

The Tree Contemplates the Lighting Ceremony
Ian LeTourneau, Cultural Laureate, December 2016

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When
the snow
falls on the city,
it falls on me too,
an orchestrated dusting

that hushes the hustle
of downtown streets. It reminds
me of the tree farm, the quiet traffic

of wildlife, the night sky a million
points of light. Now children gather
underneath my lower boughs in frenetic

anticipation. Their bottled-up holiday
energy enough to power a city block. Tonight
I announce the season of woodsmoke and hot chocolate.

Of skating sessions in Officers' Square. Of time off
from school and work. Of eating sweets. The season when
snowmen become philosophers, pulling on their pipes,

flakes of falling snow collecting on their cool, globed heads,
building toward the idea of peace. My brothers and sisters
across the city are the guardians of gifts that will soon drop overnight,

in the hours
that tiptoe past
midnight. But
now it's time
for my mic drop:
the countdown
begins and I'm
plugged in,

and Phoenix square glows with a million connections.