

Viewing Augusta Savage's "Gamin"

Carve the delicate lines
of his face, shape the prominent
nose, the strong full lips, the brow
not yet fully hardened.
Turn the gaze towards hope.

Form his ears, angle the folds
so that he can hear other men
walking behind him. And spirits.

Smooth away the fissures, set
him in stone. Yours. Ours. Every
mother's son, the one
to whom we give instructions
on how to wear his clothing,
where to keep his hands,
how to talk to police officers.

Be neat.
Be visible.
Be polite.

Protect the child.

Avoid stepping on cracks
in the sidewalk. Do not
go out when there's a full
moon. The sky was hot
red this morning. These
are not old wives' tales.

The daily paper delivered,
we wait