my brother told me he saw a ghost in the hallway last night, a boy wearing a baseball cap mouthing to himself as he leaned into the bookshelf as if trying to make out the words on the spines in the dark. It was 5:00 a.m., the time of night when he rises to piss, to lumber along the cold floor from his bedroom to the bathroom at the end of the hall. It was the only time he regretted not having slippers; it was the only time he remembered all about the icy concrete beneath his feet.

When he stumbled upon the boy, my brother shook out of his drowsiness, and it was his hands that felt clammy now. But the boy didn’t realize he had been caught in the mischief—escaping his ghost-world to take a dip in the realm of the living. So my brother gave him the universal psst! (It was understood in both English and Spanish and in the language of the dead, apparently.) Startled, the boy snapped his neck to look at my brother, and then scurried into the darkness, vanishing through the wall at the end of the hall.

He told me this on the cell phone as his truck crawled across the border on his daily international commute from México to the United States. I listened to the honking of my homeland as I looked out my window in my eighth floor New York City apartment. I told him I believed. I was certain that
a previous tenant had died in my place, that the spirit roamed the room in search of the comfort of its bed. We were both lost, my ghost and I, and therefore had been adequately matched across the dimensions, just like my brother and his ghost because they were insistent border crossers.