

Our Christmas Carol · *Michael C. Smith*

We know the story:
How ghosts cluttered his night,
Then later,
Scrooge Community College.

You resent giving
As much as I,
But we aren't the Macbeths yet.
After all, we appreciate
The humanity
Of accidentally shopping
For ourselves.

So he sells his iron lung
To buy her a Mazda;
So she foregoes her mastectomy
To buy him a place
By her heart.
What is that to us?

What is the meaning of normal?
A man running down
Hospital halls,
Clutching yellow feathers,
Yelling Ramona, Ramona?

We know the story:
Your mother out
To a long lunch,
Your brother and father
Playing pool—forever.

It comes this way each year,
Cloaked in the mystery
Of their wants: Christmas.

In the algebra of snow,
Our dark relatives cancel
Our well-intentioned friends,
Leaving us.