

Striped Skirt

Charles Muñoz

My grandmother wore a striped skirt
on her honeymoon
one hundred years ago.
The daguerreotype
shows grey on dark grey.
(Everybody's gone.)

I think it rustled when she moved.
Her eyes look down to that shadow
where the wall meets the floor.

Her skirt may have been
corn color, or poppy, or lavender.
Nobody knows: everybody's gone.

My grandfather
leans toward her in that old picture,
my grandfather, dead before my birth,
leans toward her in gentlemen's grey.
Grey clothing. Or perhaps some other color.
Nobody knows.

You can imagine his watch
ticking away in one of those pockets
with his keys and his Indian-head pennies.
Or on a chain,
or even left behind in the hotel room.
Face serious, he gazes down at her.
His neckwear may have been sky blue.

The photographer didn't make them smile.
It was too important a moment
there in those other Nineties. It was
a moment to protect,
a long time of bright, lost colors.