

## ghosts

people I know  
claim to have seen ghosts  
people I respect  
why would they lie  
about something  
so intimate as grief

despite yearning  
for my dead  
I've never seen them  
only the occasional voice  
clear as day

they come at night  
into my dreams  
fleeting visits  
from which I wake  
smiling

I hope it means  
my dead are at peace  
gone to a place  
from which they choose  
not to return

it's other ghosts  
that haunt me  
disquieting my days  
loss lingers  
in dark corners  
seldom visited  
but always present

I wonder  
in some parallel universe  
of the lives I might have lived  
the children not born  
the paths not taken

I think of the times  
I waited for permission  
that never came  
the unspoken words  
missed meetings  
chances lost

the ghost within reach  
is the one I least  
want to see  
a shadow self  
with a life half-lived  
my heart bitter  
my spirit broken

as sure of their visions  
so too am I  
certain of my choices  
at peace with my life  
its twists and turns  
its flawed but earnest pursuits

to grieve  
is the privilege of love  
of hope and ambition  
to live through and beyond  
is choice