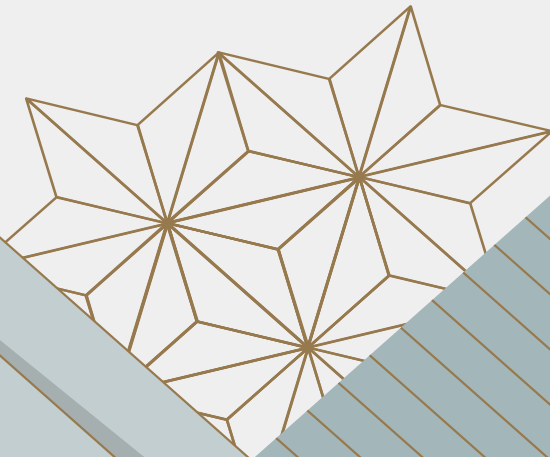


CHRISTMAS
POEMS AND STORIES
CLYDEBANK WRITERS



Christmas 2023

T'was the Night for Revenge



Twas the night before Christmas,
the whole place was rocking
And no-one had bothered to hang up a stocking;
Too busy enjoying the booze and the banter
to give ere a thought to poor bloody Santa.
Poor Babs was sitting alone on the stair
Fed up and wishing that Sidney was there
Glass in her hand, she's off to the kitchen
But no-one cared that Sidney was missing
Then the doorbell rang and at last he was there
But holding his hand was that two-timing mare
Babs was crying, whilst filling her glass
Oh why did she come to this miserable farce?
Out in the garden, with gin and no tonic
Babs knew Sidney lied when he said it's platonic
She looked up, when hearing a noise on the roof
Which sounded just like the stamp of a hoof
Up there was a sleigh with eight fine reindeer
And a red-suited driver with matching headgear
Recognising her dearest friend Kenneth
He said come on Babs whence shall we goeth
He whistled and shouted, flicking the reins
Calling them each by their very own names
Come Joan, come Hattie, come Charles and Pete

On Terry, oh Bernie, you've got four left feet.
Hurry up Frankie, get a move on Jim
If we don't get going it's gonna be grim.
'ere Kenneth, said Babs what's that in your sack
It's a present for you, just call it payback
Guided by stars the reindeer they flew
Wrecking Babs's very expensive hair-do
Over rooftops they sped, at a rollicking pace
Stopping on one with elegance and grace
Here we go, Babs, said Kenneth Claus
And they're off down the flue to a round of applause
With all the speed of a champ record-holder
A wriggling sack flung over his shoulder
His eyes were all bloodshot, his nose like a cherry
His cheeks were flushed, an' asked Babs are you merry?
'ad he driven that sleigh completely pissed?
And is he destined for the naughty list.
His face was green and he started to puke
Oh for Gawd's sake Ken, Babs's angry rebuke
He looked like death and felt like crying
He shouldn't have messed with soddin' low-flying
What's in that bloody great sack? Babs ask-ed
And looked on completely flabbergasted.
Tied up in the sack with a gag on her gob
was the two-timing mare and she started to sob
For you Babs, Happy Christmas said Kenneth Claus
She stared at her mate, and her mouth was on pause
Their clothes were all covered with ash and soot
'ere shove 'er on the sofa and 'ope she stays put
The room was a mess not Ken's finest visit
but you have to remember this stop was illicit
Kenneth stuck up two fingers and giving a nod
Found them up on the roof by the lightning-rod
They boarded the sleigh and Ken gave a whistle
He'd stole it this night and now faced dismissal
Snuggled up on the sleigh Babs heard midnight chime
And called out 'appy Christmas, I've 'ad a fab time

JILL SMITH

Angels Share

The angels sat on the distillery roof
waiting for their share
wondering what they'd been brewing today
was it a blend or something rare

Michael liked the smokey ones
Raphael liked the smooth
Gabriel would drink almost anything
as long as it wasn't Vermouth

It was lovely to sit on the roof at night
under the starlit skies
the moonbeams shining down on them
was a sight to gladden the eyes

The buildings all around them
were black as black could be
the angels share wasn't kind to them
the angels all agreed

Its a pity so much is wasted
said Michael breathing deep
the aroma is so superb tonight
I almost want to weep

Why don't we ask the others
to come and get a share
there's plenty of it to go around
and plenty going spare."

So they had a little party
with all their angel mates
and later on they sat and sang
outside the Pearly gates

DORA WRIGHT



I Can Do Without Christmas

I can do without Christmas all the fuss all the hype
and those awful do-gooders you know the type
Filling their houses with trees and lights
everything glittering shiny and bright
candles and mistletoe ribbons of red
with their children's presents under the bed
I hate the false giving and the cheery smiling faces
being accosted by big issue sellers and charity cans every few paces
A house full of presents you wish you didn't have to buy
presents for folk you'd rather spit in their eye
Pretending that everythings all hunky dory
season of goodwill the same old story
can't forget this one or that one in case they feel slighted
never mind that with them your day is blighted
Where has it gone all the true Christmas cheer
every Boxing day you say, perhaps next year
will turn out to be the christmas you really crave
a christmas with family with memories you'll save
A christmas that leaves you without any stressing
and glad to rejoice as you count all your blessings

DORA WRIGHT

UP THE LUM



Two burning fires in a single home usually indicated serious misgivings,illness or a passing, when a bedroom fire was lit to comfort....(aye that's auld Broon on his way out, a see they've got another fire going in the hoose)

The Christmas tradition of stockings draped from the fireplace, nice when there's 2 weans but in the era when contraception was a sin, a family of 10 took you into a different league...a serious fire hazard. Health and safety, had it been around at the time, would have brought that practice to an end!

The conquest of fire is a fulcrum moment in the evolution of humanity, it provide much, including comfort, security and a focal point for gathering. Fire has also mesmerised mankind since the dawn of civilisation:

Translated from Magia Celtica ...the book of the druids,

'They saw that the flames were cut and mixed with the air, causing it to move and sway in strange ways. They assumed that the flame lit thought, and for this reason they began to use fire in spells for change, intuition, creativity, imagination, and anything that transcends the rigidity of material and predictable things. "

The ritual of Santa's message 'up the lum' was not too far from these beliefs. The art in it all however was to get your note airborne above the rising flames...success, an unscorched message flying magically to the heavens... if it fell into the flames, despair! This demanded a rewrite and stirred in the mind another belief, the Sunday School fiery pit of hell.

Christmas through the eyes of a young child is joy touched by magic. Important amongst it all is the ritual of a note to Santa. A statement of hope flavored with innocence. While the sentiments remain the same the delivery of the message has changed considerably in passing years.

My notes to Santa went up the 'lum'....scrawled in pencil on a ripped out notepad page ..the list was never long..a main item ...and trailing ask for wee bits..and hopefully a Beano annual thrown in.

'Up the lum'...a message carried by fire to a magic place where dreams came true...(would i really get that 'lone star rifle', cowboy hat and matching sheriffs badge...maybe)

'The fireplace' in Clydeside homes was the single source of heat ...fuelled by nutty slack, 12s 11p a bag. In these times a full bunker reflected real wealth.

The clean air act of 1956, was the beginning of the end of the practice of gazing into the flames for the gift of prophesy. We all went 'all electric'. There is no romance in staring at coils of red hot wire sited below a pretend coal display, animated by a rotating tin fan, driven by a 100 watt red electric light bulb.

To compensate, a new trend was born...a letter 'posted' to Santa. There were even charities set up to answer these drafts of hope....introducing a new concept to the proceedings...feedback.

In new world communication Santa lives in cyberspace and you can email him directly. Dreams can be captured in a powerpoint presentation and for a small fee Santa can call you personally from the Polar North Pole accompanied by the wife and a gaggle of giggling elves. There's even a naughty or nice list. In the age of severe discipline, naughty was the default setting and Santa was watching your every move...along with that other observer of all.... god.

Alas, there's nae flames from a email or you canny warm your hands on a powerpoint ...and maybe, just maybe having all the answers diminishes the magic ...just a wee bit....maybe?

TOM MCKENDRICK



HO HO HO

O'poor Santa
Out in the cold
Left hanging upside down
Lost your magic key
I've found one two now three
I'll help you with your sack and not tell all who I see
HO HO HO
Don't open till my work is done
Sorry I took a sneaky peak
A sack of potatoes is that all I see
O poor santa is this all you have for me
Tomorrow you'll see
Santa's sack hiding out of sight
Nosey kids won't get one over me
Magic keys one two three
How daft do you think that santa has only one sack
for all the world to see
How daft do you think

TAM COX

SANTA'S KNEE

I remember when I was wee
I sat freely on Santa's knee
It was in Lewis's Glasgow
A great big store
The queue to see Santa
Coiled right out the door.

Back then we had no TV
No tacky commercials no PC
When we came home
The smell was divine
It was our Christmas tree's
Aroma of pine.

The coal fire roared
Right up the lum
Then a letter to Santa
For my presents to come.

Paper decorations
Adorning down from the ceiling
There was always a lovely warm
Winter feeling.

At night a crowd
Stood outside our door
Sweet sounding voices
Singing Carol's galore.

We went to Irish grannies
On Christmas day
She cooked Goose
And the trimmings
All her own way.

There was
Cloote dumpling to follow
with baked in
Thrupenny bits.
Warned; DO NOT SWALLOW.

Oh to turn back the clock
And have no PC
When Children sat
Freely on Santa's knee.

Great big Stores
With toys on their shelves
No Amazon nor Internet
To indulge ourselves.

How would our children
Feel going back?
Not thinking Dickensian
Kids then wore a sack

I mean the 50s or 60's
When I think we felt free.
Or Is it my sweet reminiscence
Of when I was wee?

On reflection! Back in the 50's, Christmas day was not
recognized as a holiday in Scotland.

Works were opened on Christmas Day. New year was the
Scottish Holiday. Scotland didn't recognise Christmas day
as a holiday till 1958.

Thank God I had a wee Irish Granny. We always celebrated
Christmas. The Goose that she served on Christmas
day came from her cousin Lettie who lived in the Sperrin
Mountains in Co. Tyrone. She sent two.

Christmas was always a celebration in our house back when
I was so young I am so glad I can remember. My husband
just remembers New Year with steak pie at the Bells.

ELLEN FLEMING



The White Scene Before Me

(a car journey Loch Awe)

The snow capped hills
The White mist lower and lower
The billowy clouds becoming bigger and bigger
Jagged Rocks peaking above
Taking my eye from the white scene before me

The snow dispersing further on
The sunshine taking the white scene away
Leaving a greyness in its place
Grey taking over white
Dull, the glistening snow is gone

Trees willowy, bare, isolated amongst the rocks
No wildlife just the life in the trees
I look up further, I encapsulate the snow, white on white on white
Thick trees now obscure my view of the whiteness of the scene before me.

Back in the car,
I hear the music and song in the background
The words talk about the world
The world belonging to you
The sky being blue, the silver moon
I look again to the scene before me
Seeing it In a different light, owning it.

CHRISTINE ROBERTSON

Christmas Spirit

It was Christmas Day and the Robertson children were waking up to the sound of cups and dishes clattering in the kitchen. James, Aimee, Rosie and Farrah were soon padding down the stairs. They entered the large living room and looked towards the brightest of Christmas trees. Anticipation of what they might find filled their mind and senses.

Dad came down shortly after to see their bright shining faces reflecting in the large coloured Christmas baubles. "Your faces are almost as bright as our Christmas tree" says dad running in and grasping the four children wholeheartedly. "Excited"? He asks the children. Yesssss they all shout. "Can we open our presents now?" asks Rosie the second littlest one. "Not yet" replies dad "wait for mum to come" Mum enters the living room with a large tray of hot chocolate and freshly made cookies. Has Santa eaten his cookie and drank his milk? "Yes he has" replies James, "he has eaten and drank everything. And Rudolph has eaten his carrot", "it's all gone" says Aimee. "That's so he can see in the dark and lead the other reindeers" says Rosie. "I learned that at nursery she says with a voice full of importance" the littlest one Farrah gurgled with laughter as Rosie tweaked her nose.

As the family settled down to eat and drink no one noticed the little child peering in the window, nose pressed up against the cold glass.

"Will we take it in turn to open our presents?" Says James. "Can I start? I can't wait another second!" "Ok" says dad laughing, "you can start first" The children loved taking it in turn to open their presents as it took longer and they loved to see each other's faces when they opened theirs.

"Thank you" said James as he unwrapped his Scooby Doo toy. "This is what I asked Santa for when I was at my school party" "Really?" "Laughed mum and dad. Next it was Aimee's turn. She dug deep under the tree and pulled out a little present. Neatly wrapped in red shiny paper. She carefully opened the paper taking care not to rip it as she liked to save shiny things for her craft box. She opened up the little box inside and gasped! "Thank you" she said running up and giving each of her parents a big hug. "I can't believe it! Is it real? Is it a real necklace?" "Yes" said mum tenderly it is. It's made out of real silver not plastic" "I must be very grown up says Aimee to receive a real necklace "You are" said dad. You are getting so big. Nearly 10 years old.

Next it was Rosie's turn. "Me next, me next" says Rosie. "Okay" says dad. "Your turn, you have been very patient waiting" Rosie gets up and looks at the names on the presents under the tree. "Look for the name that begins with R" helps Aimee and makes the shape of an R in the air. "Is that it?" "Asks Rosie, "yes" says Aimee, "clever girl" Rosie was just three years old and was learning the first letter of her name. "R repeats Rosie. R for Rosie" Rosie grabs the present in her little hands and tears open the Santa gift wrap. "It's a nurses outfit with lots of things to make people feel better she exclaims. Santa must know you are such a caring little girl. I'm going to make my gran better says Rosie. I'm sure you will says mummy. Farrah was sitting watching the faces of the others. We haven't forgotten you says mummy as she bends down to pick up the largest present under the tree. I wonder what it is. Ponders Aimee. Will we all help Farrah open her present? Great idea replies dad. The other three children help pull open the large present to discover a baby walker with lots of colourful bricks inside. Oh lovely James exclaims excitedly I can help build them.

Yes you can says dad you are very good at building. Remember he built with potatoes once said Aimee laughing. Farrah giggled as they all laughed.

Next it was mum and dad's turn. They both exchange gifts and kiss. "Yuk" says James. "They are kissing" Mum and dad laugh and begin to open their presents. Dad had bought mum her favourite perfume and mum had bought dad a new tie to wear at New Year.

As they were very polite children they thanked mummy and daddy and decided to write a thank you letter to Santa. We are very lucky children aren't we said Aimee. We all are said dad.

As they were piling up the paper to be put into the recycle bin dad noticed the face at the window... "Who do we have here?" He says to the children. Mum is already opening the door and calling the child in. The little boy was reluctant but came in out of the cold.

"Sorry....I was just watching your happy faces" "That's okay says James. What's your name?" "I'm William the boy replies. "Sorry but I was out for a walk looking at all the Christmas trees when I saw your family celebration. I didn't mean to be rude but I have never, ever seen such a beautiful Christmas tree"

"Where are you from William Do your parents know where you are?" "I don't have any parents said William sadly. My gran and grandpa moved up to Loch Lomond two days ago and brought me with them. I haven't made any friends yet. We still haven't opened all our packing boxes yet. "You don't even have a tree up? Or anything?" Gasps Rosie. "No, we don't, only the real important things like clothes and kettle cups and stuff "But, but Christmas trees are the most important things ever!" James adds to the conversation. Does Santa even know where you live? Asks Rosie in

disbelief? Oh I got a new hat and scarf and Christmas jumper says William. Oh lovely says Rosie not entirely convinced.

I have an idea says dad. How about if I take you home and speak to your grandparents. I can introduce myself to our new neighbors" "that would be nice "says William "we don't know ANYONE"

Mr. Robertson and William walk the short distance to Williams's house where he is kindly welcomed. The house does look quite bare he thinks to himself. Lacking in a touch of the Christmas spirit. Mr. Robertson introduces himself and explains how they had come across William. I hope he wasn't causing any trouble? He's quite inquisitive our William. No, no not at all Mr. Robertson begins I don't want you to take offence but William here has explained you have just moved in and we wondered if you would you be kind enough to come to our house for dinner tonight? My wife has made so much food to feed an army and it will go to waste" Williams gran and grandpa look around their bare living room. And we have Christmas mince pies, Christmas cake, turkey, roast potatoes, sweets and the most delicious homemade Christmas pudding you have ever tasted. They look at William with his lopsided grin and pleading eyes. William s grandpa laughingly says, "We would love to come. This house is definitely lacking a touch of the Christmas spirit. Merry Christmas Mr. Robertson he says laughing.

CHRISTINE ROBERTSON



The Night Santa Lost His Cherry



It happened on a Christmas Eve
When Nic was young and bold
The night was fresh the snow was deep
And the air was bitterly cold

You see, he was a young trainee
With L plates front and back
And he flew off on his sleigh that night
With dreams and a bulging sack

As he covered the Earth in his magical style
His thoughts drifted from his task
“Oh when will I find my one true love?”
He then himself did ask.

“Just bide your time lad” said old fat Blitzen
You’ll find something is sure to come
There’s many a frisky, buxom wench
Who’re dying to make sure you get some.

Then wee Rudolph called from out on point
“Look boss, that windy’s open wide
“Whoa lads, whoa” young Santa called
“I’ll have a look inside.”

What a site he did behold
As he stared into that room
Lasses and lads dressed in their finest
Applauding the bride and groom.

One young maid did catch his gaze
So fine so handsome with sparkling eyes
With bosoms that swayed to the music’s rhythm
Causing a stretch in his breeches’ flies

Against every rule and all convention
He showed himself to the happy throng
“Presents for all” he said “gifts for you”
while knowing it was wrong.

The dancing stopped, the people cheered
And rushed to and shake his hand
But Nic had only one goal in mind
And she stood beside the band.

“What present can I give to you my dear
As he fumbled with his sack
Oh Santa she whispered in his ear
Let’ go out round the back

And there we have it boys and girls
That night Santa lost his Cherry
And I bet you’ve guessed who took his fruit
Yes, It was Mrs Claus his dear old Merry.

EDDIE McCANN

