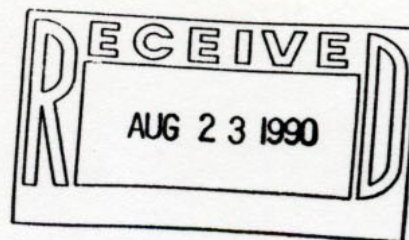


BY FAX

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23 August 1990

Mr [redacted] Inc

New York
NY 10017
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Dear [redacted]

SELF-PORTRAIT OF SOMEONE ELSE by Vincent Eaton

I am very sorry indeed for the delay in getting back to you about this title. I can only plead extreme pressure of other work as the reason.

SELF-PORTRAIT OF SOMEONE ELSE is one of the most effectively harrowing and genuinely moving novels I have read in a long time. The climactic sequence in which Tim wreaks horrific if understandable revenge on his father is so painful and powerful that I could hardly bring myself to finish this particular episode. The overall pain-level in SELF-PORTRAIT is one of the reasons why I shan't be making you an offer for Mr Eaton's novel. Don't get me wrong: I realize full well that serious fiction must engage with the dark side of human experience and that much abiding literature is largely concerned with downbeat subjects. But, in the present restricted state of the British market and bearing in mind -- as I must -- the well-stocked state of the forward schedules for our Paladin imprint, I am having to be ultraselective about what I take on in the whole area of quality fiction. SELF-PORTRAIT would, I fear, have a hard time reaching a sufficiently large readership over here: it would not, I believe, receive significant support from our major customers and, because of the aforementioned high pain-level, I cannot realistically envisage it getting much in the way of vital word-of-mouth recommendation among general readers.

It depresses me to have to give you this negative response to such an impressive and powerful first novel. I am sure Mr Eaton has a strong future as a writer of significant fiction and, in a happier economic climate, I would have attempted to come to terms with you for the British rights to SELF-PORTRAIT in order to involve this company at the outset of a promising writing career. If by some mischance you do not succeed in placing SELF-PORTRAIT OF SOMEONE ELSE with another British publisher, I would be very grateful for the chance to consider Mr Eaton's second novel when it is ready. If it were possible to extrapolate a more positive scenario for the second novel's prospects with us, it might also then make sense to go back and acquire SELF-PORTRAIT to make up a two-book deal. I am sorry that this is the best I can suggest for Mr Eaton's genuinely impressive first novel at this point in time.

All the best, as ever.

Yours,


Nick Austin
Publishing Director - Paperbacks