*Winters at the lake held their own charm. Except for the path the landlord’s tractor made for us from the road to our house, snow mounds covered the yard. Probably because I was older, Christmases took on a different dimension here as well.*

**YES, VIRGINIA**

Navy blue, crystally winter’s night.

Glittering sifted snow, icing topped lake,

evergreens muffed in white. I plodded

as Becky pulled me down the glossy road.

A bundle of blue, she sometimes followed,

sometimes led, sometimes jumped over my feet

as she chattered about baby dolls, Santa’s snack—

star-shaped cookies, his tummy and our chimney.

Late autumn’s whispered secret unmasked the man.

A grown up woman of ten, I played my part

for my younger sister that Christmas Eve,

although I no longer believed.

Carolers sang, “. . .won’t you guide my sleigh tonight?”

I grumbled, “It’s time to go home.”

As I turned, my eye caught a wink of light

dashing across the blue-black sky.

Becky and I tumbled through pockets of snow.

The yard glowed—lit house and trees.

I blinked.

Who hunched in the shadows?

Mom, traditionally dressed in pink flannel gown,

pulled off our coats and pushed us into the living room.

Becky ran to a diapered doll and teddy bear.

I gazed at a white-veiled Barbie,

Betty Crocker bake set, white fur-topped boots.

On the floor lay the emptry green 7UP bottle

and a plate of cookie crumbs.

I ran to the window. Cupped my hands around my eyes.

No reindeer, no sleigh

And on that navy blue, crystally winter’s night,

I decided to believe for one more year.