

# “ALICE”

BY KIYOMI DONG

## I.

You you so thin,  
So delicate, Waiting,  
Wanting to be  
Held. I see your eyes  
Delight in my stories.  
I could tell you your truths.  
I could imagine you  
Your reality.

I I am convinced you  
You are far wiser than  
My doddering self.  
Your bare shoulder  
Gleams, winks, mocks.  
Nothing is no longer  
    My fault  
But a mistaken dream.

In my reality, I am three  
Insignificant inches and I need  
You to survive. Place me  
In your dress pocket  
Where I can finally breathe,  
Where my voice is small  
And you must bend your  
Head to me like a flower  
Opening in the sun. This close,  
You can hear my tiny voice  
Pleading, “Believe my stories.”

I grow dizzy as you forget  
To listen, as you forget  
Me. You run freely, bare  
Feet, bare legs whirring  
Like a watch wound  
Too tight. I am still  
In your pocket being thrown  
Clinging for my life.

## II.

I’m on the verge of virginity  
Looking  
Down  
Down  
Down  
Over a precipice  
No, a pit  
Where the men await me  
Their bodies covered  
With war paint,  
Loin cloths,  
Holding spears,  
And baring their teeth.  
I think carefully before moving  
Close to the edge,  
My toes curling into the mud.  
“Hello?” I call into the empty space.

My voice, stilted, does not echo  
As his does through my head.  
I can still hear his voice  
Stammering and hot as he read,  
Teasing my imagination.

I cannot stop it,  
the monster he fed, from moving,  
Moving like clockwork,  
Painting lust where there is only  
Belief.

Now, I cannot sleep at night  
Because the shadows are  
His characters and  
I am forever his protagonist.  
Indelible and damned.