Yes, we endured the eternal

             racket the ghosts made

     with their bad breath, unwashed toes

with their shriveled fingers in our ears

with the clattering they made in the kitchen

   and we heard the pots fall out

            the window, we heard the salt

    in avalanches, their secrets, sultry,

laughing behind the cabinets

    we painted all those years ago

bright blue, to match the horizon

we'd grieve later. Well, those ghosts,

they didn't stop, so we rose

to catch them in insect nets

   and coo to them in gentle voices:

   Hey, my loves, we were sleeping.

We were sleeping and you

woke us up.

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**About E.K. Bartlett**

E.K. Bartlett is an Iowa-born, New York-educated, Paris-based writer. They are the recipient of the Gigantic Sequins Poetry Award of 2021, and were nominated for Best of the Net fall 2022. Find them in Asymptote, Jet Fuel Review, Indigo Literary, Rust + Moth, among others.