DOPPELGÄNGER

The black and white photo's point is Rosa,

twenty, in her first trench coat. Rosa in

Vienna, 1935, and she beams,

up on life, bundled in this coat, standing

a discreet space away from this larger-

than-life male nude of intersecting planes,

metallic softs, all shiny black. He turns

to the side, this monument to youth or (black

forgiven) a hint of Aryan art. This

representation Rosa graces, for she

is beautiful and her briefcase is stuffed

with Mann and general relativity.

Time frame shift. Fifty years pass, the print

with scalloped edges is pressed on

a visitor from Vienna. Here she was

happy, and the statue, does it stand?

The photograph — is it an affidavit

to having lived, or...a matte, prefigured

death? A precipitated moment

that was past just as it was, light

that bounded free now herded by lens

and focal plane shutter to silver

halide graininess. Light fixed, making

dark, inversion fitting imprisonment.

Then the printing bulb's glare, on to

another deception as we are made to see

white where there are no silver grains.

Space killed by flatness and time — well

a marker is set at t=0, cleaving the slow

curve of before and after. Vienna cropped

to a woman and a statue; but the earth

moved, and people in brown shirts,

who were people, lift arms by the statue

and load trains bearing Rosas past barbed

wires to camps where no one needs cameras.