

MICHAEL FARRELL

Character

You don't know how to write yourself, the instructors would say when the character fell down between the blackboards. You're like a meal

that thinks it's a cook, they'd add. Then if it was allowed, the character would go out, to wander the hills of fire. It carried all its meanings in a swag, and bowed down like a penitent, with a golf ball in its mouth instead of

a plum. It was autumn. Other characters roamed the hills in solitude. Up and down like a fork to a mouth, a mouth hooked on canned tropical foods, but no such mouth existed. What would you do if I turned into libido

incarnate, the character asked a fountain. Waves crashed against the cardgame. It was the south, where it took too few sailing boats to give the area an aura of

cosmopolitanism. The servants of one hill, smoking on the balcony of its chateau, mistook the character for a doctor and took ill. They all yearned for the drugs that were carried in the character's bag which contained but a roadmap and a few peanuts (seven peanuts say).

Let us out! is what the peanuts said, but for the character to notice or to hear the voices of peanuts ... that would not be the road to autonomy, which was not marked. Everything went to form – and deform – but nothing to inform, this bootlike

truth is what the character digested alone with all the others on the hills of Bombay or was it Cootamundra. They could have taken a bus or taxi (there being enough of them to share and it still be cheap) to shelter (from the tyranny of instruction) in a wormhole

on the fourleaf coast, yet why they might've
asked, hasten the process. And if so much might be accrued from the known or
apparent, what strings of popcorn – and what flavours – might be popped
from the unknown. The army base at least had melted under the burden of its own
propinquity. Living through the war was the only reward
they sought, that and a lining to the harsh
voices that resounded like a stapler chewing gum in an
iron tank or a cash register mistaken for toffee.