



GHOSTS

WE LIVE WITH GHOSTS. We live in old houses that creak and moan when the mercury hits thirty below and moonlight shadows flicker over the frozen yard. Back rooms and dark attics hold relics. Our lives are but the latest strata of the human geology that has preceded us.

Here the past is tangible. Our ancestors considered hoarding a virtue. We can still touch the familial, the worn out, the obsolete: cane-seated chairs missing legs, cracked ironware china, sap yokes and grain cradles. We run our fingers over the names of our forbears incised in marble and granite headstones that crown hilltop graveyards. We are surrounded by overgrown pastures inhabited by skeletal birches and spectral wisps of windblown milkweed down. Granite lined cellar holes are shaded by lilacs once planted by families with bright futures.

An ancient door with a thumb latch inexplicably swings shut. A distant crash reveals that a portrait of an ancestor has fallen from crumbling plaster. Ghosts. Friendly, we warily assure ourselves.

Betsy C.
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