

# They Say I Look Like You

*Raquel Cohen*

*For SC*

They say I look like you,  
round cheeks and dark eyes,  
no one knows what is hiding behind.

I always ignore it.

How can I look like a shadow  
in a faded photograph from  
twenty-two years ago, alone  
looking half at the camera, half  
at the door ready to run for it?

They say I look like you  
with beauty marks in the exact same places  
and freckles that decorate our faces.

I refuse to listen.

How can I look like someone who is lost  
and can only be found on a sun-  
damaged two-dimensional photograph  
bleeding an etched time and place  
written in ink?

They say I look like you  
when the sunlight caramelizes my  
skin into a golden yellow, my  
hair is bouncing, curling, free  
flowing in every direction  
like the world belongs to me  
or I have found my place in the world  
or somewhere in between.

I get annoyed.

How could I look like someone who is caged  
in the world of twenty-two years ago, folded  
in a photograph, willingly chained to his  
demons in ink?

They say I look like you  
and you may think so too as  
you dig in your bag for the  
only thing that sustains you,  
clutching whatever is left of a dream.

A drip from the tip and a tear from the eye,  
you shoot up for the very last time.

They say I look like you—only without  
the twenty-two-year-old prison tattoo.  
They see only the first three letters: R-A-Q  
before they move you.  
Is it weird that I still love you?  
I see it now, a memory fading in the distance.  
What they say they see in me, I see in you.  
I reach out but I am frantically  
grasping air and lonely dust particles,  
looking at my empty hands,  
breathing in smoke from the ashes  
of possibilities, eyes watering  
from the acrid char of  
*what could have been*,  
realizing I will never know  
for sure if it's really you.

Elegy to the father I never had.  
Elegy to my dead-beat dad.