

# Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

---

Volume 5 | Issue 2

Article 32

---

January 2006

## A Storm at Dusk

Amy Spade

Follow this and additional works at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate>

---

### Recommended Citation

Spade, Amy (2006) "A Storm at Dusk," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*. Vol. 5: Iss. 2, Article 32.  
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol5/iss2/32>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact [ORB@binghamton.edu](mailto:ORB@binghamton.edu).

## A STORM AT DUSK

Amy Spade

On Christmas afternoon, we all—adults  
and kids alike—wanted to sled the curvy  
cross-country ski trail near my father's house.  
This was guaranteed fun—we'd never gone  
home disappointed. We would laugh so hard  
we'd forget about the hot chocolate, cold toes.

Someone always ran straight into a tree;  
a few always flew down the hill sideways.  
This day was no different, but we'd gotten  
a late start, had to head home when dusk  
came on. Jimmy wanted us to stay till dark,  
with a thirteen-year-old "double dare you."

We didn't dare. Snow was starting to come  
down in heavy flakes, and besides, plenty  
of activities lured us back. We gathered  
the plastic sleds and climbed into Dad's truck,  
all speaking at once, the Suburban's headlights  
shining against a sea of swirling white.

We'd left behind the worn wooden sleigh  
and Jimmy left Dad's new gloves on the trail.  
Dad yelled, "Well, get out and search for them,  
then walk home!" Jimmy jumped out, slammed  
the door, disappeared on the trail leading  
into the woods. We were all quiet.

Dad swore at his lack of sight as the road  
became blurred with furious flakes. Air blared  
hot from vents at our mittens packed frozen  
and dense with icy snow; sweat clung under

steamy layers; cheeks and lips were red,  
chapped dry; the Beatles sang "A Hard Day's Night."

The wind worsened, but Dad wouldn't turn  
back for Jimmy. We begged him to stop,  
but he did only when Emily's boyfriend  
gallantly volunteered to search, cheerier  
than all of us, wandering into the wild  
for a family still like a quaint dream.

Dad finally turned into the lurid sky  
and we were in the driveway. In the house,  
ten minutes, then half an hour went by—  
the trail was just half a mile away,  
but there was no sign of Jimmy or Larry  
as we posted ourselves at windows,

straining for a glimpse of them trudging  
blindly. We thought we saw their fleeting  
figures, "They're in the front yard!" No—trees.  
My stepmother was crying, yelling, saying  
"Your son is lost and it's all your fault!"  
I thought about which subtle differences

made Jimmy "your son," "my son" or "our son,"  
how anything that went irretrievably  
wrong allowed everyone to blame my father,  
me included. Dad said, "They'll show up,  
they'll show up soon," and with a blank stare  
sat in his favorite chair. Not one of us

was willing to move from the fogged glass:  
I saw my brother silent under a pine,  
needles lashing his face, his scarf like a red  
banner, Larry stumbling ten feet away.  
With patience, the snow slowed, shapes emerged  
throwing balls in the street, merry and strange.