

Flash Fiction

Bulgarian Christmas

by Stefan Sofiski

You wake up. Stomach rumbling. Why didn't they give you slop last night?

You go out. Frost. Your trotters break the thin ice and sink into the soft ground. Your breath steams in front of your snout. You root in the mud.

Where is your bowl? Unease grips your stomach. You look up. There's the boy! The boy always brings slop. You grunt and trot toward him.

His face is different. He turns and runs away... No slop. You are confused. You look around the yard, the buildings.

Scuffling on the dirt path. You see the father, more men following him.

They open the gate, timber creaking. The father bends down. A bowl of slop in his hands! You can smell it.

You scurry toward him through the gate. He backs away...

Where is the slop? Your heart races. You find yourself in a small yard. High timber fence. You squeal and try to turn. The space is too tight. Why did they lead you here?

A crushing pain in your back. They grab your legs and stretch them out. You fight. You scream and try to roll. But you're pinned down, your belly pressed against the ground.

What is happening? You scream and twist. Feet move around you. Shouting and clamor.

The father crouches over you and puts his hand under your snout. He forces your head high, stretching your neck.

You see the boy! He has climbed the fence and watches you.

A gentle poke on your neck. Then sharp pain. Something cold plunges into your throat. You fight hard. Warmth runs down your neck. You try to scream but only gurgle. The world is blurry. You can't breathe.

Your gaze meets the boy's. Water tracks down his rosy cheeks.

You stop fighting. Your body sinks in the mud.

Appeared in Issue Spring '25

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