

At the Cafe

by Jerry Ratch

The light on his face from a lamp,
felt hat with a black band scrunched down,
the light on his face as though thrown there,

the nose creating a strong shadow,
with dark, straight eyebrows under the hat,
red and orange beard.

Leaning forward at café tables, watching
the damp curl of hair at a girl's neck,
when she says the word "available,"

which hangs in the air
as if it's the only word
floating over the café.

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

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Her face turned up to him like a half moon,
eyes black with black paint.

Skin like the inside of a ripe plum,
blue robes hanging down, opened at the front.
Black hair cut straight across the forehead.

Body in the long vertical mirror,

standing naked from the waist down,
the natural heated engine
that lies between them,
left wanting,
panting, and alive.

