

# Acknowledgements

*by* Jerry Ratch

I have outlived Ernest Hemingway  
and Kurt Cobain,  
two of my heroes.  
I never tried sleeping my way  
to the top of the literary heap.  
I've won no prizes.  
My work goes unrecognized, and  
more often than not  
unpublished.  
Am I sure I have even lived?

I tried to just keep writing,  
but to what end?  
Who am I? What am I?  
Am I delusional?  
Who really knows?  
I tried teaching once  
but was not very good at it.  
Who is, really,  
when it comes to writing?

Kurt and Ernie and put a gun in their mouths  
and shot out the light.  
With Bukowski, it was a bottle.  
I've already tried that.  
No good at that either.

I sit in a café  
and watch the near palms of summer  
swaying against the far ridge of hills  
and young girls walking along  
in their sleeveless summer dresses.

Their shoulders speaking their  
long history of sex  
and future children,  
old age and death.  
Nothing stirs inside  
except the old longings  
that go unanswered.

Some great sponge in the sky  
will soak up my lifeblood and soul.

Do you intend to keep on writing  
to the bitter end?  
Who knows? Any day  
it could end.  
Then the great silence  
that ensues.

