

Waterstones and The Fridge

by Mike French

I walk towards the white door. Around its edges light bleeds into the darkness. All is silent apart from the hum of the fridge. I open the door. Like water from a burst dam the light escapes and floods the twilight edges of the kitchen.

Cold air fills my nostrils as I look inside.

Reaching in, I pick up a bottle of milk. I need to quench my thirst. Put out the fire at the back of my throat. I try to slot into order the sequence of events: the book deal that appeared and then winked away like a dying star, the white gloves and the brick through Waterstone's window; my novel lying in the shop front in a bed of glass.

My head hurts. The characters in my mind are arguing. Damn them for waking me, demanding centre stage. Their chatter grows in volume as they follow stories across ice reflecting my inner voice. They find their rhythm and produce a hum that accompanies the fridge motor.

Enough.

Wiping the milk from my lips, I tilt my head sideways and hold my ear over the lip of the glass bottle. With my free hand I strike the side of my head facing the yellow stained ceiling. They resist at first, but as I increase the fever of my attack the voices let go and fall through the light.

I watch my creations sink into the milk. I had loved them. Shared

such intimacy with them and yet. Yet here they are severed from me
drowning in three-day-old milk.

I replace the milk bottle and shut the fridge door. Darkness returns.
The nine to five beckons and I head up the stairs. On the banister my
white gloves lie folded.

I will never write again. It is over.

Below me in the kitchen, my fridge hums.

