

Poetry Workshop I

Empty Christmas **Joe Bruner**

I stand at the edge, watching the
dark and empty house.
A puff of frosty breath materializes
in the frigid air. Snow flakes
flurry all about me, dusting my coat
in its icy velvet. One lands on my cheek
and melts, rolling down as a tear would.
I imagine a house, once festive
and brightly lit – alas no more.
Once, two boys – brothers –
stood in a pile of red and green
shreds they had amassed,
shrieking with delight.
A tree, drooping with
sparkling ornaments, wordlessly
watched over this annual ceremony.
My boot scraped against
the salt encrusted sidewalk.
Looking down, a handprint,
name, and date sunk
in cement are the only
artifacts that remain, buried
under salt and ice.
The streets are silent,
only the wind whistling
is audible. So alone...
I nestle my face into my scarf,
but the wind, with its spindly fingers
slips through the cracks,
scratching at my face and neck.
Cars are parked in others'
driveways, resting from
the numerous visits to Santa.
If I could ask for only one thing
this Christmas,
Could I have my brother back?