

Ghost light

by [Steven Peterson](#) in the [May 6, 2020](#) issue

We've closed our theatres—a silence rules.
Homebound with Internet and iPhones, stocked

with everything we'd want as hoarding fools,
we double check to see our doors are locked.

Elizabethans closed their theatres
in plague years; Shakespeare scribbled poems for praises.

Today each playwright (one is me) utters
in keyboard clacks: free verse or formal phrases.

Yet theatres keep one bare light bulb burning
on stage, illuminating emptiness.

Tradition calls it a “ghost light,” discerning
substance from shadows—like our faithfulness.

Let's ask the ghost light of our soul: Explain
this wait for life, or death, or deathless gain.