

1973

# A Christmas Photograph: Christmas Dinner; The Photograph

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## A CHRISTMAS PHOTOGRAPH

### *Christmas Dinner*

O one eye, father  
wearing your camera like a black patch.  
From the doorway you lunge at me—  
a mouthful of ocher, saying;  
“Cheese, cheese. Smile please.”  
Salmon cheeks, scotch man, pirate.

Tyrant of the Christmas dinner—  
I rise to the order: A young girl rises  
from the table  
with silver bones  
and your dark, wet history  
cramped in her knees.  
I smile: She smiles.  
You flicker your broken eye,  
shutter trap, death box, our pall bearer.  
You’ve done, it father, twenty one times.  
Like a scientist  
you’ve trapped me on your lens,  
mounted me and soaked me  
in years of blue fluid.  
I’ve squirmed to destroy every image.

Cheese, cheese, my Daddy  
Smile for me.  
Ice me one more year  
with your Winter kiss.  
Freeze me, frame me.  
I’m big enough now.  
Gin slivered, I’m yours, I’m yours.

*The Photograph*

Nothing changes—  
The door to your room stands slightly open:  
Through the years I can hear you  
coughing in your sleep.  
The snow breaks its crystals in a field.  
A glass child, your daughter, lives  
framed on your bureau.  
Her smile is forming its mouth  
in the dark.  
The moon lights her cheeks up;  
two white coins, then gold.  
You rise to collect them;  
your change.