

Christmas

by Jill Chan

First of all, there was no snow. I seem to remember that. And there was no Christmas tree in the house.

But it was still Christmas. The lights said so. The music. Family and friends. Everything said that we were born and were dying.

I am not the type to follow what other people are doing. No. I used to do that. I used to buy presents and give enough to others for the things they already owned. But something changed. It was not a huge thing. I suddenly woke up one day and felt that Christmas was just another day to live through. Did I change? No. Did people change? I doubt it. Christmas was coming and that was that. And soon, it would leave as if it were taking what we couldn't leave behind.

But who am I to say this? Of course, I was glad for the break. It was the holidays after all. But I just couldn't forget the look on his face that day. It was as if he knew it, he found out what he wanted to do that day, Christmas day.

No, he did not commit suicide. I know people always thought he would. No, he didn't lose his job. People thought he'd quit. He didn't lose me. I am still with him. He didn't have someone else. Not that I know of, anyway.

I think he realised that day that everyday was the same. No questions asked.

He is no Christian. But he is not an atheist either. He believes in all things and disbelieves them equally. He is practical, you could say. He is normal but strange. Sometimes when you talk with him, he looks at you funny, like you are there but shouldn't be.

But he is funny. Very funny. He could tell you jokes you've heard before and make you laugh harder than the first time. It is all in the way he relates them.

He said that Christmas was just another day, especially for him. Because he didn't believe in the materialism, in the way it was being made out.

"What is the reason?" he asked me. The real reason for Christmas. "It is not the gifts, not the tree, not even the star. It has been forgotten and we don't even know it."

I said to him, "Maybe it is just the way the day follows the night. How we could be forgiven for forgetting that. We are always taking things for granted."

He nodded and said, "Yeah. It is funny how people want to control everything."

I just smiled and said, "Even the world they did not create."

"And the things that require saving," he said.

