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PHILIP S. BRYANT

### The Funeral Train

She is dressed  
in her Sunday  
best-even  
though it's  
Wednesday.  
Traffic stops  
as a long line  
of cars snake  
slowly through  
the quiet streets  
at exactly twelve o'clock  
noon.  
Black pearls  
strung around  
her neck  
barely move.

PHILIP S. BRYANT

### At the Crime Scene

Suddenly there was a  
red and blue light  
flashing  
right outside our window  
hard gritty snow began to accumulate on  
the front windshields  
already two suspects  
sat quietly in the back seat-  
of a squad car  
a muffled crackling  
sound of  
a two-way radio  
a woman in just a housecoat  
and slippers standing  
on the front lawn  
head bent, down as if in prayer  
face buried  
in her hands?  
A crowd gathers  
on the corner  
even though it's  
late at night,  
bitter cold and snowy.  
Finally, a policeman  
walks out of the  
front door triumphant, holding  
something high in  
the air with just two  
fingers-it's too dark to see what it is-  
waving it slowly back and forth  
like a smoking incense holder  
at six o'clock mass.

PHILIP S. BRYANT

**Ghost Story for Carolyn**

My friend  
tells a story  
of going to visit  
her uncle  
who had “crossed over”  
and was passing for  
white in the dead  
of night. They came  
so his neighbors  
wouldn’t know  
the family secret.  
I imagine them  
creeping out  
of his back door  
late as the clock struck  
like real ghosts,  
visible for just an instant  
under the yellow porch light  
before passing  
into that cold  
white-mist night.

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