

ARIGATO, TOKYO (EXTRACT 2)

Daniel MacIvor

CARL: I've taken to riding the subway day and night. Looking for something that might help me to stop looking for something. Or to understand why I'm looking for something.

There's little space in my head among the lists of wrongs done me, duties undone by me, arguments with invisible forces, acceptance speeches for awards never to be won, and the din of minutes read by all my imaginary committees. The committees of "I should" and "I want" and "more more more." But still I'm looking for, looking for looking for... Something.

First I think I find it in the mindless lovers riding the train. Youthfully pocked and sweaty. Clinging like Cellophane to one another. Lost in fingers and legs and unsunned skin and last night and this morning and soon soon soon again where it will be nothing but deep dark pupils deep and dark, coal mines full of night. Pulsating interest.

Then it's the mother, protected in a corner, back to the window, seeing nothing of the dark undercity behind her, staring into the face of her infant, reading a message from God. Full of faith. All and only interest.

Then it's the impeccable gentleman, over eighty-five but very well cared for. His nose nearly touching the page of a book he has held up before him. Devouring some subject, hungry and interested. Interested, interested, interested. But I am not interested. But I only see tomorrow in their interest of today. The lovers apart. The child grown. The man dead.

The subway pulls into a station and I get off even though I don't know which stop it is. I get off. I close my eyes. I wait for the next train.