

Pamela Miller

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## The Semi-Visible Ghost

I'm slowly learning how to materialize. What good is being a ghost if no one can see you? My grandma's ghost says it's like giving birth: *Push! Push! Push yourself into view!* Or like painting a portrait in ectoplasm of what used to be you. I've gotten the hang of filling out my legs. Manifesting my top half, though, is tricky as playing chess on a board of air. Once or twice I willed my head into sight, but the bud of my face wouldn't open. Luckily, the afterlife has no expiration date. What's the first thing I'll do when I finally become an apparition? Jump out of walls and spook folks till their hair turns to ice! Or maybe I'll just smile and say: "Hiya."



## The Ghost at the Piano

What song can I play to bring myself back to life? "Happy Birthday to Me"? The piano refuses to consider it. I haven't had a birthday since I died, it reminds me. "Working My Way Back to You"? "Return to Sender"? I want to rejoin the living so badly my ectoplasm keeps boiling over. But nothing in my repertoire does the trick. Plus, it's hard to tickle the ivories when the keys are made of blood. Why doesn't anyone applaud me, reach rapturously through the ether to fetch me? "Don't you understand?" the piano's bass notes whisper. "There's no audience for the dead. When ghosts play a musical instrument, it makes sounds that only dust can hear."



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## Ghost Stories: The Girl in the Forest

The ground swirls around me as I walk. The dead trees sprout grasping hands. The whole woods becomes an eighty-acre cold spot. And here I am! Why am I gliding straight toward you? Because I'm lonely. Because it's my birthday. Because the creep who killed me dumped my body here and I need to tell someone about it. Because you came charging in with your ghost-hunting gadgets clanking. So you want to see a spirit, Mr. Paranormal Investigator? Let me wrap myself around you like pneumonia.



## Four Tall Ghosts

Why are our legs long as tree trunks? Well, Saint Peter ordered us down to Hell, except we ain't ready to go. The Devil hammered our feet to the floor so he could keep his squinty eye on us, but we ghosts can stretch way, way, waaaaay up! It's fun being here above ground again, our faces stroked by evening breeze. Like that night we gang-raped Emily Schultz, and her brothers rammed our car off the bridge. Sure, we deserve to be down below, roasting like rotten marshmallows. But till Satan finds a way to reel us back in, we'll be hangin' out on the street all night.