



**Ghost girl
by Una Hearne**

Just in the door from my weekly expedition to the shop, glance in the mirror. There she is - ghost girl, so pale with those dark rings under her eyes. Going to the kitchen to put away the groceries I pass the clock, it's ten to four.

I manifest in the outside world a few times a week. The shopping, zoom with friends or clients and occasionally an actual social meet up. I feel real when I interact with people. I must be, otherwise they are talking to themselves or imagining me.

After a couple of hours hard manifesting I vanish from the world again. Disappearing into my teeny, lovely cottage. Thereafter I am prostrate on couch or in bed. Able to do little or nothing, often unable to think. I can't think, therefore I am not. Do I exist? If no one sees you, are you really there?

Lying there, my consciousness is free to roam. And roam it does while my body stays at home, inert. Is this living? When it can, my mind roams, observes, travels, thinks, creates, learns, amuses itself, lives vicariously through others. Without a body to live my life with, I am an insubstantial presence, a wisp of humanity - essentially spirit.

Beautiful dreams form in my mind, a million ideas of what I could create in the world. I have no means to live these dreams. I simply weave them into exquisite works of art and let them go on a breath of air. I hope they land in someone who can use them. Is imagination a gift or a burden? The price of my dazzling dreams is acceptance that most will never exist outside my mind. Do I mind? Yes I mind. Yet I wouldn't surrender it. My imagination is my comfort and my torment. A reason I wish to live and a reason I wish to die. I've always thought an important life skill is the ability to hold a paradox with ease.

After an hour rest, I heave myself off the couch to get something to eat, catching the clock, it's ten to four. Something about that bothers me but my energy is needed elsewhere. And then back to the couch again with Complian and a buttered roll.

I wonder on...If I can't work or do anything useful for anyone, what exactly is the point of my life? It might be easier if I believed in a God. If I believed 'HE' has a plan. I do have spiritual beliefs, chief amongst them is that we can never know why we are here. There may or may not be a reason, purpose, meaning, God, Gods or nothing. This philosophy has always provided me the freedom to choose my own purpose and divine my own meaning. Being a practical little soul I have always chosen to believe we are here to be the best and wildest expression of the unique human we are. I have also chosen to believe that our quality of life is far more dependent on our attitude and choices than our circumstances and this is what I teach.

When I relapsed badly with M.E. five years ago it felt like life was throwing down a gauntlet 'That's what you believe is it? OK baby girl, now prove it!'

So I did. I learned acceptance – albeit reluctantly and without grace. More like a five year old stomping round in a temper actually. I choose to accept my incapacity, this illness, every day. I count my blessings, my home, my garden, my friends, the little work I can still do. Above all my independence. I focus on what I can do and small joys – not on what I've lost. Most days I have a good quality of life, most days I know I am of value just because I am. I even explore what might be opening up for me through this experience. My spiritual path has certainly broadened and deepened. Most days I choose happy.

But there are still those days... days when I can only manage a couple of trips to the bathroom and kitchen. Days where there is no energy to think. No energy to choose. Dark days. Those days I lie, glad to be alone, glad I don't have to make sure anyone else is ok. I lie there and wonder... why do I keep going?

I remember the day I knew my purpose for sure. I tasted that nectar of meaning, connection and success, all in one heady mix. I was standing in a training room on the third day of the course I had designed. I could see what had happened to each of the people there and the group as a whole. It was beyond anything I could have imagined - way beyond. The privilege and joy of being able to empower a group of people and watch them change their thinking and the trajectory of their lives right in front of me, because of me. It was overwhelming and it made my soul sing. Finally everything made sense, this was the ultimate version of me doing what I was born to do.

It's not surprising then, on dark days, pasted to the couch, robbed of that life – that I can't help wondering why my potential has to go to waste. There are millions of us. It seems to be such a colossal waste. What could possibly be the point of this?

The clock says ten to four. Wait.. I finally grasp it has stopped, battery dead. Just like me, ha ha ha! Or maybe time has actually stopped? Ghost time is bizarre anyway, it wouldn't surprise me. Have I stepped outside of space and time? I have always been outside, an outsider. But now I'm vanishing into the mists of time leaving only dreams. Between worlds here in my little home. Dreaming.

Later I do the dishes and go to bed. Another day as a ghost is done. Well, not quite done. I am awake at night while others sleep. It occurs to me even a ghost has purpose. It is supposed to haunt at night. I haunt this house but there's only me, not much scope for scaring. How wonderful if I could flit away and haunt elsewhere at least. There's a few people I would love to scare the shite out of. Haunt the guilty, settle scores, finish the unfinished business. However, it appears I am not fully a ghost either. Maybe the only real part of me is spirit. Maybe we are all essentially spirit.

And so I lie and wait. I watch tv or read – nothing stimulating in case I scare away the timid sleep fairy. It's just one dark day, everyone has then. Tomorrow will be better. The sleep fairy usually drops in around 4am. She is always welcome.

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