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by Nicole Hardy

Sure, I'm glad you're back
but how hard is it to come home

when the money's gone?
I'll raise my glass to your brother

instead, to knowing what it's like
playing every rule, waiting

days tasting shades of vanilla
for the promised Christmas bonus

always good always home instead
of upstairs with whoever's asking

fence-sitting on a fall somewhere
in the gray between always good

always home, the words say themselves
in the same night-prayer for who

knows how long how many years
just in case He's still listening:

Dear God, please. Please.

