



PROJECT MUSE®

## Ghost Clouds

Doug Ramspeck

Pleiades: Literature in Context, Volume 40, Issue 2, Summer 2020, p. 218 (Article)

Published by University of Central Missouri, Department of English and Philosophy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/plc.2020.0165>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/759404>

---

## Doug Ramspeck

### Ghost Clouds

She imagined it as the erosion of each night,  
so many gray mornings after. It was always after,  
some intensification of personal history,  
the self forever the reconstituted trees lifting  
their dead winter fingers toward the sky. And so the years  
became a starving horse she saw once in a dream,  
the exposed hulls of its ribs visible while a cold fluttering  
of snow came ashing down, ghost clouds snorted  
from the nostrils. She believed, then, that her husband  
was like a light shawl she wrapped around her shoulders  
some evenings in the cold, was like the pink behind her closed  
eyelids in the heavy summer sun. At night she listened  
to his breaths as though they were locked in some precise  
rotation of the seconds, each inhalation a mystic or made  
of unbaked clay. And she dreamed that their son emerged  
again from the hidden crease, but this time when  
she bent to kiss him, the carapace of his forehead  
bruised her lips. And so the years spread out like broken  
vessels, like the hemoglobin taillights she saw sometimes  
on the highway not far from the house. The hours, soon,  
became like diving into deep waters, the pressure  
like a hand against the skin, as though it were possible  
to cross out every geography behind her, to scribble  
along the edges of the body and to make it disappear.