

...may 3, 1986...

...visitor...

shoulders hunched towards the tabletop  
he helped himself to menthol cigarettes  
and stared into the ashtray  
shifting through the butts and stirring ash  
as if searching words  
that were not there –

*'i am a portrait'*

he smoothed back grease blond hair –  
darted a sideways glance  
then re-absorbed himself in ashtray play –  
i did not understand

and he could explain except to say

*'i am powerful –*

*so very powerful at times like these' –*

the phone rang and he answered it  
as if it was his own –

then addressed an empty coffee cup –

*'i am so powerful' –*

he stretched and rose –

gathering his face into a frown –

*'but you have power too –*

*i think you are more powerful than me' –*

pale eyes threw one more glance my way –

he took another of my cigarettes –

edged towards the door –

and left.