

# I Don't Know How the Nights Can Be So Long When Life Is So Short

*by* Jerry Ratch

I will always remember that  
picture of you in your  
bright blue summer dress,  
with your arms spread out  
against a wooden fence in  
Central Park.

Your thin body leaning back,  
and long dark hair over  
bare arms, like tattoos.

I remember how you took my  
heart in your red mouth  
like that hawk on the  
Met Museum skylight  
and ate it entirely,  
soul and all,  
before the astonished  
faces of a whole class  
of school children.

You will never know how  
much it hurt when  
someone else  
touched your face.

But I know how much you

counted on others  
to pull the slivers  
out of your heart,  
and that you were better at  
shaving your legs  
than you were at  
spreading your wings.

