

GHOST WRITING

I live with ghosts.
Laggard ghosts who wear their fatigue like a sheet
Petulant, unrepentant ghosts who never sleep
Ghosts like mouth sores
Ghosts that look me in the eye at midday
and buzz in my ears in the dead of night
Chinese laundry ghosts
Cuban coffee ghosts
Ghosts that tap and tease and taunt
Politically correct ghosts
Feminist ghosts
Holy ghosts
Ghosts of a chance
Gustavo-come-lately ghosts
Mami and Papi ghosts
The ghosts of all my Nochebuenas past.

My ghosts and I,
we have what you'd call this complicated relationship.
At this very moment, they tap tap tap tap tap
on the back of my head,
just behind my ears.
They know I'm listening, I pretend that I'm not.
But with every ghostly tap my spine vibrates
like a tuning fork.
If I could, I would leap to grab the greatest ghost
of them all and wring his neck like a wet towel.
But my life offers no such satisfactions.
The ghosts extract their pound of flesh
gram by gram, day by day.
You cannot sneeze them away.
They do not respond to treatment or medication
(my therapist is a ghost).

By now, the ghosts are more me than me.
One of them wrote this poem.

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