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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