

RE-EMERGENCE by Kath Barber

I saw my psychiatrist this morning at his clinic. He said, "You look better I must say than when I saw you last." And I sat down and thought, "But you always say that every time and I always pretend to agree."

"It's a ploy," I mused, nodding my head, and I gave a brief sketch of a smile I didn't feel. I used to feel smiles but I don't feel any more. "It's a ploy," I repeated in thought. "He knows I don't really agree, but he thinks if I smile and pretend then pretence will become a reality in the end."

We went through the usual charade, then he said, "I've got something to ask," and I said, "What's that?"

In his cool, measured way he said, "One night I'm giving a talk—next week in fact. If you've got no objections I'd like to talk about you." I asked him, "Why me?" and he said that the talk was concerning the treatment of depression as a symptom of cryoglobulinaemia. "I won't mention your name," he assured me. "Though some of the staff from nephrology might recognise who you are. If they're there." He said, adding "I hope you don't object."

I said that I didn't, but a voice in my head said, "He must know I don't really care or he wouldn't have asked at all" "It was good of him," I said, "to enquire if I minded or not."

Then I thought, "I just wonder how much he gets paid for a talk and I wonder if it's in cash."

I realised in fuddled surprise that my cynical old self was beginning to re-emerge.

I must be getting better.