

# actual flesh

*by* Jerry Ratch

A group of loud rich girls at the poolside. Parties all over the world, cruises, travelling, hangovers, car accidents. *"Broken nose, looks like it's only a wrinkle!"* one shouts. (I didn't notice until now.) Daughters of vintners, wealth sans culture. One exits the water, dripping. Looking over her shoulder, with the damp hair swept back behind her ear. One who is very thin, ugly, and cannot attract men, swimming, doing laps.

Hot weather brings out the sensual. Must have been that moon last night. Dull red, the color of a nipple surrounding the moon. You sit on that muscle now and think back, reminisce. People enter the water inch by inch. White deck chairs surrounding the pool.

You may have cheated the world out of actual flesh, although there are some words left behind. And I remember her face turned toward me like a half moon. Eyes black with black paint. Her skin like the inside of a plum. Her blue robes hanging down, opened, and her black crescent curved under. With nipples like those, rose-colored, we could have fed a nation!

