

In the Cafeteria

My eyes move like morning snails
Over the contours of your body,
Along your slender, blue-veined wrists
Ringed with loose musical bracelets.
You do not feel this moist scrutiny
Of muscle, tendon, cheek, and thigh,
Of your shirt open across the table
Like a letter from the front in a time of war.
The tender horns of these timid dew-drenched creatures
Go before them like studio microphones
Probing your every part, learning you, your flesh
Like that first summer garden in paradise
When Eve was exposed to Adam like wine
And Adam, all he could do, all I can do,
Taking her by the hand from shade to light
Was how she was his prisoner bound
By the silver, filmy ribbons of his sight.

—*Patrick White*