

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?