

Secret Santa

for Chris Greenfield-Pastro

At Fred Meyer's on Sunday,
I inspected the sickly cacti
and chose the least damaged one

for you. It is tiny
(snatched from Mexico? Arizona? some other hot place?)
and I've planted it, this porcupine football,

in a new small pot
in the wrong soil, probably. At least
the pot isn't plastic. Neither is it coated

in paint. I want the orange pot
and the cactus to *breathe*—
and all the white prickles.

A bright red ribbon,
hugging tightly the smooth clay vessel,
has been tied into a bow.

You will also find
a small card, typed
to keep you from recognizing

my handwriting ☺.
I had planned to slip
this frangible, green life

through the ice fog
and into your mailbox
at school this morning, but

Oh, no! It wouldn't fit.

Quickly I unfurled
another red ribbon
(extra long) and taped one end

to your mail slot
and the other
to the brown paper bag.

I hope you don't pricker yourself.