

# the plural river

*by* Jerry Ratch

Like large drops of rain on the active lap of earth, I heard myself falling all around the vacant spaces where you had once been. Emptying myself with dissolution, trying to alter the essence, to begin again where we had left off, as if to wind string back around a ball that lost its cover, and that would be all it took. The first to leave the brothel of my imagination, the first one to light a match in the archway upon leaving, listening in the night to those large drops of rain landing where they will.

I know I can't just lean naked against a wall in the night. Nightly the youth in us swim up from the underbelly of life that sets the star of moisture upon our fragile skin. I recall my life of love, my passionate blood in the plural river of destiny that flowed between us, altogether red as it passes it up, on the way somewhere else.

Slain by youth, beloved by youth, youngish yourself. You've got some honey in the loosening agent, undoing all the goddess clothes around us. Many were together in the sun, and the bright pool of clothing lay around us. And yes, in those paintings our nipples were rose-tipped and stood out, so there was some flesh to which you shall always remain attached. Tied up, bound but not mute, loosening up the long faint, weary, speechless infant of my youth.

