

## Advent

by [Diane G. Scholl](#) in the [December 2023](#) issue

Neat in my red scarf, white shirt,  
navy skirt for Assembly Day,  
I'm the only kid whose grandmother  
died last night. I'm pretty sure.  
Early December, and I mump and mime  
the words to carols with a dry,  
understated mouth, without  
conviction, with no joy, no greed  
for Santa and the rest.

The weight of something new sits  
darkly on my chest, fingers my windpipe,  
lingers where my voice should be.  
I'm a barren winter tree, leafless.

Someday I'll ride this through  
to the other side of grief,  
but now I'm waiting, tapping  
time with one foot on the floor,  
keeping my head up so no one can see.

The days grow short to Christmas;  
that baby who'll be born is me,  
sliding out of the world's rank sorrow  
like last summer's fruit, a walnut  
dropped by the roadside, windfall  
in the world's fraught landscape.

Lucky break. Everything hurts  
and promises so much—everyone  
singing, the sky's bleak gray,  
rhythm pulsing with no letup  
and nowhere to hide.

Something to hope for;  
nothing yet to say.