At the Cafe

by Jerry Ratch

The light on his face from a lamp Felt hat with a black band Scrunched down

The nose creating a strong shadow With dark, straight eyebrows under the hat Red and orange beard

Leaning forward at the café table, watching A damp curl of hair on the girl's neck When she says the word "available"

Then the phrase, "I am not bothered" Floating over the crowd Then, simply, "I want"

Her face turned up to him Like a half moon Eyes black with black paint

Skin like the insides of a ripe plum Black hair cut straight Across the forehead

Body only minutes away
In the long vertical mirror
Standing naked from the waist down

And the natural heated engine That lies between them, left wanting Panting, alive Before wine Before make-up, and fashion And the invention of the demitasse