

Finalist, Poetry

Gifts

By Thomas Cannon

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Nick

Has CP and walks with a limp;
struggles with concepts in
classes for the cognitively disabled;
Says he has trouble seeing the board with
“My one good eye.”

His classmate has CP, too. She walks
with the same limp and has a spastic arm
I remember trying to help her build
a gingerbread house, trying to get her
arm to do what she wants. Personally,
I loved her house when she finished,
but then she had to compare it to others’.

I see that man who gets off the bus
and walks with a limp so profound
I think he will fall over.
sometimes he does. You see him too.
Maybe working at Walmart
and if you think about it
maybe you think they are unlucky.
But they love their chance
to build a crooked gingerbread house.

My son has autism.
the favor, the necessary
function Nick performs
is to make it very damn
hard to complain.
Of course I asked “Why me?”
Then I realized he is not
a child with autism, he is
an autistic child,
it does define him
it will not confine him
I will not look past it,
because to not
see his disability,
is to not see the whole child.
the blessing, the gift.
you can’t look at less than that. You
can only be
thankful.