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Poetry by Paula Bonnell



The Muse of Bad Poems

feeds you a great opening line
then follows it up with weak
imitations of lines from some
of your better old poems.

The Muse of Bad Poems
has a day job in an ad agency
and insists that you call her

The Muse of Bad Poems

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“The Muse of BP.”

She says, “Just hum me
a few bars” — as though
you were the one
in charge of this gig.

The Muse of Bad Poems got
“Talks Too Much”
checked on the conduct section
of her report card.
In the same marking period
you got a check in “Can’t Seem to Listen.”

The Muse of BP
shops off-price
and goes for the mall-store labels.
You can always
avoid her by heading
for your favorite thrift store.

The Muse of Bad Poems watches as you
write your way down the page to your
habitual ending spot, then
with a straight face
she hands you —
on a silver salver if one is handy —
a small anticlimax.

Art Information

- [“Mirrored Self Portrait in Serving Tray \[5\]”](#) © Jo Christian Oterhals; Creative Commons license.



Paula Bonnell is a poet whose work has appeared widely in the U.S (*Southern Poetry Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Women’s Review of Books*), as well as in Canada, England, India, and Australia. She has received several awards, most notably from *Kalliope*, New England Poetry Club, Chester H. Jones Foundation, and the City of Boston. Her 2017 chapbook *Tales Retold* follows three collections: *Airs & Voices* (Ciardi Prize winner), a 2013 chapbook *Before the Alphabet*, and her debut collection, *Message*.

For more information, visit [Paula Bonnell's website](#) [6] or follow her on Twitter [@paulabonnell1](#) [7].

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