

"The Ghost of Joan Rivers Lives in My House"
music by Joanna Burns, lyrics by Bill Nelson

The ghost of Joan Rivers
Lives in my house.
She sits and watches tv.
 She's always dolled up in feathers and fur.
 She mocks tv stars with a tongue like a spur.
 She mostly ignores me, so I ignore her—
'Least that's how it used to be.

The ghost of Joan Rivers
Lives in my house,
And lately she has things to say.
 She tells me my hair's flat and recommends shampoos
 As she questions my choices of blouses and shoes.
 I've shown her the door, but she won't take my cues.
I fear that she's here to stay.

May I just note
I don't take her advice.
I don't listen to ghosts, that's crazy.
Except with my clothes—
They do lack spice.
I've watched myself get lazy.

Joan Rivers tells jokes as I
Eat a whole quiche.
At least she's good for a laugh.
 We talk and we tawk from midnight 'til three.
 She jokes, but she listens and lets me be me.
 I think I've been lonelier than I could see.
Joan might be my better half.

Miz Rivers claims that I need a night out—a jaunt,
That that's what my best friend
Who died
Would want.
It probably is time I return to the world,
So, as she commands, my lashes are curled.

At eight-fifteen it's a barstool for one at Benihana.
Straight away I meet

A housewife
Named Donna.
She buoyantly points out I spilled sauce on my boot.
And I learn real quick that Donna is a hoot.

Because of Joan Rivers
I make a new friend.
I can't wait to tell Joan the news.
 I can't wait to tell her our night is so fun!,
 That a cook flips my steak, and it smacks some poor nun,
 That I cackle so loud Donna feeds me a bun.
And that's before we order our booze.

Oh the ghost of Joan Rivers—
I have her to thank.
A smile is stuck on my face.
 I race home to blather about the whole night,
 To tell her my friend is bombastic and bright.
 I fly through my door and say, "Of course you were right."
But Joan is gone without a trace.

The ghost of Joan Rivers lived in my house.
The ghost of Joan Rivers would hate this blouse.
It's fine 'cause I think now I can
Face things on my own.
But if I ever get a cat,
I'll name that cat Joan.