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Merry Christmas From an ER Parking Lot

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Merry Christmas From an ER Parking Lot

Cynthia Hendrick

You sat there shaking, face in hands
as the ringing sounds of silver bells
chimed a season's greetings.
One ring for poor sweet sister.
Two rings for our silent suffering.
We suffered nerves and anxious waiting,
not to be confused with agony, grief.
In their homes, strangers ate sugared plums
while we watched the snow flurry
from within the Chevy.
Guilt was an emotion you were feeling
like ivy growing to cover you.

I'm so sorry.

It stung so sharply to hear those words,
Not because it was your fault, but
because it was how badly you felt that burnt.
I wondered if this life, even in that moment,
was what you wanted?
You must have wondered how life would be
If I weren't me and she weren't she.
It wasn't me in the ER room with four stitches under brow
or the boy at home existing in his own world, perfectly.
It was me, sitting silently next to you thinking
of words to say. You fill the void.

The snow won't last much longer.

I like the rain. It feels like isolation.

I like the rain, too.
The mystical air, the cleanliness of sorrow.
It was snowing, though,
an ethereal wonderland of pain and pure beauty.
All was well, even on that holiday
with a stitched sister, a guilt-ridden father,
and a poet feeling it all.