

Senior Division Poetry  
Matthew Hollett, St. John's  
**Theory of Ghosts (an excerpt)**

First your hair went white,  
now the rest of you. It's as if you woke up  
after the operation,  
but hamstrung, as if you have to teach yourself  
to move and breathe all over again. Your face  
looks the same, a little younger even,

more translucent. From your neck down,  
things get stranger. Your long, heavy arms  
are waterlogged curtains, soggy with ether,  
ectoplasm, entoptic phenomena, whatever  
ghosts are composed of. Your abdomen frays off  
like a bedsheet torn in half.

[...]

You resolve  
to never turn into a nuisance, fluttering books  
or levitating candlesticks, ooooo-

ooohing. Squeezing into smoke alarms,  
light fixtures, the gap above the refrigerator,  
you gradually learn to move through the house  
without giving anyone chills. You become a connoisseur  
of cobwebs, admiring how they graze corners  
barely, but with grace. It makes you shudder

to wonder whether your own tethers to this place  
might be so tenuous. It's easy to imagine  
what little gravity you have left  
frazzling thin, leaving you jettisoned  
in Earth's silent wake, as the planet unlooms  
like a balloon you let go of.