

MORNING STORIES TRANSCRIPT

The Ham: In this short story, Boston writer Pamela Painter takes us on a lonesome journey – lonesome, but never alone. *The Ham* is read by Will LeBow.

Gary Mott:

Hey, everybody, it's Gary Mott here with this week's Morning Story from WGBH radio Boston, a proud and honored member of the pod squad. The producer and director of *Morning Stories*, Tony Kahn, is off duty again this week, and it's a week where we're going to take a bit of a departure from what we normally do on *Morning Stories*. We'd like to present a short piece of fiction written by a wonderful local writer here in the Boston area. Her name is Pam Painter and here's the set-up. The holidays are here. It's Christmas Eve. It's nearing the end of the year, and oftentimes a lot of us kind of look back on the last year and think about some changes we'd like to make in the new. A more satisfying relationship, or maybe it's time to lose that dead end job, or get a bigger apartment. But often we need to be kicked really hard to get us over the hump and get us to make some of those changes.

In this week's Morning Story, it's the guy who gets the boot. The voice belongs to Will LeBow and the short story is called *The Ham*.

Will LeBow:

It's late Christmas eve at Spinelli's when Dominic presents us, the wait staff, with his dumb idea of a bonus: Italian hams in casings so tight they shimmer like Gilda's gold lamé stockings.

At home, Gilda is waiting up for me with a surprise of her own. My stuff from the last three months is sitting on the stoop. Arms crossed, scarlet nails tapping the satin sleeves of her robe, she says she's heard about Fiona. I balance the ham on my hip and pack my things – CDs, weights, a vintage Polaroid – into garbage bags she has provided free of charge. Then, I let it all drop and offer up the ham in both hands, cradling it as if it might have been our child.

She doesn't want any explanations, or the ham.

Under Gilda's unforgiving eye, I sling my garbage bags into the trunk of the car [sound of car starting and driving off].

All Christmas day I drive with the radio off, except when I call Gilda from a phone booth by the side of the road. [sound of thunder] Bing Crosby and me singing "White Christmas" means nothing to her. So I head west, the ham glistening beside me in the passenger seat. Somewhere in Indiana, I strap it into a seatbelt.

I stop to call again, but Gilda hangs up every time. After the next state, I send her

pictures of my trip instead. The ham under the silver arch of St. Louis, the ham at the Grand Canyon, the ham in Las Vegas.

[Sounds of waves on the beach] I'm taking a picture of the ham in the Pacific when a big wave washes it out to sea. I send the picture anyway. The ham in the Pacific undertow. In this picture you can't tell which of us is missing.

[Wave sounds]

Gary Mott:

That's Will LeBow telling us of his relationship with the ham. *The Ham* is a short story written by a Boston Area writer, Pam Painter.

We got some good press in the last week, this podcasting phenomenon. Last Monday's *Boston Globe*, that would be ... um ... yeah, here it is. That would be the December 20th edition of the *Globe*. Great article about podcasting, about how it's caught fire among people like us in the know. Makes mention of Adam Curry, of course, and Dave Winer. Also mentions Don and Drew and WGBH's *Morning Stories*, so it's, you know, it's cool. It's written by Peter Howe. Check it out on line. It's gonna be huge, if it's not already. Don't we know it.

Morning Stories is a production of WGBH Radio Boston and we podcast to you each and every Friday. Check out our web site at <wgbh.org/morningstories> (morningstories all one word) and from all of your homies here at WBGH, wishing you the happiest of holidays. Have a, have a great Christmas. Pull your loved ones close. Give 'em a squeeze for us. You'll hear from us next week, New Year's Eve on the *Morning Stories* podcast.

Bye now.

[End of recording]

Transcribed by: Bev Sykes