POEMS

Don’t Look Now: Reading Aloud to Ghosts

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“You ever seen a ghost? No
But you have heard of them.”

The blind side, they say,
is what hits you by surprise.

It can drive you
to your knees,
tap your shoulder,
caress you gently.

The sudden smell
of smoke
upon the air.

Milk
poured on cereal.

Water
on the soil
in a flower pot.

Cream
poured on coffee
in your coffee cup.
A place of one’s own, 
they say, too.

How was that 
on the blind side? 
And when? 
And just that?

Sometimes the blind side 
is a mirror.

Or conjures up a phrase 
from Bob Dylan.

“You give something up for everything you gain.”

Sometimes the blind side 
is not there.

Never was.

How can you take precautions against what never was?

“So pay for your ticket and don’t complain.”

A ticket delivered
from the blind side
can have exorbitant
handling fees.

It can admit you
to the blind side
in the mirror.

To see the father
fallen short.

The lover
confused
by love.

The person
placing belief in
what is
no more.

And maybe
never was.

In others.

In oneself.

A deep breath
is calming, they say.
It takes
the blind side
into the spirit
inside.

Like light tendrils
of cream
spreading through
strong hot coffee.

Like water
disappearing
in darkening
soil.

Like milk
that makes cereal
float
or sink.

Like the caress
that had
no meaning.

The touch
that called
attention
to nothing
apparent.

The force
of a
sledge hammer
upon
a
spike.

A whispering
scent
of
smoke.

What’s that?

Don’t look.

But you
already
have.

And you’re
“left looking
just like
a ghost.”