

Dances with ghosts

Gordon Purkis



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For Tanya

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A place called midnight

Tell me about your nightmares,
your conversations with ghosts,
whether you lie in a strange bed
with a strange man or you let your
soul run to that place where
it meets mine: a place called
midnight.

Tell me about your nightmares
and I'll tell you about mine –
about the fear of the beast who
bangs on the door, then it opens...

We are both paralyzed with fear
but at least we'll die together,
if not side by side or at the same
time, we'll rendezvous at a place
called midnight and living and
dying aside I'll love you forever.

Incapacity

When you're born a ghost
and somehow someday you
finally find a body to inhabit
you will sometimes still feel
dead, still feel fear – but that
just comes from not knowing
what it's really like – to *live*.

Dances with ghosts

Look at me – I'm transparent.
I don't sleep – I merely moan
the night's morning hours away
in search of a place to haunt.
I want to be remembered for more
than being semi-invisible. I want
to touch and be touched, suck dew
from the morning fog and have it
feed my soul and make me tangible,
have the girl and me fall in love like
a pair of ice skaters, forever caught

in that singular moment of gliding
through air.

Goddess exposé

Hello dear bird dear flower dear love,
to see you is amazing, I feel luckier
than the sum of mankind to touch your
sides and squeeze you, thereby proving
you really exist.

Hello dear angel dear specter dear ghost,
your voice is special, your words are
written in the air and when I smile at
you it's because I know who you are
and you don't hide it.

Hey beauty

1.
Hey beauty (I'll give you that much)
Hey summer (hot as a car on fire)
Hey flower (a rose by any name)
Hey you (I can see you smiling)
Hey now (look at me, fooled again)

2.
Hey beauty
I want to meet with you somewhere
in the darkness,
just you, me, and our ghosts.
Sure, bring him along. He knows
you best. He can vouch for what
your character has become. I don't
mind the chains.

3.
Hey beauty
I don't really know your name
or what you look like, specifically,

but generally speaking you're brunette,
or red, have great legs and a cute ass,
but other than that you are just kind
of like a statue – paused there just so –
just so I can admire you.

4.

Hey beauty
Sorry for being so forward
but I don't know what else to
call you, when you walk past my
window when you wake me up
in the middle of the night long
and hard in your hand or mouth
or inside you mushy enclosure:
I'd never call it a prison.

5.

Hey beauty
I'm tired – tired of being chased,
tired of hunting you tired of being
a ghost to it, haunting my early mornings
my late afternoons wondering when I
could've had you, where it was once
possible, but a lie that brought me to
want you. You could never be my love.
She's got it worse than a ghost –
She doesn't exist.

Indulgences

1.

I'm a soft-serve junkie.
I like my romances
mythical and full of ghosts
and of course plenty of
running and chasing about.
For the fairer hearts aren't won
as easy as ice cream is and I've
never met anyone who doesn't
like ice cream or who doesn't
like love, even a little bit, even
though they might not indulge
in either of them.

2.

Come beautiful one,

indulge me in your
sweet kisses, your
friendly eye! I'll
write long odes to
every drape of your
hair, and your fearsome
lips.

Come, beautiful figure,
do not deny me my
fantasy! I can't spend
forever walking in the
spring rain – glistening
black top reminding me
of all the parking lots
I've crossed in search
of cupcakes, crying until
I didn't cry anymore,
until the anger left.

Mini-Jesus

I may not get out of bed at all tomorrow.

I may resemble a ghost, without the wailing,
and decide that it's best to be pale and
poorly dressed.

Do not take this as disaffection,
but merely as a means of
resurrection.

Call me mini-Jesus, for
I am right with man today and women
even flatter me with their good graces.

So, I can be a tramp of lounging around
and be admired – at least as
someone not looking to be loved
or even noticed.

I have a phone that doesn't ring anymore.

How does one get a ghost's telephone number?

Black ghost

I try to write about
the funny old sun
and the silly, girlish
moon but it never
gets on paper; only
images of the black
ghost that walks by
my window Monday
morning, looking like
some beautiful terror,
can break the blank
block in between my
head and my heart –
my fingertips doing
the translation. I'm
basically a beast that
watches things as they
pass, wonders, fancies
and lusts – I could rip
out all my hairs and
it wouldn't change the
fact that I'm a wolf, a
black wolf, who chases
after everything he sees.

Lord Bliss

I'm held in a chalice of joy
like a ballpoint pen stick figure,
arms outstretched, not able to
remember the last time
I was in Wal-Mart
but knowing that it's
a good thing, somnambulating
something awful but shit, there
has to be something more to

Monday and the other six days,
something that will help me pretend
more, to be a pretty stalwart ghost
and have all the beautiful young
babes swoon at my feet –
to be wanted,
to be called
Lord Bliss.

King of nothing

You can't see me so you
can't love me; you can't
see my heart so you don't
know my heart, the contents
of it, yada yada yada.

You can't see me so you
can't hear me; I am invisible
like the breath of god,
silent as the morning after
a big party w/out the hangover.

I might as well be a ghost;
but don't pretend that you
weren't in love with that
man you hated, aka me –

I'm a shadow;
not as low as you think I am,
a somewhat serious clown &
far from as perfect as I pretend
to be, a king of nothing.

Green-like haze

Why do I dream about your ghost,
your mother and father,
their mysterious comings and goings?

I long to know you again, whether
you still breath in and out as sweetly
as you once did when we lied together
in the green-like haze of a dream.

Life as a ghost

would be so much easier; as it is I already
wander around all night in the container
of my dreams, shackled bones and
wreaked hands amid the dark night.
I could speak to you poetically but also
enjoy long drawn-out silences, only
broken occasionally by my sudden
appearance, giving me the attention
I need to survive, the holiness involved
in wonder and the magic of fear. To be
feared is one thing, to be missed when
I'm absent is what I'm really after.
I would like to be your ghost and keep
you company when no one else is there.

Me ghost

I am haunted by
the memory of places
I've once lived, but none
more so than where we
were raised – it's still so
there.

I can remember each
and every sidewalk,
every blade of grass
and Rose of Sharon.

Me ghost
Me red
Me big dummy
Pens don't write upside down but I do

Here beneath the candle's glow
it continues:
we have managed to survive it –
the Saturday day and night
and henceforward to call it
Sunday,
somehow at ease.

It requires not whiskey,
nor even other indulgences.

I knew that I would fall in
love with you,
but never life.

Am I supposed to fear
your ghost?

All my weapons

Entrer

Where are the creatures of rhythm and beauty?
Where is the love brought upon me by casual
strangers? Where are the eighties, the beauties,
my ex-loves? What happened to all my weapons?
Why am I just weak, tired, disinterested?

Continuer

I used to walk around with a brave casual heart and now
I'm just a ghost, sliding through pale lights, listening
to songs they used to play on the nickelodeon back in
the flirty thirties. Where did punk rock go? It turned
into hip-hop and I still can't dance.

Recommencer

I'm truly a ghost, a ghost that has run out of weapons.
I can't even scare people anymore – all that's left of
me is just a secondhand soul I was given on the cheap
as part of god's somewhat vague plan for me.

Encore une fois

I say forget praise. It is a dull science which keeps
me alive anyway, enough to go bowling, to make music,

to keep everything I can around me alive while I
slowly disappear...

Chains

You left me as lonely
as a ghost, cut off from
your love, your light –
left me alone
to linger here in a damp
dark purgatory with nothing
but my spirit floating,
writhing in its rattling chains.

Boo

Once I looked at you with rapture,
even reverence.

Now I don't look at you at all –
you're a ghost
(and I lousy one at that).

I could blow air or poke
my finger right through
you
and you wouldn't even know it.

You're hardly haunting at all.

Boo.

How does it feel?

Everything

Today can be anything you want it to be:

a quiet morning or a loud one; some
people's mornings begin long before yours,
the cat coughs up a hairball, a horn honks
incessantly, while you half-dream about
curveballs and honkytonks
wondering if it's *all* a dream, I mean
everything. "So then," my mind wants to
know, "what is the point of waking up?"
To which I (the other me) answers "what
is the point of staying in bed if you're
always asleep anyway, wandering like
a poor man's ghost through all the
Thursdays you can know?" The rude
sonofabitch this doesn't answer me.

No idea

I wish I could figure it out:
why the playground still exists,
why Falstaff is always drunk and
ready to explode in Calais,
why we see fiction everywhere
and some of it is true, why I
just can't tell you exactly how
I feel because I really don't
know. I'd rather be a ghost
or some words on a page, written
by somebody else. I'd rather it
was 1996 again or someotheryear.
I wonder what Texas would be
like if it were smaller, what a cat
with wings would do to the world,
what real love would be like – I
wonder because I have no idea.

Please

Please don't build me up
with happiness at what could be.

I'm happy with now so I want to
keep it this way.

Please don't let me down,
be true – be my soul's one good
bandage.

If you only knew
the ghosts in this soul;
it feels like I've lived
forever,
like forever that I've
wanted to die.

Please love me or
just go home.

Disappearing act

I want to hide from the law
and eat strawberries for
breakfast, never reach in
my back pocket for anything
and make the sun my god,
dancing on flames, immune
to the devastating effect of
beauty, how persistently it
wreaks havoc with my soul,
my continuously broken and
rebuilt heart.

I want to hide and you won't
be able to reach me, not
from Los Angeles on
a Monday or ever.
I've got a poor tin sarcophagus for
a body, but inside it swirls
my dark musty ghost, metallic
in its renderings.

The ghost and you

What is it about ghosts?
What is it about you?
What is it about you and
ghosts, where you can
be up on stage and believe
but down here you forget?

The ghost and you part
company and you go on
without the ghost, you
go your own way and the
ghost must either find
someone else to haunt
(if you think that's what
a ghost does) or it could
be that the ghost is really
your friend or your shadow,
your helper or your angel,
signifying that which you
ought to know but sometimes
you don't see him and you
don't believe, even though
the ghost believes in you,
in all his opaqueness, swaying
in magic robes, knowing that
he's your ghost and belongs
to you.

The young Hamlet

Who are you going to believe,
a ghost?
Please. Well just sit there
and whine. Or just do it.
See how you are called mad
no matter what you do
or don't do? It's
a young man's life – get used to it.

Rhetorical love

Come closer so I can whisper in your ear
this: if you see her, tell her she's beautiful.
Heck, tell her I love her, because I only
mean it rhetorically, like I do, like I
describe the fairer sex in all their hardened
delicacies. If you see her, which you won't,
tell her someone said hello, *someone is
very fond of you* but don't mention me by name.
Let it be a mystery. Let it dance around in
the air like a ghost with a penchant for
telling the same old stories over and over.

The envy of spirits

God I just want to be a ghost
but I have this body
to deal with,
this face –
about to fall off.

Everything about *mi cuerpo*
is not up to snuff, I'm
feeling the weight
of all the gravity that's ever pulled
down on my ankles,
the burden of physicality
and the envy of spirits.

Very special diamond

The Reverend tells me if it's dark,
light a candle
and so I will.
I will light it and sit here awhile
and talk to your ghost.
I will call you a very special diamond,
one of a kind.
And your picture could answer back any
number of things –
but silence will suffice; I see and
hear enough when I look into those
jewels you call eyes.
I see that it is enough to be here
with you, alone.
I can only think a smile is something

that came from heaven, from the
thought that it's you blessing me
from far away.

From this point forward I am not
going to dwell on our pain
but prove I can and will thrive in
this imperfect shell.

And I will know that you will
always shine like a very special
diamond,

one that no one else can see,
not the way I see it.

This is my only uniqueness
and knowing there will never
be another you is what allows
me to get up from this chair
and go out in the world
and make my very special diamond
proud.

The War on love

This time I'm going to do it differently,
not become a victim and win the war on love.

Imagine a 34-year-old man with a boy's childish heart –
a lover's heart. Imagine the enemy of my mind: careless,
callous, only knowing that it desires. Imagine the cowardice:

I'd rather hide in a cave until the battle was over than to risk glory. I'm scared of what I might
gain in victory.

I'd like to tell you this and many other things as we lay
side by side together somewhere – anywhere. I'm really
just an old soul with a body he doesn't feel like he owns.

One side of my family tree is made up of ghosts.

Whatever happens I'm just going to keep right on
flying through and maybe when the time is right

I will surrender to love's will and the rest

will be reclining and eating grapes

while the servants fan my brow.

Wishing, knowing

I know I'm not
in your thoughts
and it bites like
ice against my
eye sockets and
burns like a long
stinger of wanton
disregard
and
lately I've
been up nights
dreaming of you
lately I've coughed
and withered
like
a
run of the mill
ghost
but
I know I'm not in
your thoughts and
it's not surprising –
I am most forgettable
and I'm afraid to go
with flowers, prefer
pink balloons and
sunshine to ever
thinking of you
and yet
lately I've stared
up at the sky and
renamed the stars
after your eyes
but told no one –
lately I've said
I quit a hundred
times without
knowing what
it means
but if I may
hazard a guess
I would say
it means I'm
through with

beauty and
desire,
I've decided just
to become a
plain old ghost,
nothing special,
because
I know I'm not in your
thoughts and it super-sized
sucks –
I would give my life for
a minute of your
day
a twinkle from
your
charmed ornaments,
glistening glass
orbs
which shine
in any kind of
light
I could imagine,
even a moonless
night,
and
although I've spent
a lot more time
wishing than
knowing
lately it seems
that people can
read my mind
just by looking
at me and they
know that it's
empty, just like
I know that I'm
not in your thoughts
and how I wish I were
I wish I were.