Christmas

Dennis Hathaway*
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Abstract

The best part of the day was about to begin. The women had finished washing the dishes from the big dinner and joined their husbands in the living room. The children, for the first time, were quiet and sitting still...
Len picked up his book and stole quietly toward the kitchen. In the hallway, he heard his Uncle George’s booming voice.

“Hell, John, you’re so goddam thick-headed I can’t see how you could have a kid that’s smart enough to go to college. ‘Course, you was in the service when he was born, wasn’t ya?”

He guffawed loudly, and Len could hear his father calling for more eggnog. He opened the book, his heart leaping at the title, “The Moonship.”

As he began to read, he heard his father’s voice.

“Say, George, did ya hear the one ’bout the nigger that was gonna rob a bank. Well, you see . . . .”

tomorrow’s dust

—lloyd quibble

An old woman, face lined with time’s scratches and slipping spectacles, plays the collar of her prim, gingham house coat, and presses closer to the dust-mellowed lace curtains.

Across the street, approaching the next house, walks a postal carrier, strapped under the weight of paper which just days ago was alive in some ink scratched emotion.

The old woman turns to her room and sees her daughter—a bride, pressed beneath a sheet of Woolworth’s glass, faded in dust along with the crumpled post-card from Morro Bay.

Finger twisting hope, returns her window world. The carrier, shuffling through mail, walks past without stopping. The old woman turns away, tomorrow’s dust has settled.