

Tiny Window

by Dianne McKnight-Warren

I remember the living room heater, a gas one with a tiny window that showed a white grate inside. "Bones on fire," he said and I believed him.

He told me when kittens purred it meant they had worms.

I'd shiver through nights before I'd get near that heater and it was years before I held a kitten again.

Now he's old. He calls and asks me why I can't visit. I'm so busy, I say. I tell him I baked Christmas cookies yesterday. And I did, stained glass cookies, and I hung them in garlands across French doors to catch the light.

I want to tell him I saw a Christmas card today with a picture of a house settled in snow, smoke streaming out its chimney. The house has yellow windows and inside there's a stove that shows its fire. I want to tell him all the frail bones have burned. Gone, I want to say.

