

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

Maybe Tomorrow: Writer Erica Ferencik chases big game in the waters off Boston Harbor. Also, a conversation with Erica about her blog, wakeupandsmelltheblog.com.

Tony Kahn:

Hi everybody. This is Tony Kahn, the producer and director of *Morning Stories* from WGBH in Boston. First of all, we'd like you to hear a Morning Story from one of our favorite contributors, Erica Ferencik. She calls this piece *Maybe Tomorrow*.

Erica Ferencik:

Maybe because I'm somewhat large myself, I've always loved big mammals, starting with my dad and working my way along the food chain to elephants, moose, and especially whales. [whale sounds]

The very idea of a whale, eleven times heavier than an elephant, a rib cage you can walk into, a heart as big as a VW bus – what's not to love? Some friends of mine had just been on a whale watch. "Oh my God," one of them spouted, "the second we were out on the harbor, we were surrounded by pigmy whales. They came up to the boat and played like we were another whale! We were naming them by the end of the trip." "Are you kidding?" another friend said, "On our trip, we witnessed the birth of a humpback whale. It changed my life."

[Sound of boat horn]

I was on my first whale watch the very next day. It was a perfect summer morning, bright and still. [boat sounds and, in the background, on the boat's public address system, Frank Sinatra singing *You Do Something to Me*] As we motored out of the harbor, a guy named Jim came on the loud speaker and began a harangue about Boston and the islands, clam chowder and the Red Sox. The horizon was a grim, unbroken line, fishless. The day grew hot, the sky an upturned china blue bowl on a flat grey sea. But I never left my post at the prow of the boat, endlessly scanning the water for the breach of a forty-five ton cutie. Jim got back on the loud speaker to apologize for the lack of action and to plug the snack bar. After that, only silence, interrupted by the occasional shriek of gulls, for four more hours.

[Gulls crying; same song in background]

It was six o'clock when we pulled into the pier without a single sighting. I was sunburned, wind-whipped, and beached. Jim announced that everyone would be given a complimentary pass for another whale watch. My heart picked up. I was already conjuring the wording of my call-in-sick-to-work speech for the next day.

Day two: Another flawless morning. I was first on the boat, startling Jim at the helm as he dosed his Starbucks with something from a hipflask. "Damn, girl, hang on to your dreams," I thought as I made my way to my usual spot. "Eyes on the prize."
[Boat sounds]

I had a good feeling this time. I could almost see the whales rumbling under the boat, big as blimps with huge smiles, sifting through the sea for their tiny snacks, itching for their curtain call. But the sea was as flat and grey as a parking lot. As I was splashing my sunburned face in the bathroom, I heard a scream. "Look," someone yelled, "whales!" Still dripping, I stumbled out of the head. And there it was. Just like a baby whale – a big, black, garbage bag, rolling and tumbling on the waves. Without a word, Jim reached out with a pole and dragged it to the boat.

[Seagull calls and singing]

As we chugged into the harbor for another set of complimentary whale watch tickets, Jim pulled me aside. He said he didn't know what I was doing tomorrow, but it was supposed to rain, and supposedly, whales like that. Which brings me to tonight.
[thunder is distance]

When I got home, there was a phone message from my boss, something about needing to talk to me when he sees me tomorrow. All I know is, he's going to have to wait one more day. Whatever is huge and wonderful out there, I hope I find it soon. Since this whale watch thing got started, I've already lost three pounds, and Jim is looking better and better.

[Song *You Do Something To Me* with whale sounds]

Tony Kahn:

That was today's Morning Story from Erica Ferencik, *Maybe Tomorrow*.

Erica Ferencik:

I claim no responsibility at all.

Tony Kahn:

Erica Ferencik herself is with us right now. You were, you were saying in fact that maybe a good title for it would be *Big Loser*.

Erica Ferencik:

Big Loser.

Tony Kahn:

Big Loser.

Erica Ferencik:

Big Loser. Forget nanotechnology, I mean. Nanotechnology is so 2004. I just want to make an enormous cell phone, or this mammoth, you know, pacemaker.

Tony Kahn:

You've got a blog. What do you, what do you call your blog?

Erica Ferencik:

It's <wakeupandsmelltheblog.com>. There's nothing on my blog that has any relevance to anything, and that's why it's kind of the go-to site, you know, for nothing.

Tony Kahn:

What do you use the blog for?

Erica Ferencik:

I used to do standup for ten years, and it's an audience. I, I like having an audience. And, I'm also a novelist and filmmaker, and it's a great way to sort of perform in your pajamas and someone's reading it in France, I mean, you know, it's, it's fantastic fun.

Tony Kahn:

It would be very hard to describe your blog, which is one of the nice things about it. You really don't know what's going to happen, the next time you get to your blog.

Erica Ferencik:

It's not just jokes, as you say. There are like little mini-essays and things that occur to me and, I, you know, I think they're funny so hopefully, other people will.

Tony Kahn:

I checked it out yesterday. Gary Mott, who's with us here also, checked it out today.

Gary Mott:

Hi.

Erica Ferencik:

Hi Gary.

Gary Mott:

I'm really enjoying this conversation, you know

Erica Ferencik:

Oh good. I'm having a ball.

Gary Mott:

I'm just soaking it up.

Erica Ferencik:

Yeah.

Tony Kahn:

You probably realized, Erica, that we feel free to use just about every sound that you make in a recording session, and you are a great source of many sounds that, really, are so natural.

Gary Mott:

The great thing about large hard drives, right?, is that we can store sounds that were made when we recorded you a year-and-a-half ago.

Erica Ferencik:

Oh my God.

Gary Mott:

So you remember when we played volleyball in the studio here?

Erica Ferencik:

I do. [laughing]

Gary Mott:

And we were giving each other “high fives?”

Erica Ferencik:

Yes.

Gary Mott:

That may make it into a, a future Morning Story.

Erica Ferencik:

Okay. Wow.

Tony Kahn:

That’s right. The way you express your feelings in the course of a session – a sigh or a laugh, or even the way you drink water – we, we feel that these sounds really enhance your stories sometimes, and even the stories of other people. So ...

[Sound of Erica loudly slurping water]

Erica Ferencik:

It’s so beautiful!

Tony Kahn:

The best of – The Best of Erica Ferencik. So what we've done is we've really put together a little demo reel of some of, some of the moments [Erica laughs] that, that we've had with you in our editing sessions.

Erica Ferencik:

Good Lord. Are you kidding?

Tony Kahn:

I Just wanted you to hear it.

Erica Ferencik:

[From recordings]

"I love it." "Okay." "My iPod." "I gotta get a ..." "Oh my God!"

Ach. Ugh. Sigh. Okay. Sigh. "I should have thought about this before I came in today. Oh my God. Oh, all right." "Okay, all right, great. Wait – double check. Um." "Thank you." [laughter]

Tony Kahn:

Well, Erica. It's as always a pleasure, and one that I hope we'll repeat.

Erica Ferencik:

Thank you. Same here.

Tony Kahn:

And we really cleaned up the studio for you. Want you to know that. Next week we go back to Studio "O" in the parking lot.

Erica Ferencik:

Love what you've done.

Tony Kahn:

We can't take this. [laughing]

Erica Ferencik:

We only have one nice day in the year and we're in the studio.

Tony Kahn:

All right my dear. Well, thank you. Come back soon, and we'll be hearing more of you.

Erica Ferencik:

Yes. Absolutely.

Tony Kahn:

While thanking Erica, we simply must also thank our abiding presence in this podcast, our sponsor week after week, Ipswitch, a leader in file transfer software <Ipswitch.com> - that's I-P-S-W-I-T-C-H.

Gary Mott:

And right after you go there, go to the *Morning Stories* website:

<WGBH.org/morningstories>, great way to spend some time on your lunch hour. And also send us an email at <morningstories@WGBH.org>. We love hearing from you.

Tony Kahn:

See you next week.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Susan MacLeod