The Invisible Woman
by Carl Santoro

She took a sip of her black coffee, drew a long snake of smoke into her lungs, and was immediately reminded of why her nose hurt.

She leaned over to see her face in the well inside her cup and winced at her two black eyes and bandaged nose. If all this is so apparent, why, she thought, isn't she?

Her dilemma began yesterday, in the midst of holiday sales, as she decided to enter Walmart. Two teens nearly knocked her over as they brushed by her laughing into each others face. She saw they were absorbed in making faces at each other with a smartphone app that enlarged a mouth. They seemed like from another planet mimicking wooden puppets. They dashed into the store unaware of their rude behavior.

As the electronic door shut, she glanced over her shoulder to remember where she parked. Nine cars straight down from under the "A" in Walmart.

Keys placed in her pocketbook, she walked towards the door. It wouldn't open. She stepped back and approached again at a slower pace and a slightly different angle. Still no opened door. She tried a third time. The door remained closed. She looked for the sensors, waved her hands for more visibility. No luck. An elderly couple passed her and entered easily as the door slid smoothly along its tracks. She followed two paces behind them and was suddenly greeted with the hard reality of glass as the door quickly closed in front of her and caused her face to become one with the cold, fingerprint-smudged surface.

A man pushing a shopping cart behind her found a woman had fallen backwards into it and had become unconscious.

She took another sip realizing her reminiscing had caused the coffee to get cold.

She picked up the Daily News off the table in front of her and read the headlines again:

"Woman Not Recognized by Electronic Doors has Finally Disappeared."

She picked up the cup and gazed back down into the dark pool. There was nothing there but coffee.