

Layers on a Cold Night

by Matt DeVirgiliis

The lights flickered and then cut out; the humming heater gurgled to a halt; only the laptop's backlit screen highlighted the edges of the dark room.

Henry fondled his way to the closet and grabbed blankets for his three kids - Marianne, Toby, and little Henry. Pawing his way from room to room, he covered each of them with an extra layer of warmth and kissed their foreheads.

He settled back down at the computer and scrolled through the classifieds -experienced at something; experienced for nothing.

Later that night, he laid his shivering children in his own bed, the bed that betrayed and abandoned him just a few years ago. It will protect them now.

He sat on the bed's edge and watched them breathe. He watched his own breath billow from his mouth, as the unforgiving winter wind forced its way into his home and attacked his family.

Tomorrow will be warmer, he thought. Surely it will be warmer than this.

