

Putting Up the Blue Light

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As children, we liked our red-carpeted front rooms best

when the Christmas tree tossed the air with the richness
of pinyon pine,

when the rust-colored water in Mom's cinnamon and cloves
spice pot slowly mulled its own thoughts on the kitchen
stove then misted them all the way to the secrets of
the ice cream parlor in the attic,

when, if you squinted your eyes in daytime, the tree lights
shone through the boughs like a scattered rainbow,

when the blue light appeared about the time of the candles,
words and songs of Advent, wrapped its softest tones
around the tinsel threads of a thousand icicles, reached
for the Bethlehem star atop the tree in the corner of
the dining room.

We learned to take in as much of the blue light as we could,
rocking for hours, sometimes through the night,
curled up in the white leather chair that stared directly
into the deep winter shimmering there, the tree cast
in slow blue and silver.

We nurtured a child's hope that the hue of the blue light would
somehow transform us, too.

Now, at this late age, we know what it took to make the blue light shine: that someone had to figure out where it would go, get the wire, get the light, get the mount, get the circle of blue glass, get the stepladder, and, with a set of most curious tools, cobble it all together like an *Offret* gumption trap, wire it just so a little above the paint-cracked moulding that framed the sliding doors to the sitting room.

Like the majestic hundred-year pine that blew down in our front yard, the blue light will not stand or shine where there is too much show, not enough attachment to hold it firm.

Last year, our father took the blue light to Trinidad to night-flood the sun-whitened wall of an orchid garden, change the color on the east side of the Lee Poy house in the green Maracas Hills, a long way and a long time from his children in Utah.

Now it's our turn to put up the blue light wherever we are.