

# the long white cloud above my body

*by* Jerry Ratch

Butter me up, moon lover. Remember, I was once your warm and hot goddess of flowers, washed to shore with the others you may have forgotten. Now the issue of the earth gets nearer, and we can see each other once again, if only in our dreams.

Just be sure to butter me up. Unspeakable the beauty there. The river waving in my hair, unspeakable. Stem meaning desire, unspeakable. The salmon in the river, the cock on the land, all unspeakable. You were like an unfallen angel spying from your vine, and I was unstoppable, getting near enough to smell that English Leather aftershave you always wore. I never could forget that smell.

In my dream, I am in this painting and you are too, though in it you are a fox (or a wolf.) A grey-green statue has fallen, and I lie naked on the grass with you while the people of a wedding party traverse the pink land up a path from the coast.

I'm lying with you stretched out upon the land behind a hedge for privacy, your paw draped over my breast, and my toes are crossed against hope as I hold a flower in one hand, because the deed has already been done. Finally my virginity has passed over us like a long white cloud hanging above my body, above the pure ultramarine sea, and that was where I learned not to be shy.

