

# the HARLEQUIN

*Pippa Little*  
**Casa XochiQuetzal**

Someone is sweeping in the courtyard.  
Only women's voices rise here,  
through doors ajar to unshared beds  
and time alone to grow old in.  
Daughters of the goddess, they still dress up  
in hats and boas, lips slicked cherry-red,  
finger-ends glittering, but on secret afternoons  
doze in housecoats and comfortable *pantaletas*,

no men now, who grow senile in their own families,  
to knock and demand. Somehow these crumpled  
butterflies have washed up here, on a sweet island  
walled against remembering. It's not heaven,

almost Sanctuary. In their next lives  
may they be reborn on the isthmus  
as trader women, breasts formidable  
as the Sierra Madre, carrying iguanas  
on their heads to market.

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