



# Sun on the Water: The Brilliant Life and Tragic Death of Kirsty MacColl

*Jean MacColl*

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## **Sun on the Water: The Brilliant Life and Tragic Death of Kirsty MacColl** Jean MacColl

Kirsty MacColl led a dazzling life—tender, creative, heroic, and full of love. This book, by her mother Jean MacColl, charts with moving insight Kirsty's early years, celebrates her brilliant career at the front rank of the music business in the 1980s and 1990s, and mourns her tragic and untimely death—killed by a speedboat in Mexican waters in December 2000. It also tells, with heartfelt truth, the shocking story of the elaborate cover-up and gross miscarriage of justice that followed, and appeals for justice to be done in her name. Daughter of legendary folksinger Ewan MacColl and dancer Jean, Kirsty was a precocious child, troubled by ill health, whose talent quickly blossomed into a unique artistry. She signed to the Stiff Records label and after her first tentative success moved to Polydor, which brought her her first major airplay with "There's a Guy Works Down the Chip Shop Swears He's Elvis," demonstrating Kirsty's trademark dry wit and social awareness. Top-ten success—and widespread acclaim as a musical postergirl of the times—followed with such hits as "A New England" and "Days", but it was her 1987 collaboration with The Pogues on the Christmas hit "Fairytale of New York" which really brought her brand of feisty folk-pop to an international audience. By then married to producer Steve Lillywhite, her talents lent magic to an astonishing array of creative collaborations; this book includes new reflections on her life by many of her friends and colleagues, including Jools Holland and Billy Bragg. In 2006 Bono dedicated U2's Mexico concert performances of "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For" to Kirsty's memory. But Kirsty's family, friends, and fans still haven't found what they're looking for—justice for those responsible for the needless hit-and-run accident that took her life. Soon after Kirsty's death, Jean and her friend and colleague John Dalby started the Justice for Kirsty Campaign, which has now grown into a worldwide organization, ably spearheaded by human rights activist Fred Shortland. The campaign will continue until justice is done. Meanwhile, Kirsty's vivacious personality lives on in the enduring legacy of her brilliant music. This remarkable book—in equal parts a celebration and an appeal for truth—tells the story of both.

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