

## Michael Winter / I, FOREIGN I

I am sitting near the candle. It glazes your gazing eyes. You are lying two dimensional to the window, hair twitching in captured breezes funnelling along the concrete wall and escaping through every ridge and crevice. You douse your doubts with a single wave; resume a state of placidity. You say there is a good film on tonight and I see it forming behind your heavy lids. You stand in a hallway looking through a windowed door at a man near a greenboard. He picks up a sliver of chalk and slowly draws a line about ten inches long down the middle of the board. He draws another line exactly like the first and parallel with it. Two dots ensue and another line. Then an S-shaped figure appears to complete the cryptic message. The yellow chalk is placed back on its ledge. The lines dots and squiggle remain. You crane for comprehension. It is the time — 11:15. A revelation.

Alternating your eyes from the candle to me to the whistling window. The double entendre escapes you. Fixed and rigid. To the concrete box after the film I cross blackly a deserted lot. It is dark there is wind and a streetlamp nods at the far end of the tarmac barren. You close your eyes, let your feet that touch mine guide us across. No fears. No maniacal drivers or chasms to dodge. And no time for casual canterings. I send you thought-shapes but you never receive.

Fish in the glass box behind your head keep bumping their noses, asking politely to be let out. Fed every day same time; kissing reflections. Nice green sand coating the bottom. Yellow light beaming down, bubble bubble behind your head. You are a fish and I am kissing you. The wind is not. Smell the symmetry.

Coffee instant on the trunk in the middle of the room. A Nescafé bottle and even the contents are not what they appear. From a fifty cent an ounce Chase and Sanborn. Without birth and their bottle is hypnotic blue. You shook your head when shaking into the red-brown bottle. An instant frown perked above your eyes, behind my head.

Crouch on your couch in the shade. An aura of understanding, sometimes alienation, but you are them. Read another weathered book, find an idea and use it. That black hair, dripping icicles down your face. Trying to make some rebellious remark, narcissus? Never eat with the lights off. Sit by my plate in chiaroscuro, barely discerning between carrots and chicken. Car tyres slicking through streaky streets jump into the kitchen. I turn on a lamp and move the mood.

Lounge in your chair nearest the flame. A red shimmer casts over your face hotly. Triangular mobiles revolve around with each billow from the window. Huffle down to Bowring Park and feed the iced ducks Dominion bread and orange candy. Their frozen beaks are slick and sleek and the real wind glimmers around them. Beneath the frozen pond, faceless fishes bump their noses politely.