

—+ **STEPHANIE EARP** | Hermaphrodite

Flash of your back lit by moon
or streetlight.
Thighs thick and heavy as stone.
Eyes shut too tight, like mine.

A marble man, I thought, a statue come to life.

“You haven’t got a mark on you.”

My fingertips flutter, searching for something embossed.
But they are gone, your skin-doctor father
burned all the marks off.

I thought, a *monster*, lying there in your bed but said,
“like a god”
Greek and white,

already rewriting.

Fiction, I say to myself,
fiction fiction fiction
a mantra, a call
Will you come out?

Fiction. Fission. Fix him.

Meaningless.

Meaningless.

half-corpse on a bed
half in half out
floating between the ceiling
and me I watch
the glow stars applied
in a heart-shaped constellation
by a previous tenant
not mine
but mine
by virtue of their
growing familiarity

one night I watched them and wished
my life were different
I was deliberately vague, just a change.
anything.

now that thought accompanies their light
every time.

—| **STEPHANIE EARP** | The Second Person in the Poem

You move at the periphery.

I have trained my head
not to turn. You will be gone by
the time my synapses collect themselves
into decision: turn head, look.

The distance between us is
 expectancy inverted
more difficult to detect the closer
I get to you.

You leave blatant ink stains
in the corners of my diary pages.
I match up the ridges of our prints.
 My words provoke your insolent
comma-shaped mouth, mine an
 apostrophe.

 I hear you. You are
 a breeze on the blinds
 b flat electrical hum.

I render myself ecstatic
with a powerful shove
now my body and me makes two.

I call you.
You remain serene
in the face of endless repetitious
catastrophes.

I never have a second person in my poems
so I borrowed you.
I'm sorry.