

Our Secret Life in the Movies

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The decision to watch every film in the Criterion Collection—hundreds of them drawn from cinema classics from all around the world—in a single year led McGriff and Tyree, both published authors, to start writing about the films that had, to some degree, taken over their minds, filling them with powerful images and warping them slightly. The result is a “twinned narrative,” more experimental than autobiographical, a kind of call-and-response playing with the material—if one writer wrote under the inspiration of a film, the other would respond with his own story, like jazz players taking turns with their solos.

As the work grew, rules entered the picture: there had to be one story from each of them for each film, no one would know who wrote what, and the stories had to make sense to someone who had never seen the movies. The result is a collection of linked snapshots of the lives of two young men coming of age in the 1980s, in which the veil that’s supposed to separate the real from the unreal thins and lifts. Our own lives could be the movie, they suggest—and maybe they are.

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KRISTINE MORRIS (Winter 2015)

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