

## **Distorting Mirror Effect**

### **Mileva Anastasiadou**

I am nobody. Mom stole my face away. She carefully placed a new face on me. She painted my eyes, my nose, she said, *much better, you look much better*. I don't like my new face, it's not me, I frowned, but mom grabbed the sadness, she threw it out of the window, like it was burning her hands, like it was a bomb about to explode, replaced it with a smile, she said, *you look beautiful, beautiful, you are nice and sweet*.

But I know better.

I am nobody. Dad put my voice in a bottle and threw it away, he threw it in the ocean, never to be found. He put his voice in me. I can only speak through him, say his words, he said, *you don't roar now, you sound nice*, and I can barely hear my voice now, I only hear it through the wind, the waves, when I look at the moon and dad grabs my hand and takes me away, *it's all gone now*, he says, *you are fixed*.

But I know better.

I am nobody, unless they see me. Boyfriend stole my body away, lit a match, put it on fire. He brought me a new one, he wore it on me, like a glove, he said, *I want you, I want you*, he placed a ring on my finger, he brought me roses, he placed his arms around me, he said, *you are safe*.

But I know better.

I am nobody, because they see me. They look at me in wonder, but all I see is but a shadow of me in the mirror, as if I don't exist, like what exists is but a ghost. I step into the mirror to find me, I step out to break it, but there is no mirror; I see their look, they're proud of me, they say, *you're grateful, you're shiny, you're better*, their eyes staring at me, surrounding me, entrapping me, caging me, imprisoning me, loving me.

I can only hope. To grow strong enough to be free and wild again. To love them less and less and less, to love them more, to claim back myself and smash the mirror in their eyes.

Mileva Anastasiadou is a neurologist, from Athens, Greece. A Pushcart, Best of the Net, Best Microfiction and Best Small Fictions nominated writer, her work can be found in many journals, such as Litro, Jellyfish Review, HAD, Ruminant, Lost Balloon, X-R-A-Y, Chestnut Review and others.