

M Explains How to Become Invisible

Carlton D. Fisher

Remember the dead girl you left behind—
the slump of her shoulder,
the shuffle of her step,
how she always walked into a room
hoping for someone to notice her.

Remember the yoke of her husband,
floating in the South Pacific—
the fear that any day would bring the messengers,
the days she feared more
that they might not come,
his mother coaching her
on the perfect pot roast,
the lay of the linen apron.

Let her ghost settle the weight of her hands upon you,
remind you of the absent mother,
the illegitimacy of her orphaning,
hear her say,
“But I have a mother.
But I’m not an orphan.”

The light will dampen,
the curl of your forelock will flatten
just by a suggestion,
but enough to wilt the flower
that grew from her bones.
Become potting soil,
the cracked planter—

they will bump into your shoulder,
a huff instead of a pardon,
you won't even earn the first look.

I walk mid-day Manhattan,
April breeze off the Atlantic.
He marvels at my ability
to divorce myself from substance.
I say, "Do you want me to be her?"
I press the lid closed on the dead girl's box,
and the light turns on.

"Say isn't that?"

"Ms. Monroe, Ms. Monroe."

He stands, slack-faced in my trail,
the shadows cast by my light
swallowing him with the crowd.

Carlton D. Fisher is a doctoral student at SUNY Binghamton and a full-time instructor in the English department at SUNY Jefferson. He has published work in *Assaracus*, *Lips*, *MiPOesias*, *OCHO* and other journals. You can learn more about him at carltondfisher.com.