

The Longing

by Jerry Ratch

It's the longing from another life inside that pulls me along by the fine hairs below my navel, exposed at the midriff, and by the short fine hair at my neck, also the dense bunch between my legs, as you might imagine. And it's the longing of the love I had imbedded in my life for you. It's the longing inside that has stayed with me over these years.

One time I found myself floating 2 ft above the surface of a star. I leaned my young body (with the sound of wind in it) against your desk, your bed, against the fence in your backyard. Out over the fields surrounding our town. I remember floating, letting you come until we were both exhausted, down on all fours in the dark, in the grass, my young simple breasts still forming in silence, while the dew rose in everybody's lawns like a thin new ocean.

And I whispered 3 songs to a weed: I do not belong, I do not belong, I do not belong. Somehow I was able to see the dark side of the moon, the dark and fading stars, understanding, even then when I was so young, that if it's heaven we were after, I couldn't get there by ladder or taxi.

Yet when I was naked, when I entered with my own body the mirror, the small shadows on my chest, and that soft dark splash of hair — that unused nakedness, that newness of skin, so soft, so thin that you could see right through it to my soul — and that long taste of breastlessness beginning to be gone — I remember I kept thinking: Where's my heart anymore?

And who cares if it was a waiter who was the first to bring the finger in? Who cares whether it was you or Louie Weezer who was the actual first? Because it was really you who was the first to make me float above the world near your ceiling. The first to make me remember what it was like when everything turned and I became a god or goddess, a speckled moth with short fine hair at my neck. To

*make me see everything from the other dimension — you were the
very real first!*

