

In My Past Life

By Kristen Walker

A psychic once told me
I had been a prostitute in a previous life,
not a queen or a diplomat or even
the guy who invented sunglasses
but a floppy, open-mouthed, perfumed whore.

I saw myself in a hotel room wearing
nothing but high heels and a black neck tie,
a middle-aged businessman hovering over me
in boxers, an unbuttoned shirt, and dress socks
up to his knees like an umpire.
He slaps me on the butt and demands
I call him Mr. President.

I even pictured myself in ancient Pompeii
as a slave in a brothel advertising my specialties
standing naked among fresco paintings
of fleshy whores coiled around taut Roman bodies.
A prospective customer fondles the ends of my hair
as his fingernails brush my nipples.

I then thought about my life now:
nine to five in a cubicle, a boss who views
my breasts as two candied apples, a husband
who doesn't know how to use a stove, and a sick
mother-in-law yodeling at me from our finished
basement to bring her a tube of Capzasin Cream.

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