

HAUNTINGS

Let no transparent shadows, floating formless through a room,
nor phosphorescent figures, staring gauntly from the gloom,
instill a trembling terror . . . stir the slightest ounce of fear.
They need to know you know they need no longer linger here.

Be not afraid when dishes rattle, items fly and fall,
or spooky strangers visit, just to vanish through the wall.
Regardless—whether gentle or inflamed with hellish rage—
the dead have played their parts and need to exit off the stage.

Despite the way a disembodied history was marred,
no house was meant to be a haunt, no field a prison yard.
Old crimes or cruel injustice, re-enacted in the night,
cannot, from their rehearsal, bring revenge by spreading fright!

The past holds too much sorrow for this life to serve as host
to handle undone business that's still burdening a ghost.
In spite of sudden passing—hopes and duties unfulfilled—
no haunting apparitions can achieve what once was willed.

If stuck by burning vengeance or by death's confused surprise,
these restless souls must learn the truth to breach the devil's lies.
Forgiving is the doorway; trusting God is wisdom's key
to move the long-deceased along to their eternity.

So, do not fear or flee them, if they hover where you stay,
but sing some sacred hymns or psalms to send them on their way.
Observe the Holy Table, saying prayers for their release,
then bid them to let go and leave this place to rest in peace.

— *David L. Hatton, 9/5/2019*