

living in the flames, again

by Jerry Ratch

I was meant to stroke, touch, handle the union of love, the egg, the ova with desire. Hurling the self forward so you could handle the semi-virgin loaf with your four flowered gloves, your soft kid gloves, and deprive the night, thank God, of its natural terror. Our breasts together in copulation, full of pity, full of compassion.

The tawny eyes of all belligerent animals turned inward on the nights I spent with you, following the moon as it sank backwards, blooming, flowery, alone, to feel the plural arousal of the flesh. The dual purpose of creation, looking backward in that natural looping swan-dive you put me through. Cognizant of name, feature, fulfillment. Of fire's liquid internal nature as it looks upon stone. The vessel of myself containing all abundance, placed in heaven near your ceiling, on fire with your touch.

But my god, our god is like an alcohol flame out of a hand-held lamp in the purple velvet dusk. We see the faces of our heroes in this dim light under the volcano only because of the blue line that outlines their bodies. They rise on a warm gust of air in the desert nearby. And we still love them, it is clear. Because without laughter, there is only sanity.

