

# The First Christmas Eve at Home

*N. Andrew Spackman*

The air above my parents' roof is cold.  
It pushes smoke back down the chimney,  
forcing me to turn off the fire alarm  
and open both windows.  
My wife and I still can't breathe,  
so I hang a wet towel from the mantel  
next to the Christmas stockings  
my mom made for the family.  
On mine she needled 'baby.'  
The one she made for Kathy  
is black with soot.

Crouched beneath the smoke,  
Kathy and I drank eggnog.  
On our hands and knees,  
we lap it up like kittens.  
She hides her hands in my hair  
and sponges my face with kisses.  
"Be soft," she says  
when I bite her lip on the hide-a-bed.  
That night, in dreams, I stand before her,  
black with soot and tempting.  
She says all she wants is a pomegranate.