

Peace on Earth and Mercy Mild

Matthew Jerome van Huizen

This Christmas...

I will no longer make dinner for her extended family,
Me, the feminist father who cooks and cleans at will,
Her family – who will bring their own containers
to remove every bit of the meal,
leaving no leftovers.

The day after Christmas,

I'd have to cook. The Thrill!

Who would do that? Chumps like me, that's who.

Over time...

I developed the habit
of cooking two full Christmas dinners.
Squirrelling one in the basement refrigerator.
Until they discovered it one year.
When I stood up and said no, they scolded me.
Again, the extra food I cooked –
Ended up in the hands of her ungrateful cretins.
Folks who didn't even say thank you
while they grab our unopened booze bottles and leave.
In **MY** house, they were like the Grinch.

Under the tree...

I'm no longer going to open presents from her.

“*From*” her but obviously meant for HER.

Once, she gave me a “*lovely big television*” – Her words not mine;

Despite the fact that I don't watch the telly.

But, but, but... The girls came round to watch

Love Island in HD.

Making out on a beach

never looked so clear in our living room,

she says.

We've never kissed in years though,

let alone under a mistletoe.

Over the doorstep...

I will no longer stand by and watch her leave

the house for the holidays.

She would simply vanish.

But then come home for dinner reeking of masculine cologne.

And the salty smell of coitus with a Devil.

I'd irritate her if I tried to predict her departure.

"No, you are not permitted to accompany me. I'm going to get something special."

And say I bought some Christmas ham from *Jaya Grocer*.

A chore that would only take 20 minutes.

But for her – several hours. Her children noticed.

They were enraged.

That Mother spends so little time at home on Christmas Day.

No more!

This Christmas...

I will be home.

No fancy dinners, lovely presents, or family round the tree.

Perhaps a pint or two with the lads on Christmas Eve.

Or I might just be alone.

Even alone there will be the glow from my blow moulds;

my pinecone elves;

the sparkle of my two five-foot trees;

Crosby's Christmas music; and

something special to eat.

And There will be a brisk morning hike through a drizzle-soaked hill.

And There will be peace.

His Fingers

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His fingers.

I stare at them when he's at his desk;

Those well-manicured digits;

Prismatic and radiant under the pale fluorescent light,

Of our dull office.

While our cubicles conceal the sight,

Of my gulping

as he traces his hands across the keyboard.

We are both married.

Unhappily.

The lustre of the fingered ring.

And that old saying:

Never dip your pen

in company ink

Serves as my injunction.

Yet it still burns...

My unbridled desire.

Of wanting those fingers inside of me.

The Lonely Life of an Associate Lawyer

Matthew Jerome van Huizen

Oh' poor Associate Raj,
Meeting this morning, his boss, a client, the Judge,
The unholy trinity, furious those three,
So much scolding, endures he.

God, where is the Agreement draft?
With skill and acumen, he crafts,
If he does not hand it in by ten,
You will know *shit* hits the fan.

By lunch, into a Hot Cup he dives.
Scant nourishment for half-dead lives,
But submissions must be in by three,
To avoid a rollicking, it must be.

At six, the staff clocks out,
Some back home, some to Guinness Stout,
While Raj bangs out a demand letter,
Associates going home early. You'd know better.

Unlocking the apartment door,
It is Nine now, just like days before,
Alone, to his Netflix and snacks,
Little rest after a day on the racks.

Goodnight Raj. Until boss calls after Ten!