

Race

by V.

I came in hell from the wet and cold
 Shot to hell and exhausted
 I met a man
 A stranger
 And he is black!
 I did nothing to prompt his kindness
 He prayed for my spirit
 And took his kit
 And scraped and filed
 The dead layers of
 Calloused dead skin
 From my trashed feet
 That got that way
 From rolling the streets
 He made me cry
 My faith in
 Interracial brotherhood
 Restored
 The next day
 I marched in defiance
 Of the police
 In the name of Eric Garner
 Among many others
 We shut down the justice center
 For an hour or so
 It let me know
 I had something
 Left to give.

Christmas Expectations

by Machete

My energy was constantly up and down as a kid.
 Every year, my dad and mom put up the tree,
 And I was asked to write
 The list of all those things I was hoping for,
 And at first it was great.
 The wrapped boxes,
 Glittering with patterned paper and springy
 holographic ribbon
 Spread steadily beneath the tree,
 Piling up day by day
 The holiday lights changed each year
 Betraying nothing of the secrets
 Held beneath the darkness.
 Hopes glow like that.
 Emotions run different at Christmas time.
 I wanted the ice skates.
 I wanted the want.
 I still wanted the want,
 Then I wanted less.
 I did not get my ice skates.

Maybe I didn't want the ice skates.
 Roller skates were better,
 And ice skating in seemed winter
 Seemed like too much to ask for
 It was too... "nostalgic."
 I would have wanted them more...
 If I hadn't seen the figure skating on TV.
 Why?
 If my dad hadn't taken us to see Disney on Ice,
 live—
 Which actually was a surprise...
 Not an expectation.
 To this season, again—
 I find myself in question,
 As, I am sure, certainly,
 Most good Americans do
 Was it acceptable to expect...
 That simple, materialistic manifestation;
 Of physical items,
 From that oh so special list,
 Given to a loved one
 And perhaps even read aloud...
 Oh, I dunno.
 Just that is it not a great thing to get a present,
 Whether you expect it or not?

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