

Disbelief

by S.H. Gall

Built around prompt words for a Christmas story from Meg Pokrass:
path
spotty
stretch
rocking
sock
jerk
hang
stopper
stomach
scar

When I was seven there was a trauma.

Dad took the tube sock I had been painstakingly trying to pull onto my foot, and cut it to bits with scissors. He beheld an inhuman rage. I was taking too long with the task, thinking there was a route to identity perfection: ideal seam alignment.

This possibly has nothing to do with my refutation of Christmas, my disavowal of the very acknowledgment of the holiday. The sock incident occurred in August, after all. But it did break *something* in me, something which covers a number of bases, Christmas likely included.

The path I follow is one of nontheism. Even atheists have a spotty record with deism, compared with the likes of me. I have absolutely nothing to question; my faith is complete in all its self-contained, grace-imbued imperfection.

There is me and there is not me. Every morning, I pay for the lacunae of the night before. I try to stretch my muscles, but resort to slowly rocking, sunk in the couch, bringing my torso to unsteady life through the simplest movements. Forward and back. It's Christmas!

I take my vitamins with 1% milk, promptly misplace the lid to the milk bottle, and stuff a napkin in as a stopper until I buy new milk. My stomach growls in gruff recognition.

I hang up the shirt I'm wearing, draw hot water, spread shaving cream on my face. My chin is a scar three deep; I have a history of deadfalls, smack on my chin. The scar tissue is fully ossified now, and I can drag a blade over it with abandon. No more electric shavers for me!

When the hot water threatens to run out, I jerk on the showerhead hose. This works momentarily, until the whole unit just falls, spraying water all over the bathroom floor. Just another morning. Just another day.

Merry Christmas.

Seth Gall has had work published in China, Canada, and the U.S. His work has appeared in Word Riot, SmokeLong Quarterly, and Nanoism. He is S.H. Gall in decomp Magazine, Nanoism, issues one and 27 of SmokeLong Quarterly, Five Star Literary Stories, and Fictionaut.

