

Christmas Morning

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Originally published in
Voices International 29:4, 1994
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My children strip the skin from their gifts,
pull the gaudy insides into the light,
and play with them.
I sit sullen, swallow a pill or two,
and watch the pine tree,
covered with wire and glass,
die slowly.
“There is a history to all of this,”
I tell the dying tree,
the flayed gifts.
“All around us are the bones
of one god or another.”
My children ignore me;
my husband says, “Cass.”

So I tell them we need new holidays
for the global warming that is coming soon.
We can pray for the rebirth of snowflakes,
we can pretend they hang in the night sky
waiting, always waiting, and occasionally crying.
We can sit in our loincloths
around the cool fluorescent lampfire
and listen to the elders tell stories
(about ice cubes).
We can pray to the fridge.

My husband has had enough.
He approaches, takes my hand,
leads me away. I wish my dead friend
who is everywhere
a happy birthday.