

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Christmas 1995

By Michael Ansara

For Emma

The ornaments come out,
each with a story as well-worn
as the old newspapers unfolded
to reveal their garish colors,

each is a memory as much family myth
as the marks on your skin—
the scar from the fall
on the padded daycare play steps,

or the cut knee from a mystery tumble
on nothing but clean park grass,
or the time you thrust your tiny hand
into the pond and drew out bloody fingers.

Each faint line becomes an ornament of childhood.
I watch you and your sister unwrap

The pig that has lost its hat.
The clay fish without a hook.
The silly southern parrot.

I'm looking for something you might hang on to,
wrap into the news of the coming years
that will let you know how much I have loved you
before all you have is another set of stories

when the hatless pig is brought out into the light,
the clay fish is allowed to leap in the air,
the silly southern parrot perches on a new tree,
and memories of me sift like snow in the night.