

The Tourists at the Museum

by Jerry Ratch

For the camera
she smiles
otherwise not
and
only when she is
standing beside him

But for the camera?
for the crowd
for posterity
yes

For their children
for the future?
a thousand times
yes
until her face
becomes accustomed
to the wrinkles
her smiles have created

She stands looking at
the paintings at the
museum
She is so skinny
it almost looks like
she is standing on one leg

like a crane

He's caressing her
He handles her bottom
like the bowl of a
tulip

cradled in his hands
filled with callouses
and the leaves of books
and she lets him
and continues to smile
for as long as
it takes

