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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.

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### 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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