

# The Front Window at Starbucks, NYC

*by* Jerry Ratch

His eyes drift over the body of every  
woman who enters Starbucks, even though  
he's old enough to be their father or grandfather,  
still his eyes are aware of every shape passing by,  
refusing to let go, and die.

Maybe they're speaking Polish or Russian or some Balkan  
language,  
and hogging the damned front table at the window, which we  
need  
to photograph everything passing by in life,  
including all those bodies his eyes won't give up on,  
while searching the memories of inner youth.

The women are often drawn, painted, and sung about.  
What is it about them  
that we cannot resist looking at their flesh?  
The ripe flower of it, the full-throated,  
bird-like fluttering caused inside the heart  
when the draperies fall away?

When the silken, frail things float down like subliminal  
blossoms, and we gloat, flushed at the face,  
caught off-guard in the moment.  
And that blind flash of the mind  
going off inside where memory  
begins to make up its own mind about history?

