

## The Actor

When the matinee idol kissed Miss Cardinale  
naked in the shower during the '60s caper flick,  
we could not see her breasts, though of course  
we did see them, glistening like hothouse palms,  
her brick nipples melting water onto his pecs.  
While we devoured her through him, his eyes  
were closed, his lips shy. Though this was not Doris,  
this was Claudia, who would surely come to bed  
wearing only hip-length boots and a mink stole,  
we understood. It was the censor's version of sex.  
Then, suddenly, we knew it was something else.  
Behind his eyelids burned the Roman pool boy,  
the slim cameriere with the tight silk shirt. As if  
he was winding the actual Jack into the shiny Box,  
preparing to surprise us away from the old genetics  
of round-hipped woman for strong-armed man  
toward an even more fertile and fractious muse—  
the inexhaustible palette of desire. So personal.  
To the nature of which nothing is unnatural.  
Not the portly or the pileous, the commandant or  
the nurse, the red wetsuit, the Dali, the eggplant  
or the waxed hood of a car. Not even Claudia  
herself, old school or with toes dipped in chocolate.  
Like nothing any God could have envisioned.  
Or any Spielberg or Jobs. It was our movie now.  
No one would stand in for us. And none of us  
had to be Roy Harold Hudson to know that.

Ken Haas lives in San Francisco, where he works in healthcare and sponsors a poetry writing program at the UCSF Children's Hospital. His poems have appeared in *Cottonwood*, *Forge*, *Freshwater*, *Helix*, *Lullwater Review*, *Natural Bridge*, *Nimrod*, *Pennsylvania English*, *Quiddity*, *Sanskrit*, and *Soundings East*. You can visit him online at <http://kenhaas.org>.