

**L. Lamar Wilson**, Cave Canem fellow and Virginia Tech MFA graduate, has poetry published or forthcoming in *Rattle*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Mythium*, *Reverie* and *The 100 Best African American Poems* and essays and reviews in *The Washington Post*, *Post No Ills* and other publications. Wilson is a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

## Touch

I've driven 654 miles without sleep to make you better,  
but when I ask how you feel & you thrust your breast  
within my grasp & say See, it's fine, I see it's not. Cool!  
I lie, then recoil. But you never have. Not when I came  
to you, instead of Daddy, to show hair down there. Not  
when I followed you, finally bra-free, to the bathroom  
during commercial breaks to debate whodunit on *The Young*  
& the *Restless* or to ask which jeans best showcased my assets.  
Not when I danced around the house naked as a jaybird,  
you'd say, never laughing at my *Funny Girl* monologues.  
You didn't turn me away when I said His name is Johnnie  
& I love him, & you never said Brown boys can't be sissies, baby,  
though I wish you had, since now a lump the size of the head  
of a tack may take away the only one who hasn't recoiled  
at what comes naturally to me. Your eyes reflect mine  
at the sight of what something so small can do: like a lump,  
like a lie. You're OK, it's OK slips from my lips & I reach  
out & touch your scar to assure us the enemy lurking  
will not bring shame where shame has no home.