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?

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