

54 3rd PROOF

All of his life he had not believed in ghosts
and now he had the proof that they didn't exist.

He had chosen The Anniversary to make it easy for her
and still she didn't dare to come!
Not even as a model on a catwalk, smiling seductively.
Relishing his staring, teasing, tormenting.
Desirable. Deceitful. Unworthy.

In the early days of being inside
she had forced her way into his dreams,
an unwelcome guest, like Banquo's Ghost,
her head covered in gouts of blood
and he'd jolt awake, sweating, sometimes screaming.
But that was just memory, out of control,
the death throes of the last speck of conscience.
Besides the old lag who shared his cell
told him the nightmares would disappear in time
and as usual he was right. Pretty much.

Once on a school trip to a mining museum
he'd been dropped down deep then deeper still
and when the guide told them to switch off their lamps
he'd been stranded in purest blackness.
But here, alone, in this room as the light slowly faded
his eyes grew accustomed to the dark.

He could see that it was a breeze
that was making the curtains flutter
and that unearthly moan outside
was definitely a cat on heat.
And didn't all houses creak at night?

His breathing was regular,
his pulse was normal
and nothing, absolutely nothing,
was relentlessly, remorselessly.
creeping up the stairs towards him.