

Denial

by Brenda Bishop Blakey

We're American, by God, and we know a thing or two about celebration. Thanksgiving is a national holiday and a day of the family being together. Celebration looks a lot like indulgence. But, it's all indulgence isn't it? And don't say, *I dunno*. We baste and stuff the once frozen bird, sip tea with friends, and refresh our palates with ambrosia of orange and coconut. We are happy. We tell ourselves we are.

But we are oblivious.

It creeps in, this transient notion, an epiphany born of a guilty tremble deep in the soul. Maybe we're watching *A Christmas Carol* or *The Godfather* or *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* when the bloat of our contentedness sends a cramp through our middle. Then for a few seconds, maybe even a minute or two, we wallow in a sensual shower of raw emotion. Our defenses are nonexistent and we are overwhelmed with care and gratitude. Suddenly, we love our enemies and are willing to forgive our trespassers.

But, this too will pass.

Maybe there is a family not too far away. Maybe they have only a few granules of salt and little more than a crust of bread. Most likely they are lacking in the type of gadgetry that you and I take for granted. Perhaps they are un-kept, their greasy hair mussed and tangled like their lives. The starch is gone from more than their collar, maybe. We can't fix that. We can't do anything about that.

But we are in denial.

Maybe the 'happy' and the 'thanks' should come after the giving. This is too hard. Of course we know this. Much easier to turn on Xbox or check Facebook while keeping one eye on the football score. But the survivor instinct is strong in us, in Americans. Our minds turn to getting back to work or school and regular routine and the pursuit of me, me, my, my. When asked, "Did you have a happy Thanksgiving?" We will say, "Fine, just great, and you?"

But, we know this is not true.

