

Norm Never Says

by Mark Reep

Norm never says what he sees out the window. We like to think he respects confidences.

He was supposed to be a garden gnome. Give pause to the squirrels, keep an eye on the impatiums. We found him at Wegman's. He looked hopeful and observant.

We put him in the cart with the lunchmeat and yogurt but he slid around and I took him out and carried him. His hat was poky. He didn't seem frightened. I turned him around so he could see things. When the cashier saw us coming she laughed.

She was a tall thin talkative girl. Mornings she milked cows for two hours before she came into work at Wegman's. The gnome liked her too.

What's your name? she said.

He looked like he hadn't thought about it.

Well, you'll figure it out, she said. You want to ride in a bag?

