?The H Street Sledding Record? By Ron Carlson Essay, Research Paper

Room For One More

Family rituals at Christmastime is significant to “The H Street Sledding Record” by Ron Carlson. A husband tells the story of his wife Drew, and their daughter Elise and rituals that keep the family together. He finds personal significant in a sledding record, throwing horse manure on the roof, and buying a Christmas trees.

The strangest family ritual involves getting horse manure from a friend and throwing it on the roof for Elise. He does this not only for his daughter but also for himself, as a reminder of what it is like to be a child around Christmas. The excitement of believing in Santa Claus. Drew takes this time to call his mother and talk in amusement of the horse turds being heaved onto the roof. He takes “their responses to my ritual as a kind of fond, subtle support”. Even though they laugh at him, they know he has the best intentions of making his child believe that Santa Claus and his reindeer really do exist. Even though Drew would prefer half-eaten cookies and milk as evidence he makes up excuses to not go with such an idea. He then blames it on the fact that he does not like desserts, so therefore the manure will remain until his arms give out.

There is and added complication in that he would like to have another child to throw the reindeer droppings on the roof for. Even though he wants this more than anything, he is reluctant to approach his wife. He fears that she may not share his desire and that would just be too painful to accept. He would prefer to have a boy and vividly anticipates this imaginary child finding the evidence on the roof on Christmas morning.

Christmas is coming and he vows to bring it up some how. When he does, the family is about to set off for another record at the top of Eleventh Avenue. He says that there is room for one more on the Flexible Flyer. When Elise asks for who,” ’ Drew answers your little brother.’” This single sentence is what he wants to hear more than anything, he knows now that his wife wants another child as well.

The first Friday of December is when they set out too find the tree. This to is another of their many Christmastime rituals. They wander around looking “for some lopsided pinon to leap into their heart.” They chose to not pick the best looking tree, but one that enables them to be creative. Along the way to buy the tree they see that a young punk couple are negotiating for a noble tree of twelve feet. He sees “a public display of emotion and longing of this magnitude Salt Lake City” that he has never seen before. The young name, Jimmy, is trying to get the tree seller to give him a deal, but he is unwilling. Then Jimmy gives the man most of the money and his watch. Knowing that the lady want the tree he gives some money to Elise to give to Jimmy so that she will be able to have the tree that she so desperately wants. When they get the tree back to their house Drew and Elise decorate it with artifacts of past Christmases together as a family.

He has another ritual, which is treading popcorn on a long thread while he watches his women light up with enthusiasm as the holiday approaches. He sees this once a year, and when he does, it makes him feel wonderful.

Every Christmas Eve this family attempts to break the record set back in 1969. They make their way up to Eleventh Avenue, and then make their way down on the sled. Some years they have faced obstacles like no snow, cars, and laughter that makes them wobble to a crash. This event has become more than just a ritual, it has brought them closer together and keeps them looking forward to the years that will follow.

Every year on the day after Halloween they get out the sled and make minor adjustments to get it ready for the big day. Over the years they have added a brake made of a sawed off baseball bat, they installed the brake while Drew was pregnant with Elise. They climb their way up to Eleventh Avenue stare down the avenue and prepare for yet another record. Elise gives advice on how to make it successful year, by leaning from there past experiences. All their excitement grows as they get ready to set off.

With the sled as old as the marriage and a brake as old as their daughter their ritual is now a strong bond which they hold dearly to their hearts. This family ritual is strong and makes them look forward to each Christmas together as a family. Knowing that they will always be there to carry on the tradition that they have installed in themselves.

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