

FROM “SANTA’S HELPER”

TOM, around 50, shares a story about his life as a paramedic.

TOM

(Beat)

Mr. Misty. You should have seen me on the runs. Sometimes the family members would arrive at the hospital and the patient would already be dead. They’d be grieving. I’d go over and say a kind word. “He was in no pain.” Shit like that. Then they changed all that. You know. There are so many lawsuits against us. ...We’re trying to save fucking lives here. The word came from on top. Don’t say a word. But one time I had this run. A dawner.

(Beat)

I hate dawn. ...Sunday. ...West Side. ...Middle of the block. A well dressed black gentleman. Sitting on the curb. Large man. Very polite. Very. ...Considerate. He had a bullet in his stomach. You could smell the cologne. He had gone out on a Saturday night. Like we all do. ...So polite. Like he was bothering us. His daughter came in as we were filling out the report. She came in and thanked me. ...Rosemary. ...There was this pause. Where you don’t know what to say. Should you go on with the big subject or should you return to the small stuff. The essential stuff. “What do you do for a living, Rosemary?” I said it as if there was a piece in a puzzle I needed filled. “I work at Fields.” Then I took a shot. “Yeah. He was talking about you in the ambulance. How much you enjoyed your work. Meeting people.” I didn’t lay it on thick, you know. Just one quiet spread of the knife. Her face brightened and burst into. What? Tears of joyous sorrow?

(Beat)

I had done a good deed that morning, Mo.

(Beat)

But I can’t fool you with no angel shit, can I?