

I visit his grave on Christmas

by [Suzanne Underwood Rhodes](#) in the [December 2023](#) issue

and trade mums for a white poinsettia.

The earth has sunk, level now as unleavened bread  
of communion, no longer a mound,

that unnatural, risen loaf of the first raw day  
he went down, but this ground's recognizable,  
a place to plant my feet, let me live my sorrow,  
something understood, like the rise and fall  
of his body in my arms so lately gone.

But faith asks more, asks me  
to leave the known habits of love,  
senseless now and impotent:  
his boots that do not walk with me.

The recent snow has softened the earth here  
and I see tracks where a deer favored  
his grave on the way to somewhere.