

## They Call Me Jezebel

by Natalie McNabb

They call me Jezebel,  
whore, prostitute, lady  
of the night, hooker, mistress,  
streetwalker, call girl, perhaps courtesan  
if they're nice.

And you,  
—you, woman who  
looks down hard from atop  
your throne into my squalor  
when you think that they're not looking,  
when you think I'm not looking too,  
—you, woman who holds your eyes  
high and lips pursed, looking  
unforgiving in the pearls  
and diamonds that you wear  
because of them,  
in the home and car you own  
because of them,  
—you, woman who sits contentedly, playing  
at niceties, sipping tea, stealing glances  
at my squalor and unpleasantness,  
—you, woman who turns your face  
each time I catch you, make you  
blush hard and hot beneath cool rouge,  
—you, woman who looks down on me,  
who calls me the names they call me too.

Yes—oh yes, you know what they call me,  
and you know what you call me too.  
Yet, they keep calling me.  
Do they keep calling you?  
And, if they do—yes—oh yes,  
you say that they do,  
just what is it that they do call you?  
Jezebel? Whore? Prostitute? Lady  
of the night? Hooker? Mistress?  
Streetwalker? Call girl? Perhaps courtesan,  
if they're nice?

Yes—oh yes, they call you these names too,  
when they think that you're not listening,  
when you think I'm not listening too.  
And, when they do—yes—oh yes,  
I know that they do,  
they sneer and chuckle  
at the pearls and diamonds that you wear  
because of them,  
at the home and car you own  
because of them,  
while they sip gin contentedly, playing  
at niceties, setting tees, stealing glances  
at one another, sidling up to clubs  
evocatively.  
And,—yes—oh yes,  
how they laugh too,  
while they lounge with me  
after they've been with you.

Yes—oh yes, they look down hard  
upon you too.  
Yet, you keep crawling back to them,  
and they keep crawling back to you,  
just as I come to them upon my knees,  
and they come upon theirs for me.  
We are the same, we two.  
We are the same  
—you, woman who...  
I just don't make their beds  
before I leave  
after they've laughed at you  
while they've been with me.

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