

## Ghost & *Other* Sonnets

GERALDINE MONK was born in Blackburn, Lancashire in 1952. Since first being published in the 1970s she has written six major collections of poetry and numerous chapbooks. Her writing has appeared extensively in the both the U.K. and the U.S.A. As an extension to her activities in poetry she collaborates with many musicians including Martin Archer, Charlie Collins and Julie Tippets. A collection of essays on her poetry, *The Salt Companion to Geraldine Monk*, edited by Scott Thurston, was brought out in 2007 by Salt Publishing.

Also by Geraldine Monk

POETRY

*Noctivagations* (Sheffield: West House Books, 2001)

*Selected Poems* (Cambridge: Salt 2003)

*Escafeld Hangings* (Sheffield: West House Books, 2005)

*Raccoon* (Boise: Free Poetry, 2007)

# Ghost & *Other* Sonnets

GERALDINE MONK



CAMBRIDGE

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*For Lesley and David.*

*My dear friends who  
know the temperature of ghosts.*



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'I stand in my absence in front of a thing  
That stands in its presence and fits it  
To perfection.'

—PETER RILEY



Ghost



1

It started with a tryst and twist of  
Lupine lovely arms along a rural railroad  
Bank. Winter rose up summer's rise.  
Throes of profound bafflement.  
Vague was the impression of fossil  
Teeth across the false breast  
Yearning for a straight line in  
Nature digging the *what* that lies  
Oblong and lewd in the tube of  
Afterlife lingerings.  
Un sourced scent so strong it  
Overpowered sense and narrative.

Disturbed earth grew stripes.  
A stalk broke too far.

Light a nightlight flimsy.  
Fingertip search. Distilled eye of owl.  
Neck-head etched with chevron blaze.  
Disconcerted ferns clutched  
Breeze of little feet in lost cotton  
Socks tripping hither came to  
Pass a murdering stream concluding.  
Happy-heart so young upon a  
Devious pond to chance. Dragged by  
Shady plankton mouth. Down-down.  
Leery-long his slow green  
Face replaced her woeful visage.

Egg-shaped love that shined up rooms.  
For whom the gods love. Brut.

Agitation shocked the public library.  
Pushes and scuffles nudged a thousand  
Books—splendid to behold—into  
Fits of hissy pulp. Parchments  
Fell into silence please she passes  
Disappointingly not white the *Grey Lady*  
Glides gilded vellum lips. Hint of  
Tongue. Authentic scrawls bemoan  
Clingy narratives: her thwarted soul  
Worries faux hieroglyphic  
Codes dabbing Mille Flores on  
Distressed temples. Perforated syntax.

A room much sadder for its off-white shade  
Doomed to overwrite in perpetuity.

Swallow-tail moth artificially lit  
Anglepoise. Alien apparent illumed.  
Mandrake-shaped human catches exhale.  
Midnight oily. Flying coppers buzz choppers  
Riddle dull-rut backtrack. Blink of  
Wing and lash. Shush. Electric  
Standoff. Duel farce. Bluff of  
Eyeballs. Mutually accusing dovetails.  
Engrossment. *Aside*: Discarded kid  
Gloves low-glow pearl buttons:  
Bread in milk. Pobs. Feckless  
Exposure. Unearthly whey. Sore-eye sight.

Almost day when they found them. Limpid  
Heap of white & cream. Crumpled cold.

Desperation clung to petulant  
Hillside. Sadistic clouds gingered  
Nails snagged a cut of  
Gibbous moon. It was getting nasty.  
Eccentric crops of revert cats  
Mewled semicircles beneath the bay  
Window frocks shimmied in full party swing.  
Transparency rebounded dark: looking  
Out with awe they saw themselves looking  
In: Thin things shattered on  
Fluted reflections. As if . . .  
They gasped . . . as if . . .

Grabbing the scruff a noun  
Drowned an over-gowned thought.

Sided by accident she wandered in a  
Shade knocking beamers off their  
Brilliant yeah-day axis dimmed  
Somewhat too sudden. Apprehensive  
Frost evaporated certainty. Radiation of  
Fossils things kindled underfoot. Couched  
Blusters of embarrassments. You! You!  
Blush driven guffaws nude metallic  
Claws tendering raw unholy  
Collision. Petrification happens. Not  
Solely in the megalithic night but in the full  
Bright of true and other yes.

Being scared stiff of shadows tires coloured  
Balloons. Redesigns trusty schedules.

Chronic webbings. Intrigue.  
Androgynous flush haunts  
Reptilian spine vault gothic.  
Vehement throb conflicts on  
Polyphonic gutwire. Phantom strings  
Berserk minor arpeggios. Buttress ups  
Super star dome. Sanctuary out to lunch.  
Alone and pale and sort of floaty  
Fingers clutched the altar rails of dread  
Draining the face with featureless  
Caress a shaft of light carved through her  
Strained glass prelude.

Fragmented fugues of spheres break  
Wind on mobile ring tones. Discarnate.

The disembodied head looked  
Browned-off. Crammed under an  
Undeodorised pit: a pendulum  
Seeps misshapen gore  
Tenders X centuries O clock shadows.  
Yonder staircase growing microbes  
Gating post-world beings.  
*Heritage* is a young word hung  
Wearily around old corners. Shoulders  
Peeve. Tempered daggers drawl.  
Orion in ascendance belting three glee  
Songs the eunuch clears high C.

Living things: better to be lost over heels than  
Lose your head over love of detail.