

Iris Dement

"The Night I Learned How Not To Pray"

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I was laying on my belly on the middle of the living
room floor
I was watching Howdy Doody so I guess it
was right around four
When I saw my baby brother tumblin' from the top
of the stairs
He was lying limp and silent and the blood was
tricklin' through his shiny hair
When my mom saw little brother, she said "Hon,
you'd better run and get your dad.
Her voice was high and she was shaking so I knew that
this was bad
We stood out by the mailbox watchin' her and dad
and brother drive away
And I didn't waste no time, I got down on my knees
right there, and I began to pray
I prayed into the evening never even took the time to
have a bite
I was sure if I prayed hard enough that God would
make it right
We were at the kitchen table long past bedtime when
we finally got that call
And I knew that it was over when my sister slammed
that phone against the wall
That was the night I learned how not to pray Cause God
does what he wants to anyway
I never did tell my mother and I kept it from my sisters
and all my brothers
But that was the night I learned how not to pray
It was forty-one years later when I took my
brother's picture out of a box
I hung it on the wall, sat across from him and I began to
talk
When the evening started, I didn't know what I was
going say
But before the night was over I'd told him all about
how I'd learned not to pray

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