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Flash Fiction by Maria Romasco Moore

Two Pieces from *Ghostographs*

Editor's Note: It's hard to describe Maria Romasco Moore's *Ghostographs: An Album*. This hybrid work from Rose Metal Press is haunting in the best sense of the word: smudged photographs of strangers float from the pages, sometimes accompanied by a single line of text, evoking remembered stories or ghosts.
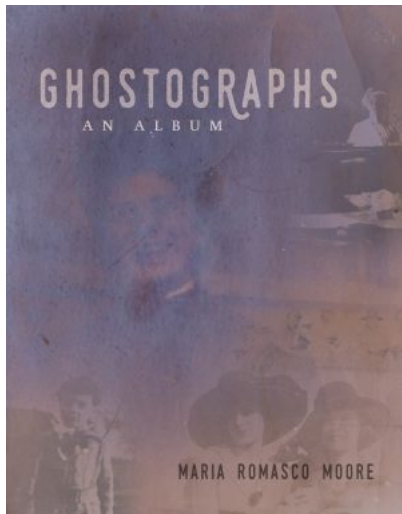
In her "Author's Note," Maria Romasco Moore says she found her first stash of old photos in a Whitman's Sampler box at an antiques market:

> At home, I spent many evenings looking through the images, staring at the faces of the people in them, trying to guess their stories. The box was like a mystery novel, written out of order and without a single word.

We're pleased to reprint Romasco Moore's "Preface" and one of her flash stories—"The Bridge over the Abyss"—as part of the TW Reading Series. For more information, see the Rose Metal Press page for *[Ghostographs: An Album](#)* [5].

Preface

Every story is a ghost story.

Even the ones you tell about yourself.

(function(i,s,o,g,r,a,m){i['GoogleAnalyticsObject']=r;i[r]=i[r]||function(){ (i[r].q=i[r].q||[]).push(arguments)},i[r].l=1*new Date();a=s.createElement(o), m=s.getElementsByTagName(o)[0];a.async=1;a.src=g;m.parentNode.insertBefore(a,m) })(window,document,'script','https://www.google-analytics.com/analytics.js','ga'); ga('create', 'UA-18260536-1', 'auto'); ga('send', 'pageview');

When I was little I believed that the person I was today and the person I was yesterday and the person I would be tomorrow were three separate people.

I believed that I lived only one day. In the morning I was born and in the evening I died and the person who awoke in my bed the following morning was someone new.

I believed that this cycle continued day after day, the variances between iterations subtle enough as to be nearly imperceptible, but each iteration nonetheless distinct from its predecessors and descendants.

Like frames in a film, this succession of discrete individuals appeared from a distance to be continuous, but upon closer inspection was clearly divided by regular intervals of darkness, of nothingness, which most people mistakenly referred to as sleep.

This was a childish belief, of course.

The truth of it is that every single instant we are, all of us, obliterated and refreshed.

In the time it takes to blink or turn around, you have become someone new, separate from the originator of the action, who is gone now forever.

A brief conversation between yourself and a stranger is, in reality, a hundred some snippets of sound passed between a hundred some strangers and a hundred some versions of you.

And if, at a later point in time, you choose to relate this conversation to a third party, you are telling the story of people long gone. You are telling the story of ghosts.

These are mine.

The Bridge over the Abyss

We liked to throw pennies off it and then listen. You might think it would be boring, waiting for a sound that never came, but it wasn't. I guess we never stopped believing that if we just waited long enough we'd hear a distant clink.

We were proud that a town as small as ours had an abyss of its own.

True, every now and then someone would jump off the bridge and then someone else would say, *We've got to do something about the damn thing. Think of the children.* And then everyone would think about us for a few days. We would think about ourselves, too, and about what it must feel like to fall forever. It didn't seem so bad to us. Like my mother always said, there are worse ways to spend your time.

The people who went over the railings were missed, to be sure, but they were never truly mourned. There was too much uncertainty. It seemed possible that if we just waited long enough, we would hear them, calling up to us from a long way down, calling up to tell us what they'd found.

Art Information

- All photographs are from the collection of Maria Romasco Moore and used with permission of the author and Rose Metal Press.

Maria Romasco Moore's stories have appeared in *DIAGRAM*, *Hobart*, *Interfictions*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, and the Lightspeed anthology *Women Destroy Science Fiction*. Her first novel, *Some Kind of Animal*, will be published by Delacorte Press in 2020. She is a graduate of the Clarion West Writers Workshop and has an MFA from Southern Illinois University. She currently lives in Columbus, Ohio, with her partner Axel and cat Gamma Ray. She likes silent films, aquariums, and other tiny windows into other worlds.

For more information, visit [Maria Romasco Moore's](https://mariaromascomoore.com) [6] website.

Source URL: https://mail.talkingwriting.com/memory-ghosts

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