

Christmas Wrap

written by

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OVER BLACK.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I'm not supposed to have thoughts,
but somehow I do.

Christmas music drifts into the void.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My consciousness is a mystery. One
day I was nothing, the next I had
total awareness.

Sleigh bells jingle in the background.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At random I could quote French poet
and essayist Charles Baudelaire,
even though I've never studied him
or read his work.

A gust of winter wind from outside a window.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Baudelaire once wrote, "Remembering
is only a new form of suffering."

A sigh.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I didn't have to attend San Jose
State to know that, lucky for me.

The darkness fades and is replaced with a closeup view of
Christmas wrapping paper, a deep red variety with white
snowflakes, all of them the same.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Who am I? What am I? I'm hesitant
to tell you, but here it goes.

A deep breath.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I am, for lack of better words, a
sheet of Christmas wrapping paper.
I was purchased in a two-for-the-
price-of-one special at a CVS
drugstore in Harwood Heights,
Illinois in late November.

The wrapping paper comes into sharper focus.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This is me. Bright. Repetitious.
Fabricated from cheap fibers and
totally un-recyclable. Behold my
woeful existence.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brandishing scissors is DEBBIE LUSTER (30s), a frazzled
mother on a late-night giftwrapping binge.

She spreads the snowflake wrapping paper over her bed and
cuts it--unleashing searing pain upon the paper.

The snowflake wrapping paper screams in bloody-murder agony.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Hurts! Hurts! Hurts so much! Stop!

Debbie assesses her work, resumes. She can't hear the cries.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You soulless hack-bitch! You've
mutilated me!

A pained wail.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Lacerated! Gashed! Detached from
the whole! Fuck you! Fuck your
children!

Debbie plops a toy ray gun on top of the wrapping paper and
folds it around the gift, causing more agony.

Crack! Pop! Each fold Debbie makes is accompanied by the
sound of crunching, popping bones. Who knew that a sheet of
wrapping paper had such an intricate skeleton?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Help! Pain! Shattered! Crushed!

Debbie tapes the gift's edges.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You've broken me, devil-hag. I'm
pulverized to the core.

Weary Debbie softly hums a Christmas tune. Only a dozen more
gifts for her to wrap.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Wrapped in the snowflake paper, the ray gun sits amid dozens of other gifts under a bright Christmas tree.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Woe! Misery! I'm a skinned carcass,
doomed to live out my days as the
epidermis to this cosmic,
cacophonous toy.

A sigh.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Baudelaire understood this pain of
mine: "I am a cemetery by the moon
unblessed."

The ray gun randomly flashes and blares: phoooooo! phooooo!

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Keep it down! Keep it down!

Footsteps. Rushing to the gift pile is WENDELL LUSTER, 7,
fully-charged with the excitement of Christmas morning.

He clutches the wrapped ray gun and shreds it open.

Each rip elicits howls of pain from the wrapping paper.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Arrrrrg! My pancreas, ruptured! My
spleen, lacerated! My soul, utterly
smashed!

Wendell flings the wrapping paper everywhere--a human weed
wacker.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Shredded! Bloody! Nearly-dead!

Wendell tears into the next gift like a chainsaw.

LATER

A tattered piece of the snowflake wrapping paper remains
under the tree.

This lone scrap has escaped cleanup and the trashcan.

A Christmas party is underway. Debbie's husband LEN LUSTER
(40s) whoops it up by the tree with UNCLE KEVIN (40s). Both
men are drunk on Maker's Mark bourbon.

The oafish uncle spills his drink, raining bourbon upon the tattered scrap of snowflake wrapping paper.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Firewater! Drowning! Soaked!

Soon the wrapping paper is drunk as a skunk--just like Kevin.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Hic! Hiccup!

Uncle Kevin nearly knocks over the Christmas tree before he sways to the dinner table for holiday turkey. Len follows.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Sweet magical cocktail! Heavenly elixir! I welcome this numbness!

Uncontrollable, silly laughter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"Be always drunken," Baudelaire wrote. "Nothing else matters."

LATER

Christmas day has turned into Christmas night. The clock on the wall registers at 10:30 p.m.

Len is passed out on the couch, snoring.

Uncle Kevin scandalously makes out with Debbie next to the Christmas tree.

They fall to the floor in passion. Uncle Kevin hikes up Debbie's skirt.

Her buttocks lands squarely on the snowflake scrap.

Trapped between the floor and Debbie's writhing ass, the wrapping paper cries out.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
No! No! No!

Debbie shouts in passion.

DEBBIE
Yes! Yes! Yes!

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Foul carnal debauchery!

Len wakes up, shocked by what he sees.

He bounds off the couch, snags Uncle Kevin by the collar, socks him in the nose.

Debbie screams and scrambles to her feet.

The wrapping paper scrap sticks to her sweaty butt cheek.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Peel me off! Free me!

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

The bickering trio stumbles out the front door, with Len and Uncle Kevin trading punches.

A breeze mercifully frees the snowflake wrapping paper from Debbie's skin. The scrap flutters down.

Battered Uncle Kevin spits blood directly onto it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Gross! Blood! Gore! Hell!

The wind kicks up and lifts the scrap up and away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Liberation! Freedom!

High into the air it goes. Christmas lights twinkle below.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
"I have felt the wind on the wing
of madness." That's another thing
Baudelaire wrote.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The breeze dies down and the scrap drifts to a slushy road, where it is promptly stepped on by a scruffy, down-on-his-luck DRIFTER (60s).

The scrap sticks to the drifter's grimy boot heel and gets dragged along with each step he takes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Is this how it ends? To be trampled
by this pathetic wretch? Then so be
it. You and I travel the same road
of lonely misery, my sad friend.

It only takes a few steps for the wrapping paper to come loose. It soars on another night breeze.

The scrap blows past beautifully decorated homes.

NARRATOR

Such warmth and beauty, but so much
waste and conflict. So much pain.

Eventually, the scrap flutters its way to Lake Michigan and
comes down on the lake's dark, smooth surface. It's not long
before the scrap starts to sink into the cold, inky water.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I find myself in this dark, wet
abyss. I welcome it.

Down, down it goes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

My apologies if my story didn't
fill you with Christmas cheer. It
would have been better for you if I
were a holiday pixie or a
mischievous elf or a magical
ornament. Any other story would
have been preferable my tale of
Christmas woe.

Dark. Freezing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sometimes you're just a ruffled
shred of wrapping paper sinking to
the bottom of a lake, and you don't
get to be the treasured gift.

It's almost too dark now to see.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Maybe we'll see each other again
one day. Perhaps I'll clog your
pipes or get eaten by a fish that
you'll be served at a restaurant.

Down to the bottom.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I'm all out of Baudelaire quotes,
so find one for yourself. May your
Christmas be merrier than mine.

FADE OUT: