

Christmas Eve, 1943, Marinette Wisconsin



December 23, 2015

This photo was taken, probably by my Dad, in 1946. Dr. Redeman, a family friend, was Santa. He visited the homes of parents with children on Christmas Eve in our small town. Three of us four children sit in little chairs, adults behind us, waiting for Santa's silver chimes outside our front door. Midge, the baby, sits on Mom's lap on the left. Santa came in and took his black book out of its pouch. He read to us from the gospel of Luke and talked with us about the coming of Jesus into the world. The photo captures our stillness. our attention fixed on this mysterious

person. How did Dr. Redemon move us to stillness? Perhaps by the depth of his voice, and its cadence; perhaps by the way he moved, a solemn dancer, with no sign of hurry as he and his Eskimo partner took presents out of large cloth bags, read our names, and placed each one under the tree.

While Sr. Renee Kettering, RSM photo-shopped the picture's age marks last week (thank you Renee!) whoever took the picture captured my attention. The lighting takes me first to Santa's face and beard and to his hand raised in a good-bye blessing; his poise, mid gesture, makes the entire photo hold its breath. The children show us how focused we felt that night, absorbed with wonder. Dr. R taught us that sacred mystery is story telling with no hint of hurrying. All my life since, the pace of my life helps me recognize when I have found the grace to pay attention and not to interrupt.

All of us are better when our life's pace makes us as still as the children in this 1946 photo. Writing about a moment from childhood makes me grateful for the "Work Day/Hard Times" poetry list. When I write, imagining all of you who read fills me with gratitude and wonder.

love

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