

HOST 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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