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Encounters with my Mother's Ghost

I met her
in the kitchen. She was shouting.
No man or child answered.
The floor was slippery with botched
cooking none of us had eaten which she had
thrown down of her power.
Power we had not noticed
when she walled a war out of her house
where every pastry rose to our clean fingers
and nothing was ever allowed to be broken.

I met her
in the church. She was shouting
her name not her nickname nor
the mouthful her parents gave her but
the name only God ever called her
when she was too given to know herself called.
And I could not hear what syllables
she shouted. Only
the truth of it plucking the strung rafters
to sound the hollow air vaulted in stone.

I met her in the street.
She was revving
the little red sports car she sometimes
joked about but never found the right to buy.
No neighbour frowned or tutted
but the hard desire of her anger shut
out their good-day smiles
and claimed the thundering scandal
her careful quiet was busy to deny
all her careful life.