

that whistle of yours

by Jerry Ratch

I heard a song once that said we are all entitled to seven good years. No, wait, that is not exactly what it said. Rather, it was more plaintive and inquiring. The feeling that song gave was more one of asking the question: Wasn't I supposed to get seven good years? Where are my seven good years?

With you I had seven good months, before you left for California, and I know now how lucky I was, even so. I have girlfriends for whom achieving any brightness in life at all is a struggle. And I myself, before meeting you, remember a period of time (though I was very young, they would say) where I had begun to hear the longing internal question: Where are my seven good years?

At the end of the documentary film of my life, there would be your whistle. We'll be in a land where they will have taken away all the instruments used to make music, but they would have been unable to remove that ability of yours to whistle. (It was so pretty, I remember, even though it annoyed a few grouchy older people.)

And it would be at the very end that I would still hear it, that whistle of yours, that they couldn't take away. Your soul was very like a bird's, in that way.

