



On Earth As It Is

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The Santa Who Laughs

Chantel Tattoli

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on earth as it is

prayer as story, story as prayer

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The Santa Who Laughs

Chantel Tattoli

There are faces of toast bearing your visage on Ebay. MARY IS MY HOMEGIRL tee shirts. A flash drive *in your image Mary* marketed for its capacity to keep 512 MB of data en womb: “Oh Maria, keep my data safe” engraved on your halo and your LED heart red-blinking while data transfers over. But you are too much a saint to mind it. Or maybe you’ve learned to take cruel jokes. That?

People say, *Holy Mother of God! Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!* And I wonder, do your crisp blue Byzantine folds bunch up even more?

A friend in China walked into a store and saw Santa Claus dead on the cross, his paunch round on the T-shape. Clearly a misunderstanding, but how funny. Are you laughing?

You know I played alongside you once. I was cast as “The Servant.” A 5th grader who already had boobs got to be you. She made us say *Hail Mary* until finally, enough-enough, another kid took her cardboard halo and frisbeed it across the stage. When it hit the manger, all the caked-on glitter flew off, and how it shifted in the lights on the way down like eensy, strobing stars of Bethlehem, that was holy. I don’t know if you saw that, but if you did, Mary, I hope to God you laughed out loud.

Chantel is twenty-two, Florida born and raised. Her work has appeared or will at Redivider, Prism Review, PANK, Rosebud, Dark Sky Magazine, Saw Palm, and elsewhere. She is going for the writing MFA this January at SCAD.

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