

Nameless by Jihan Howell

The day was cold and a sheet of fresh white snow protected the world around me. Forms of icicles hung from the leaves. The trees stood taller, but the branches hung lower than normal trying to support the weight of the snow that bestowed upon them. It was Christmas morning, and unlike any other child on this day, I wasn't happy to rush down stairs and begin ripping the mound of presents that lay underneath the fir tree. Instead, I wanted to stay in my blanket nest and wait for the day to end. I looked over to see my door ajar. The night visitor didn't close back the door, but left it open to remind me of the events that took place. I knew I had to get up and pretend my way through the day. I couldn't show any signs of abnormality. It was getting hard to fake the happiness. I knew that the end was nearing.

Sitting across the table I could see my sister itching around in her seat annoyed that mom was making us eat breakfast before the opening of presents. The smell of the sizzling bacon in the frying pan was making me nauseas. I took hard gulps of my saliva to hold down the stomach acid that was trying to creep up. My mother must have notice my discomfort because with one look she rolled her eyes and dismissed us up from the table, letting us know that we can open presents now. She took my sickness for anticipation of opening up gifts. I didn't care what she thought was wrong with me. I was just happy to get out of the room with the smells that was about to make me regurgitate all over the kitchen floor.

Five minutes into opening presents, dad walked down the stairs to find my sister in hyperventilation mode over her brand new bike. With the first sight of his red flannel

cushion slippers hitting the steps, I mustered up the biggest smile and acted like I was having the time of my life.

I can only remember one gift I received that year and it wasn't on Christmas day. The feeling of my insides screaming and my outsides smiling is the only memory I have of that morning. But the event that took place the night before remains a vivid image in my head.

A dark shadow of an immense figure hovered over me. The smell of alcohol and cigarettes was making its way inside of my mouth. Heavy panting and groaning echoed as my innocence was being slipped away. He thrust back and forth, ripping out my childhood purity. Through the pain of my elastic skin being strength past the limit of flexibility I began to drift out of my body. I was no longer apart of what was happening but a viewer watching the episode. I gazed down at my self fighting the unenviable. I didn't want to look at him. I couldn't look at him. I didn't want to see my father's face.