

At the Cafe

by Jerry Ratch

The light on his face from a lamp
Felt hat with a black band
Scrunched down

The nose creating a strong shadow
With dark, straight eyebrows under the hat
Red and orange beard

Leaning forward at the café table, watching
A damp curl of hair on the girl's neck
When she says the word “available”

Then the phrase, “I am not bothered”
Floating over the crowd
Then, simply, “I want”

Her face turned up to him
Like a half moon
Eyes black with black paint

Skin like the insides of a ripe plum
Black hair cut straight
Across the forehead

Body only minutes away
In the long vertical mirror
Standing naked from the waist down

And the natural heated engine
That lies between them, left wanting
Panting, alive

Before wine
Before make-up, and fashion
And the invention of the demitasse

