

seven past lives

caveman

I'm in a wild place
squatting naked next to a lake
no other people around
maybe an animal or two
it's peaceful here
I see my reflection in the water
the face looks cro-magnon
or perhaps neanderthal
but I feel fully conscious
it's an experience of
wholeness and awe
wonder and peace
maybe my first visit to earth
in a human-like body.

priest

pre-columbian central america
I lead and perform religious rituals
human sacrifice
vivisections
I inflict terrible agonizing physical pain on others
I perform these cruel acts without malice
but also without compassion
motivated by a religious conviction so deep
that it completely disconnects me
from the reality of the suffering I cause.

heretic

europa
middle ages
my head is being held underwater
some religious authority
is attempting to force me to admit something
or perhaps recant or repent some blasphemy
next
I'm in the woods
hung upside down from a tree by my left foot
as punishment
for contradicting the established order
it's a form of crucifixion.

zealot

europe

1600s

I'm a member of a religious sect that practices self-injury
I drip hot candle wax on my back
I cut myself because the pain "brings me closer to god"
I shove hot pepper up my nose
to make myself sneeze
"to get the devil out"
I allow myself to be mock crucified
when I'm 24 I hang myself "to be with god"
I'm found hanging
from a wooden beam in one of the rooms of the monastery
I am dead
the walls and floors are made of stone.

simpleton

colonial new england

I'm mentally impaired

my neck and hands have been locked in wooden stocks
as punishment for looking at a pretty young girl
my consciousness is primitive
I feel bewildered most of the time
but I find comfort and solace
in a direct experience of nature
standing in a meadow
awes me
calms me
fills me with peace
I have no concept of why I'm being punished
but I have no ill feeling toward anyone about it either.

diplomat

japan

late 1800s

I'm a japanese diplomat
working to open my country to contact with the west
I want to bring the two halves
east and west
together
I want to build a bridge between
old ways and new ways
I hope to be
an ambassador to the future.

assassin

chicago

1920s

a dark alley at night

I'm an enforcer for the mob

a tough guy

a hit man

but this time

someone's put a hit on me

the nose of a revolver

kisses the skin behind my left ear

someone pulls the trigger

bye bye.