

young salesman

by Jerry Ratch

When I was young I bowed with such forgotten politeness, a young salesman, enchanting, in the silken trades. But I remembered the sun also when it was in Hades, which had forgotten to set, or to rise.

Peace, also, dangled there by the neck. Such a pretty look on its face, though it had been beaten, dragged back by the hair to the underworld. Just knowing you are never alone in slavery makes a difference, but belong with lovers of jade, mathematics, and novels. Some society left in us maybe. But no olives.

Bitter the sun when it is in Hades!

I know I should have known better, but I didn't. I was young and naïve. You were young and naïve too. Maybe that was why we fit together so well that we flew upwards into heaven, which was so close, close enough to be seen from my bedroom ceiling. Maybe you were the first to see it, in our crowd. Maybe you were among the first to acquire wings.

I'm still hoping to find mine — if they will fit me, or even have me.

If you find me again, under that tree above the river in your dream, hold me a little longer. See if you can fit me into your arms. Don't let me get up just because it's getting late, and dark out. Do not let me go gently into that good night.

