

MICHAEL CARRINO

My Italian

Why did I never learn
this language spoken
by my grandfather,
hopeful immigrant?
It sweetens the cool air
around you on St. Catherine Street
tonight. I'm fascinated
by every lilting word.
In your dark eyes
a clue—flashing implications
of exchange rates, necessity
of cash. Perhaps
you hail from Naples,
a southerner, the mezzogiorno.

Lets walk.
I'll practise my Italian
as I light your cigarette.
Bare-shouldered, you shiver
in this October night.
It's late; you are tired.

Soon we will be bodies at rest,
but for now, walk with me;
teach me
my Italian.