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## Portrait of a Gentleman

—*Giovanni Bernardo Carbone*

1614-1683

I wish I could feel the blood-red  
velvet of his robe  
on my flushed fevered cheek  
the creamy silk ruffles of wrist and neck  
slipping through prayerful fingertips.  
Delicate hands resting on a silver sword  
that stands on a hardwood floor,  
walls muted black  
with occasional candle-show dances.  
Sculpted buffed nails  
graze against each other,  
the gold-encrusted amethyst ring  
too feminine not to have been a gift  
from another admirer.  
I shiver from earthy coolness  
of imagined skin on skin  
as my face is guided to look into his.  
Elegance resonates from almond eyes  
that I know I have worshipped before  
in another lifetime.  
Half-smile jests from one-dimensional capture  
his secret a temptation I crave  
to pry out of heat-scented lips  
guarded by bristling auburn moustache  
that scratches with every  
wine-kissed promise.  
Shoulder curls absorb incense  
of candles from cathedrals  
and now scent floats around his head  
like a giddy angel.  
I ache to hear the voice that was not captured  
by perfect lines and strokes and color  
the name of this man forgotten  
from centuries before,  
still demanding my adoration  
a testimony to lustful timelessness.

*Sara Kleynenberg*