

No One Is Listening

by Jerry Ratch

Bum on a Parisian stoop begging
with his big Jackson Pollack
bare head in the rain
The water running in streaks
all over his brain
reminding him of a painting
he once thought of

Man standing outside a bar
talking to his own reflection
in the window
when no one else
is listening

They will always remember
that picture of you in your bright
blue summer dress, with your arms
spread out, leaning against
a wooden fence in Central Park
Your thin body leaning back
and long dark hair over bare arms
like tattoos

They will remember how you
took their heart in your red mouth
like the hawk at the Met Museum
and ate them entirely, soul and all,
before the astonished faces
of a whole class of children

You will never know how
much it hurts

when someone else
touches your face
But they know how much you
count on others
to pull the slivers
out of your heart

and that you were better at shaving your legs
than you were at spreading your wings

