

Christmas Solos (2012)

Houston Hodges, for Writer's Corner on WLRH, Huntsville, AL USA

We'll be here for Christmas, just the two of us. My! "...the two of us:" hooray, and yes! We're not through talking to each other yet, we'll make it fine, thank you, and Christmas will come on schedule. But there are all those others who'll be doing it solo.

My beloved father went back home on the train, two days after he spent Christmas with us in Dallas, in 1967. When he got back he made the trek up Phelps Avenue in Littlefield, Texas, regaling everyone about his very first Dallas Cowboy game, on Christmas Eve. That night came the heart attack that made the game also his last. His grandson John, who was nine, still remembers the score: Dallas 52, Cleveland Browns 14.

For a year or so that made the 28th of December a day of sadness, but then it started changing... a little at a time... like the dawn of Christmas morning, like the tidings of great joy. Christmas started to shine with a new kind of glitter.

For my mom, however, it was the start of a really long string of Christmas solos. She waited thirty-one years, smiling at her grandkids, until the time when she and my dad were together again.

So I think of those who do Christmas on their own: perhaps they do the job so their colleagues can be home; maybe they're on duty at the airport or in the ER, or maybe they get their turkey dinner in Afghanistan or on the line in South Korea. Or maybe they're like my mother. I hope somehow those people who do it alone can see the light of the solitary Christmas star, shining in the darkness.