

# UNDEAD FAITH:

A Poetic  
Haunted House  
of  
the Dearly Deconverted



Ivy Zeller

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PART I:

Monster Mash

# Undead

Evangelical me died,  
Crushed by fundamentalism.

But she didn't die in vain.

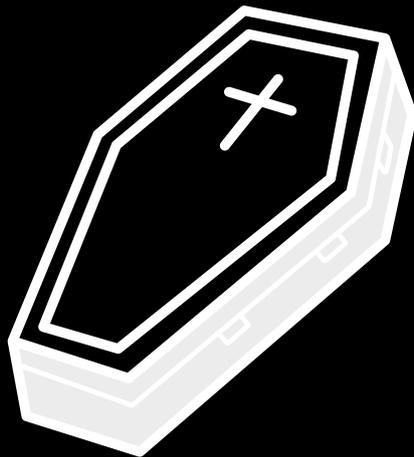
She died fighting for me,  
For my safety,  
For the safety of her loved ones,  
For the truth.

She died in bravery.

She was crushed unjustly, but she was raised up.

She is me, and I am her.

And now my faith is undead.



# Vampire

Can't eat garlic,  
Can't go outside,  
A flair for the dramatic:

Is she a vampire...  
Or a traumatized,  
closeted,  
chronically ill  
sapphic?



# Witch

Double, double  
Toil and trouble

Wise as a dove  
Innocent as a serpent

Why is the snake demonized?  
Why is the witch crushed under your heel?

Her alchemy holds both  
Dove and serpent

But you made up stories about demons  
And now there's hell to pay



Witch,

PART 2

But what if I told you  
There's mercy in my brew?

That I mean no harm to you  
But only to the systems  
That all of us over did screw?



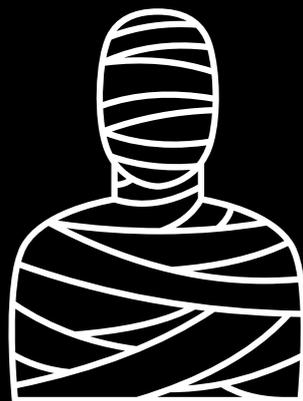
## Mummified

Fundamentalism embalmed me  
in so many secrets,  
I had to unwrap  
my mummified self  
to become free.

Maybe that's what  
resurrection, healing is:  
revealing secrets.

So this mummy is  
leaving the grave cloths behind,  
sort of like Jesus.

You can't hide your abuse with me anymore.



Holy Ghost

Church,  
we know our stories haunt you...

Have you ever considered  
that that might be  
the Holy Ghost?



# Frankenstein's Monster

Sew together  
A hatred of the flesh,  
The lightning bolt of hellfire,  
And a love of the poor  
and the one who made them...  
Look what rises up.



You stagger back,  
“This is not the  
perfect evangelical  
we wanted.”

But I'm just taking the gospels literally.

I am what you made me.

Part II

Heaven Hell

Horror Hope

## Shiver

“Dead faith?” \*clutches pearls\*

You misheard me.

I said *undead*,

Living in limbo

For justice to be done.

Like the the slain saints under the altar,

Their blood crying out,

“How long, O Lord?”

Mingling with my blood

From your rejection,

The stab wounds in my back.

My faith may be undead.

But a resurrection is coming.

And at that time,

By your own Bible’s admission,

A just judge will avenge.

And so I call out to Him,

“Lord, have mercy!”

# (Holy) Haunted

There's a specter in these woods.  
The ferns hold her secrets.

She's the ghost of the girl  
I used to be.

She was killed by injustice,  
Her silence forced and fatal.

But now she haunts these hallowed trees,  
Her cries heard faintly during the cracking of storms.

She knows about the assaults,  
She knows about the abuse.

And to the violence, she says,  
"I will do no harm,  
But I will take no shit."

Her anthem joins the chorus  
Of millions of haunted, wounded spirits like hers.

And if her story makes you fear  
You'll lose your power?

Yes, she is (and they are)  
Haunting your institutions.  
Our cries echo off  
Your unjust power structures.  
Your church's supposed success,  
Made of a foundation  
Of marginalized corpses.

So cease the harm.  
And we'll cease the haunt.

# Blood, Blood, Blood

All this talk about blood,  
About how Jesus's execution  
At the hands of empire  
Made you whole.

But silence about all the  
Abels you killed  
Because they were  
too queer,  
too pagan,  
too anti-empire,  
too undesirable.

The ones you killed because,  
even with all the above,  
they loved God more than you ever have—  
and their neighbors too.

Still, you hold up your hands and say,  
“Am I my brother's keeper?”  
When the blood  
of unaddressed envy, projection,  
And conversion therapy  
is all over your hands.

## Fallen Angel

You used to call me an angel  
For my kindness, for my care,  
for my faith, for my prayers...

But when I applied those things  
To injustice,  
I was an angel to you no more.

But God didn't kick me out of heaven:  
Christians just kicked me out of the church,

Forcing me to leave,  
So that the death of an angel,  
The birth of a demon,  
Wasn't on their hands.

## Demon

Tarot cards  
Are scarier to you  
Than fascism,  
Than kicking your friends out,  
Than clergy abuse.

I wasn't summoning demons:  
That was you.

You chose oppression,  
Excommunicated your friends  
with judgment.

But turns out?  
Banishing me to hell  
just made me hotter.

And your heaven?  
Looks a lot like a hellish cult.

## Final Girl

I escaped  
a horror-movie childhood  
Like a final girl.

Left a cult  
Strong as hell.

## Living Dead

I've been living dead  
Full-time  
For a long time.

But post-cult, I also  
Get to be human,  
With all the emotions—  
Joy, sadness, anger, all in between.

I only haunt part-time now.  
I mostly just live in the arms  
Of my partners and friends—  
Alive and obsessed with Halloween.

Haunted and happy,  
Forever free.



# What happens When your Faith becomes a Wraith?

In this poetry collection zine, you'll find horror-tinged musings on deconversion, from cult survivor and Halloween enthusiast, Ivy Zeller. From a monster mash to a haunted forest to the religious horror of demons, there's something for every dearly deconverted human...and a haunt for every cult leader.



Ivy Zeller (she/they) is a queer and disabled writer, editor, and cult survivor born and raised in the Midwest. These days, you can find her thrifting, pole dancing, pining for Halloween, and hanging out with her partners and friends. You can find out more about their work at [Linktree.com/IvyZeller](http://Linktree.com/IvyZeller).