narrative structure expresses that era.

Now read them and experience it for yourself.

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