

I've also, when I have moved into a new apartment, imagined what the previous occupant was like and ended up giving him many of my own characteristics. So, "The Previous Occupant".

The landlady says he lived here
for years. Now there's enough missing
for me to know him. On the empty shelves,
absent books gather dust: Neruda. Cavafy.
He knew their poetry, by heart
the lines I love.

From a half-torn horoscope I learn
his sign: Aquarius, just like me.
A half-empty Flexsol in the cabinet:
he wore soft lenses. Yes, Aquarians are vain.
And no anthems on their lips, they travel
great distances. He came from some country
as far as Chile.

She says the apartment
will be cleaned by the 1st:

What detergent will rub his voice from the air
I hear the ink stains of his thoughts
I decipher his frost still clinging in phrases to the windows
and which spray will get inside the mirror
from where his brown eyes,
brown, yes, brown,
stare as if for years he'd been
searching for me.

Now that he's found me,
my body casts his shadow everywhere.
He'll never, never, move out of here.