

VOICES

i've been hearing voices calling me again.
actually just today i heard one, in the early
afternoon: i was upstairs changing the sheets on
the bed and a voice came from downstairs somewhere,
but i wasn't exactly sure where. i don't know what
to think of this. they never really scare me, these
voices; it's always a distant call, and when i go
to it there is nothing there. it's not from
the drinking that i hear these voices, no. i hear
them when i am sober too. and it's always a
female voice that i hear. i should mention
this, not because it means anything to me, but
it might mean something to you, although i
cannot imagine what. recently i talked to the
family who used to live in this old farmhouse.
i had run into them at the supermarket.
one of the children had something interesting
to say: she told me that she had heard voices
here. when she did her parents snickered
and told me not to take her seriously.
she told me this without me mentioning a word
about the voices i had heard. and
the voices always seem to use my whole
first name. this makes me even more curious,
since only my family uses my name this way.
friends and acquaintances without fail
will shorten it. and every so often i swear
i can identify one of the voices. i'm
convinced one of the voices belongs to
the woman whom i lived with not too long ago,
for over three years. but, i don't know
how this could be the case, since i thought
only the dead called out to you
in this manner. and she is not dead,
thank god. only yesterday i ran into her
at the health food store at the little
mall in town. she appeared as beautiful
as ever. we talked for a brief spell.
in all the time we've known each other
we have not had a bitter word between us.
anyway, it could not have been
her voice that i've been hearing, or
one of the voices. if she wanted
to call me all she'd have to do
is use the phone. the dead
cannot do that. they can't use
phones. not even
pushbutton.

— Ronald Baatz

Mt. Tremper NY