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## Poem 2

### Theory of Lipstick

*by Karla Huston, Poet Laureate of Wisconsin, 2017-2018*

Coral is far more red than her lips' red ...  
Shakespeare

Pot rouge, rouge pot, glosser, lip plumper, bee  
stung devil's candy and painted porcelain  
Fire and Ice, a vermilion bullet,  
dangerous beauty lipstick, carmine death rub, history  
of henna. Fact: more men get lip cancer

because they don't wear lipstick or butter,  
jumble of a luminous palette with brush made  
to outlast, last long, kiss off, you ruby busser,  
your gilded rose bud bluster is weapon and wine.  
QE's blend: cochineal mixed with egg, gum Arabic

and fig milk – alizarin crimson and lead – poison  
to men who kiss women wearing lipstick, once illegal  
and loathsome – then cherry jellybean licked and smeared,  
then balm gloss crayon, a cocktail of the mouth  
happy hour lip-o-hito, lip-arita, with pout-fashioned chaser

made from fruit pigment and raspberry cream,  
a lux of shimmer-shine, lipstick glimmer, duo  
in satin-lined pouch, Clara Bow glow: city brilliant  
and country chick -- sparkling, sensual, silks  
and sangria stains, those radiant tints and beeswax liberty—

oh, kiss me now, oh, double agents of beauty  
slip me essential pencils in various shades  
of nude and pearl and suede, oh, bombshell lipstick,  
sinner and saint, venom and lotsa sugar, lip sweet,  
pucker up gelato: every pink signal is a warning.

*Credits: Broadside: Theory of Lipstick, MSOE, April 2017*