

## GHOSTS

I

I have reached a quickening age  
when my darling dead  
begin to fill the active air  
in bright, essential shades  
like finches swooping and darting everywhere,  
like Giotto's stubby angels.

2

For a true vacation, go  
into a bygone life.  
Hermit-crabwise, come to know  
its shell – and then to see,  
to feel – to cough at the Paxtons' smoky fire,  
or have dear Jane to tea.

3

“And did those feet in ancient times  
walk upon England's shore?”  
They say a North Sea fish still mimes  
St. Peter's thumbprint, marked  
by the Fisherman as the one in ancient lore  
of another miracle worked.

4

The Star of Mary's built on five  
like creatures of the sea.  
Was she “Miryam” when alive,  
like oceans, “bitter, salt?”  
And did an unknown pagan tongue between,  
moved by magic, talk?

5

And how did the Biblical account  
of Jesus' siblings survive –  
and Peter's marriage – evading Councils,  
their doctrines by which we live?  
We are heirs to histories that thrive  
if lost, undone, outlived.

6

Even language allows its use  
within unbending laws,  
but when it uses us, a Muse,  
the limits fall away.  
To serve as oracles must give us pause;  
if instruments, who plays?