

## Ghost owl

by [Ned Balbo](#) in the [December 16, 2020](#) issue

A cellphone's flashlight beam selects your face  
watching from a high branch skeptically—  
We've found you now, ghost owl, lodged cryptically  
above us, grim observer. Fixed in place,

you shine, a constellation pulled from space,  
made feather, flesh, and talon. Carelessly,  
our cellphone casts a cool light on your face  
while you look down and watch us skeptically,

unruly lovers grounded, who gave chase  
to *Tyto alba* flying noiselessly. . . .

How could we hope our words, imperfectly,  
would capture your dark world, as if to trace  
a straight line to the sky, your heart-shaped face  
remote, your cold gaze watching skeptically?