

Nobody's Grandpa

R. A. Christmas

He paid the three-twenty-
three and slipped the familiar
red and white box into
his jacket pocket.

He wouldn't light up
outside the convenience
store (if this was to be it
had to be special)—

so he strolled to the park,
stripped the foil from
under the flip-top and raised
the filters to his nose.

(Some things you could change—
a woman's love, the faith
of a child-but never,
never that smell.)

He knew that after the first
puff he wouldn't be quite
himself-he wouldn't be anyone's
grandpa anymore.

Cigarettes were expensive these
days-but maybe not if
you adjusted for the increase
in the cost of living.