

and dark blood flowed out of our youth

by Jerry Ratch

I remember this shot taken of you in a bright blue summer dress, with your arms spread out, leaning against a wood fence near the beach, or by Lincoln Park maybe, your thin body leaning back and long blonde hair down bare arms. Other men will remember how you took their heart in your red mouth and ate them entirely, like a hawk. But I remember how you came once and floated near my ceiling like a speckled moth with short blonde hair at your neck. How you watched us making love from above, like a soft god, like a dove, without a taste for blood.

And I remember rubbing Coppertone Suntan Lotion along the ridge of your bikini, occasionally sliding my finger underneath the thin white material into the fine hairs on your stomach. And watching your muscles tense up and relax, then go tense, then relax with the trickle of life inside your body, rising slowly as your breast rises and falls, rises and falls, while the flame draws you back with its hunger. Still.

And I remember how your nipples played between my fingers, so. We would break out of the hot shadows into the hot sky, your limbs wrapped around me like tendrils, and I would let the lithe glass slide up inside you.

And we were both shattered. We covered ourselves with mist and glitter, stars and glue, and the dark blood flowed out of our youth. And the sun is, after that hour, floating in flame, dry flame, like petals in wind. Ho!

And how an old man was sweeping the shore, quiet, altered.

