

Sock

by Jay McKenzie

It's circling Sylvania Families in the Argos catalogue and rewinding The Snowman to watch it for the third time today and digging in the tin for the Toffee Pennies and Shakin Stevens in the snow and Trev and Simon swinging their pants and tinsel scarf-itches and cards piling up on the mat and the breathless anticipation of what's in dad's biggest sock except nothing's in dad's sock not even dad anymore and mum hasn't got out of bed for two days and so it's a desperate prayer to Santa that you scribble then burn then start again.

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Author bio: Jay McKenzie's work appears in *adda*, Maudlin House, The Hooghly Review, Fahmidan Journal, Fictive Dream and others. She has been recognised in the Exeter Story Prize, Henshaw, Quiet Man Dave, Edinburgh Short Story Award, Oxford Flash Fiction Prize, Exeter Novel Prize, Alpine Fellowship, Bath Short Story Award, Bath Flash Fiction Award, Aesthetica, Bridport Prize, Commonwealth Short Story Prize, and was recently awarded first prize in the 2025 Fish Short Story Prize and runner up in the inaugural Tom Grass Prize. Her novel, *How to Lose the Lottery*, will be published with Harper Fiction in March 2026. You can find her at jaymckenzieauthor.com or on Instagram as [jay_writes_books](https://www.instagram.com/jay_writes_books).