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Lost Christmas Presence

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Lost Christmas Presence

Surveying snapshots from the sixties,
I see a small wall-papered apartment
With a baby family smiling
By a cedar tree
Father whacked
For wife to shower with wisps of plastic
Chrome icicles and one strand of lights,
Bruised blue.

What made that red-haired boy so happy?

Was it the Roy Rogers lunchbox
With matching thermos, which would be dropped and shattered
The following day.

Was it the cherub-faced sibling, always standing beside
Or behind the “perfect” big brother
Who never stood up
For him?

Was it the loving gaze of the mother,
Whose arm lies
Unselfconsciously teasing
The lock of dark hair of the head
Relaxed, smiling, for once,
In her lap.

Surveying snapshots from the sixties,
I remember the laughter;
I remember the smiles, but
I have lost all those gifts.

Paul M. Bush
14 December 2002