

[Home](#)

[Autumn 2006](#)

[Summer 2006](#)

[Spring 2006](#)

[Winter 2006](#)

[Fall 2005](#)

[Summer 2005](#)

[Spring 2005](#)

[Winter 2005](#)

[Editor's Note](#)

[Guidelines](#)

[SNR's Writers](#)

[Mail](#)

THREE POEMS

BY LUCAS CHRISTIAN STACK

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July 4th, 1935 A Photograph

Look, my father says,
pressing his index finger
into the shadowed alley
between the mercantile
and the post office.
A couple has hidden
there, beneath his print.

With all other eyes
on the grand marshal,
gallant atop a sleek Lincoln,
theirs are closed, their lips
hard fastened and their hands
searching the folds of
one another's clothing.
They weren't married, he says,
not to one another.

I am just old enough
to tingle at what is forbidden.

Funeral Pie

Methodists pressed this flaky shell
from flour and snow cap lard.

Poured hot into the crust,
the coconut cream has congealed
while they were away,
lowering a body.

Wisps of meringue float
over it like clouds.

Sweet end to this somber day.

Grandfather

Your Buick, brown as tilled ground,
crawling up the drive. A flannel seed cap
high on your head, a pie riding beside you,
our Sunday dinner guest.

Your Wurlitzer forced to recall the hymns
of your childhood, not a single note lost
under the command of crooked fingers
as the coffee cools and we close our eyes.

Your breath, bitter in its eighties,
as you lean over me in the pew
on Christmas Eve, warm with family,
singing, "Stille nacht, heilige nacht."

Now, your cracked lips, like baby birds
squirm in the grey nest of your beard.
This last glance I'm determined to steal
as mother and I watch from the door:

You rocking yourself towards death,
cooing like a child, whimpering, yes,
when all the while, you mean to say,
Turn away, turn away, this is not who I am.

Lucas Christian Stock lives outside of Murdock, Nebraska, and is currently pursuing his MA at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. When not writing fiction or poetry, he enjoys writing songs for his rock and roll band, *Slick Fiction*. His fiction has been anthologized in *Rural Voices: Literature from Rural Nebraska*. This is his first poetry publication.

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