

## ***Junior Category***

### **Christmas Poem**

Snowflakes drift, soft and white,  
Christmas lights twinkle, what a sight!

Cookies baked, oh so sweet,  
Santa's coming, can't be beat!

Presents wrapped with ribbons tight,  
Family hugs feel just right!

Joy and laughter fill the night,  
At Christmas time, everything's bright!

All the animals snooze away,  
While snow piles up more every day!

We sing carols, voices soar,  
Hot cocoa is waiting by the door.

Snowmen stand, big and round,  
Magic and warmth in every sound.

Snuggling up with mom and dad,  
During Christmas, it is a time so glad.

Counting down the days with cheer,  
Christmas comes but once a year!

*Anica Singhal*

Happiness  
Joy, Peace  
A bright star  
Chestnuts and Egg nog  
The birth of baby Jesus  
Jolly, decorative, frosty, cheer, bright  
Yuletide festivities is how they know me  
The mistletoe hung above my tree and door

*Arianna Romero*

It was Christmas day, in the crisp cool air, with the sounds of coolers bringing warmth. Children's laughter filled the street, and the smell of home from a mother's cooking lingered. It was the day of love and celebration. It was a day of joy. Inside the house, was the smell of pine, with the colors of the Christmas lights twinkling delicately on the walls. The fire crackling and dancing with all its might in the fireplace. This day years ago celebrated the birth of Jesus. It represents the happiness his mother felt. Now years later, this similar joy lives on. It lives on in the wind, the stars, and in our hearts. The safest place for it to be.

*Olga Romero*

### **Christmas Cheer**

Christmas cheer is finally here! The elves go to their shelves and the children play in the snow. While some go caroling others have hot cocoa!

*Maya Ayala*

Summer fades as the days get longer and more exhausting.  
Fall brings colors red, orange and brown  
Leaves crumble up in your yard as you crawl home from school  
Awaiting a supper and sleep too  
Fall passes by as quick as can be, soon the days will be done by  
The first snow fall never feels quite right  
As you feel as you we just laughing at pool, with endless joy  
Driving to get a sap filled tree to hang fun memories on  
Your first day of school or maybe a cartoon character  
All of it brings holiday joy  
Lights go on all around your street  
As the stockings get filled and presents surround the tree  
You lie in bed with your heart thumping fast  
Thinking of waking up to joy and laughter  
Then you remember all those months ago at the pool  
Time goes by quickly like a race car  
Speeding down the track  
It all goes by so you savor the moment and drift off to sleep  
But it all never stops, not for a moment  
The thinking and the memories play in your head like a record spinning along

*Luisa da Silva*

## The Christmas Delivery

Once upon a time there lived a brave gingerbread man who everyone knew could help the people of fairyland when they were in trouble. He wore a magic belt and carried a special satchel full of secret tools everywhere he went.

One day the Nutcracker Prince sent word, he needed a magic spinning wheel, a bag of candy, and a special key delivered, but the journey would be dangerous. As the gingerbread man started off through the enchanted forest, he met a giant who he hoped would help him along the way.

They took off in the Giant's sleigh to the Icy North where the Nutcracker Prince lived. When they arrived, he treated them to a feast of hot cocoa and dragon jellies before giving them the package with the spinning wheel, candy, and the secret key. He wished them luck and they were on their way.

As they pushed through the Icy North, they found themselves face-to-face with an abominable snowman who tried to steal the princes' treasures. Luckily, the giant was able to summon his special swan who swooped down and carried them to a beautiful garden where they saw a small toadstool house.

The gingerbread man knocked on the door and three Christmas witches opened it, surprised and overjoyed to see the gingerbread man, the giant, and the package with their special spinning wheel, candy, and the mysterious key. "We've been waiting for you", the witches said, "and for delivering our treasures from the prince, we have a gift."

The witches gave the gingerbread man back the key and pointed through the garden towards a beautiful castle. "That castle now belongs to you, where you can stay in fairytale land, and become the protectors of our home."

The gingerbread man and the giant agreed, and they all lived together in their special garden in fairytale land forever and ever.

The end.



*Archer Ellington*

### **The Search for Christmas**

Ever drifting never finding  
Home or house or voice inclining,  
Sadness settles on my soul  
As distant Christmas church bells toll.

Then a light in distant window  
Finds a way into my heart  
Settles there my thoughts to winnow  
Weaving in it joy, like art.

Softly walking on the way  
that leads up to the cozy dwelling  
Wind sways trees and swirls the snow  
All fear through expectation quelling.

Knocking softly at the door  
It opens wide and fills with light  
Children playing on the floor  
Within the mother's loving sight.

Cozy fire, warmth and love  
Warming food and drink to share  
Angels look on from above  
Safely guarding there.

*Clara Tummescheit*

## ***Adult Category***

### **Over the Mountains, Home for Christmas**

In the misty Pacific Northwest, where the evergreens stand tall,  
Where snow drifts soft like whispered dreams and winter hushes all,  
A young mother wraps her baby tight in blankets lined with gold,  
And hums a tune of Christmas cheer to chase away the cold.

Her husband shoulders suitcases with practiced, steady grace,  
A businessman, a family rock, with warmth upon his face.  
He locks the door, he starts the Jeep, he turns to her and grins—  
“For Christmas morning with your mom... let’s hope the roads let us in.”

Her mother’s voice had trembled sweet through every call that week,  
A longing only holidays could make so bright and weak.  
“Come home,” she begged, “just come this year, I need to hold you near.”  
And so they packed their hopes and coats, and all their festive gear.

The Jeep groaned full of bags and love, of bottles, bows, and bears,  
Of peppermint dreams and tangled cords, of burdens, joys, and cares.  
Through mountain passes frosted white and valleys glazed with ice,  
They chased the glow of Christmas lights—each mile a sacrifice.

The baby cooed, the mother smiled; her heart felt like a flame,  
A beacon warm enough to melt the winter as they came.  
The dawn broke soft on Christmas Day, a blush across the snow,  
And there—her mother waiting wide, in lights’ warm, golden glow.

She ran to them with happy tears, the years undone in part,  
And held them close the way the season holds the human heart.  
For what is Christmas but the road that leads our hearts back home—  
Through miles of frost and longing’s weight, we never walk alone.

Love is the gift.  
And family, the miracle.  
Every year anew.

*Jodi Stuchlik*

### **Christmas Angelicus 2024**

“Sure on this Shining Night” echoes in my head  
as the Cold Full Moon lights up the northeast sky,  
brightening the week where the longest nights lie.  
Drum, flute, and organ rang for singers robed-red.  
Mohicans’ Long Night Moon is the path you tread.  
Tilted, gyrating eighteen-plus years you fly  
to-ward a major lunar stand-still but why?  
Bright without heat over nature’s frigid bed,  
lit by hot sun lying south in Capricorn,  
your reign over night makes a turn to new light.  
Those voices robed-red raised up songs of delight  
in trust for not just longer days but love born.  
The son who arrived that shining night has sworn  
life tuned to compassion finds your heaven’s height.

*Emily Elliot*

### **Buon Natale**

I’ve watched the videos about “the only perfect way to slice a pomegranate” but let me tell you. The perfect way to *eat* a pomegranate is to rip it into thirds, rubies drooling sticky down your palms. Lay the spongy pith open on a small bowl that ten aunts and uncles and an exponential amount of cousins will pick furat over the course of the holidays, nibbling small mouthfuls on their way to something else. On Christmas Eve, you will wake before the sun, sipping a moment of quiet all to yourself as you tell the family dog sorry, this time she needs to stay. As you climb the hill outside, the forest groans with cold–silverback fir and pine, ferns furred with frost. Deer stare, ears tracking the crackle of your boots on needled ice. Clouds lap at the surrounding peaks, valley slowly overflowing with fog—a wild creature that shifts and peeks, settling with the flourish of a villain’s cloak over the shoulders of brooding trees. A forest reduced to silhouette. A brief trill of birdsong muted by the flap of wings. A dark hunter swoops through the gap between two branches to perch, talons flexing on frosted ridges of bark. A sea of white swells and buckles, crusted with ice that shatters into powder on impact. Death and Winter slouch at a poker table in these woods. Good-natured ribbing and laughter. Dice and chips dancing through their fingers. The wild creatures gamble as well, an edge of desperation gnawing at their bellies. Down the hill, you see a light is now glowing in the kitchen window. A cozy drift of smoke rises from the chimney. The forest glitters. Snow whispers in the trees.

*Linea Jantz*

## **A Clemens Christmas**

At Christmastide, giving tours at the Mark Twain House becomes a bridge between the old holiday traditions and the new. Dressed as Twain's daughter Susy Clemens, I sweep visitors away to an enchanted time where halls really are decked with holly by children in Victorian "gay apparel" and where the Christmas spirit burnt as brightly as the logs in the fireplace. The magnificent house, usually so neat and prim, acquires a merry chaos of gifts and decorations, making it feel as if the Clemens family really had just stepped out for a moment. The library is strewn with Christmas cards from friends, doll clothes in the making, half-finished paper chains and lacy snowflakes, and cranberry-popcorn garlands in the making, as if the three girls have left for their tea and will be back any moment, while upstairs in the billiards room a scarlet coat trimmed with white is thrown over a chair, ready for Mark Twain to don when he assumes the character of Santa Claus for the delight of his daughters. In the servant's wing, there is fruit and more greenery and dough for Christmas cookies rolled out on the table. But the center of the Clemens's holiday preparations is found in the ornate mahogany guest room, where the bed and floor are covered with a flurry of baskets, wrappings, food, and gifts. These are Livy Clemens's Christmas baskets, representing the fifty or more she made every year for all the poorer families they knew; Livy kept up her generous tradition even in times of financial hardship. As I bid my visitors a final farewell, the one thing I hope they will carry with them into 2025 is Livy's knowledge that generosity is the true heart of the holiday.

*Olivia Tummescheit*

Christmas time is here  
Once every year  
The season of giving  
And of the beginning  
Of the new year  
But why should we wait till this time  
To embrace our neighbors  
And those we hold dear  
Only at this time of year  
The love we give  
The love we share  
showing how much you care  
Time to hang the stockings  
And light the tree  
Bake the cookies  
Pour the milk  
Now go run to bed  
And rest your head  
For Christmas time is here

*Norah McCarthy*

### **Christmas Light**

Christmas cheer  
Coming near  
Ringing clear  
For all to hear

Peace and hope alight  
Shining bright

Trees dressed  
Now its time to rest

Settle down  
Find your way

To be warm  
And alright

Chills Arise  
Breeze blows by

Let the light  
Within shine  
Allow and appreciate  
This holiday season  
Inside and outside

*Michelle Ayala*

### **Dawn Christmas Morning at the Alpaca Farm**

A dozen snuffling muzzles lip our hands.  
She pours more feed into our palms, and I  
cup my youngest daughter's, and help her stand  
steady in the surging herd. Alpaca eyes  
glow snow globes in the early morning light.  
My daughters squeal and dance in sheer delight.

It's Christmas morning. Inside stockings wait  
stuffed with lip gloss, chocolate, and fuzzy socks.  
My heart strains at their joy. I hope it sates  
them for the quiet day. Last night we talked  
about how quickly grandma tires. And how  
the chemo makes her sick. Snow on the bough

above falls in a rush. I clutch the scarf  
that grandma knit a dozen years ago.  
I do not know the pattern. How to start  
the perls of wisdom running through the row.  
If I can hold the tension. Afterward  
if I can make each little girl feel heard.

The herd follows the girls down the pasture,  
except one golden dam who stands with me.  
She nudges my hand. I'd like to ask her  
if she knows the way. But she tugs free  
the cowl from my coat and bumps my palm.  
I offer her more feed: a comfort psalm.

*Christiana Douchette*

## Where Advent Found Me

In my home country, Advent was everywhere.

Shops hung greenery over their windows, choirs rehearsed in echoing halls, and every household lit the candles. My mother's wreath was always the heart of it. Every year, she wove her own: her hands moved with a practiced kind of reverence — not religious, exactly, but tenderly, as if she were braiding a memory before it even existed.

When I moved away, I thought I'd carry that feeling with me. But here, Advent was nowhere. Not in the streets or the stores. Not in the rhythm of December. I kept searching out of habit — scanning for some echo of home, some glimpse of that slow-building light — but each year arrived as if the season I remembered had been left behind entirely.

Then, last year, something nudged me into the dollar store.

Plastic greenery. A foam ring. A small box of electric candles glowing faintly through clear plastic. Nothing like what my mother crafted, nothing like the wreaths that once made an ordinary room feel quietly sacred. Yet my hands gathered the pieces almost on their own.

At home, I shaped the wreath the only way I knew: clockwise, slowly, letting memory lead. When I turned on the first candle, its small flicker didn't brighten the room much — but it changed it.

The air grew softer. Thinner. As though something familiar had stepped across a great distance to stand beside me.

I didn't hear my mother, but I felt her the way warmth settles near you on a cold morning — gentle, steady, unmistakable.

I had spent decades searching for Advent in the world. But when that humble light flickered to life, I understood:

Advent had been searching for me — and through it, my mother found her way back.

*Alexandra Heep*

### **First Snow and Northern Lights**

Pause here, just for a breath, as the first flakes begin their slow descent.

Look up at the lights.

See how the world around us softens, how even the sharpest edges seem tender.

Pause here, as each flake drifts down, hoping for a small act of forgiveness for falling without forewarning, and without asking where to land.

Pause here, as charged particles mix with gas to create light that offers reflection in the darkest of nights.

May the snow and the light teach you how to fall softly, see things differently, and rest gently into those things we cannot control with welcome, with wonder, and with grace.

*RoseMarie Wallace*

### **John's Fruitcake**

I spied your fruitcake  
sitting on the kitchen counter  
when we visited you  
in Connecticut.

Wrapped tight in cellophane—  
its red and green candied cherries  
caught my eye,  
along with golden raisins  
and cubes of apricot.  
Bright and colorful,  
like Christmas lights.

“He’s the only one who likes fruitcake,”  
your wife said.  
“Kids and I won’t touch the stuff.  
Even if it didn’t have tree nuts in it.”

I looked at you knowingly.  
You offered me a piece.  
The square fit in my hand.  
With delicate bites,  
I savored the soft cake,  
syrupy sweet cherries  
and chewy pecans.

“Not bad for \$2.99,”  
I said, having seen its price tag.  
“But I can do better.  
You deserve better”—  
I winked,  
my heart warming like an oven  
as I baked up the idea  
of a special gift for you.

We drove back to Wisconsin  
after Thanksgiving dinner.  
My wheels were turning.  
I became a girl with a mission.

I made a list:  
gold rum, brandy,  
dried fruits of all sorts—  
cranberries, cherries,

currants, raisins, apricots,  
candied ginger,  
lemon, orange,  
and a jug of cider.

My husband didn't mind.  
"Get all you need,"  
he said with a smile,  
always willing to give.

I baked the first brown cake  
just for you,  
spritzed it with brandy,  
wrapped it in cheesecloth.  
Tended to it like a child,  
spraying every few days.  
Found a box with Santa Claus on it  
and mailed it to you—  
the best brother-in-law ever.

Each year I try new recipes  
but always send one made  
the same as the first.  
Freshly ground cinnamon,  
cloves, and allspice—  
sweet and inviting, like you.

Nothing brings more holiday cheer  
than stirring the batter,  
filling these pans,  
and knowing we'll both  
share this treat  
though a thousand miles apart.

*Jennifer Gawinski Cuming*

## **My Christmas Angel**

That morning in the church hall, as Christmas carols played over the PA system, I wound my way through a maze of tables bearing cotton-bearded Santas, clothespin reindeer, and Styrofoam ornaments dipped in glitter. My classmates raced around, thrilled to pay a nickel here, a dime there, for a pipe-cleaner candy cane or a popsicle-stick manger scene. But all the twenty-five-cent splendor of the annual St. Ambrose Christmas Craft Fair was out of my reach because I'd forgotten to ask my mother for money when she brought me to school that morning.

I plodded through the crowd, sweating in my coat, fretting that I was locked out of this long-awaited day. I wanted to cry. I was six, and cried a lot. I fought tears as I watched my little friends exult over sequined Christmas trees and felt snowmen with shining button eyes. And then, whomp, I walked right into a big bulky lady who was standing in the aisle. This lady would probably yell at me to watch where I was going, and then I would cry.

The lady turned to face me, and we stared at each other, open-mouthed. It was my grandmother! I was stunned, though it made sense for her to be there – she lived across the street. But that fact was yet another thing I forgot that day. As far as I was concerned, Grandma had appeared as if by magic, as if somehow she knew I needed help. Grandma and I bought gifts for everyone in the family as the snowmen smiled bigger and the glitter sparkled brighter.

Nearly 50 years later, I cherish the memory of the time my Grandma appeared just when I needed a Christmas angel.

*Becky Rodia Schoenfeld*

### **Nativity, at Night, A Christmas Poem**

Beneath a Northern star, his life cut short,  
Geertgen tot Sint Jans, of Netherlandish sort.  
An oak wood sheet, his genius would proclaim,  
He built his Christmas mystery for fame.  
Inspired by faith, the artist sought to spread  
The holy words that Saint Bridget had said.  
She saw a light no earthly sun could claim,  
A radiant glory round the Manger flame.  
"The sun in heaven could not compare," she cried,  
To the Child's brilliance where salvation lied.  
This sacred truth Geertgen yearned to show,  
A supernatural and pure, celestial glow.  
He used the oil paint, pioneer so bold,  
A spiritual story that would now unfold.  
The stable waits, a setting "vast and dim,"  
A silent frame for the eternal hymn.  
No smoky torch, no candle's common grace,  
Illuminates the solemn, central space.  
From the Infant Christ, the central focus streams,  
Fulfilling all of Bridget's deepest dreams.  
A brilliant light bursts forth, divine and stark,  
  
A sacred power pushing back the dark.  
It bathes the Mother's face in gentle rays,  
Her hands in prayer, lost in adoring gaze.  
The master planned three distinct light sources there,  
To make the miracle profoundly clear.  
The main is God, where all the glory lies,  
Reflected gently in the Virgin's eyes.  
A secondary glow is seen on high,  
An angel's light across the shadowed sky.  
Below, the shepherds, cold and stressed, are blessed  
By a small, pale earthly fire put to the test.  
This chiaroscuro, rich and full of grace,  
Forces the viewer to the central, holy place.  
Five hundred years have passed, we watch afar  
Still gazing at the guiding Star.  
His mastery over shadow and pure light,  
Made his enduring artwork, "Nativity at Night."

*Anne Hendricks*

### **The birth of LOVE**

Star bright in sky reflecting upon world beauty seen felt heard as is sought within reach still and steady. Gift the world true love birthed in Bethlehem. Miles journeyed, gifts presented authentic representation. Season to reflect, discover, uproot Devine Love.

Love deserves to spread like crisp winter winds dances twirling, commanding attention. Beautiful lights in environment models love of the world shining and rendered towards one another.

Seasons Greetings humankind / creations. Season of joy, sadness, happiness, fear, excitement, depression, illness, wellness. Love has a place in every Season to uplift, as reaching for the star still shining bright as in Bethlehem.

Be the gift of love to the disabled who wants to be seen / heard, to the orphan who wants to be held upon a cry, to those who haven't discovered love depressed. Let your love brighten humanity

washing sorrow way.

Blessed with Love bestow your blessings

Christmas season and no Season go on without the foundation of LOVE.

Allow jingle bells of love pave way for humanity mingling free with purpose of peace, harmony, kindness.

Let it snow flakes of magical love landing the surface of our being, of our land of the free and home of the brave.

Be bold to love, be free to feel spirit of joyous Christmas reaching out to those who are lost. Lost to be found in LOVE so near so true.

Cherish and free your love to the universe to be the gift under everyone's Christmas tree, stuffed in everyone's Christmas stockings, living in everyone heart....Santa Clause is coming to town, oh the sound of Handel Mesiah Hallelujah Hallelujah the King of King Lord of Lord, The birth of LOVE the Gift from God, Jesus is Lord is Love

And have yourself a merry little Christmas now  
I love you

*Nnenna Akoma-Ononaji*

## **The Christmas Song**

### **AKA the crash of 1958**

Christmas Eve, 1958, the year of, chipmunks , Barbie dolls , Lionel trains.

Christmas Eve, the seven fishes. The whole family crammed into my Nonna's kitchen, frying up shrimps, scallops, smelts, flounder, baccala (I give that one a big P.U.).. Fried dough, pizza fritta, sprinkled with sugar ( My personal favorite.)

We lived next door to my Nonna, on the 2 nd floor of a two family. My Nonna on the first floor of her house. We had a bird's eye view of her kitchen from our living room window. Great place to spy on the adults.

I was sent upstairs to our house to fetch something. You know when you are 7 you are the fetcher in the family. "Go get my slippers. Go get me that wooden spoon. Go find my glasses.

Upstairs.... It is eerily quiet except the noise of the party next door. I look around. No one is here!

Did I tell you that the Chipmunk's Christmas song played everywhere, radio, stores, tv. Ad nauseum for days. I loved it.

Now is my chance. No , "Turn that thing off! "

There's my little 45 rpm record player. I put the record on, blasted the volume and.....Dance Party!!! In the living room. Now, we lived in a very tiny apartment with not much room to dance around . We had a small Christmas tree, nicely decorated I might add, set upon a desk in the corner of the room.

I was very excited about Santa coming. How much better can it get? Family, anticipation, music, twirling arms and legs. I was so excited and then.....Crash! Breaking glass and tinkling sounds..... Uh oh!!! Guess what I did? Yep, knocked down that little, nicely appointed tree.

And all I really wanted was to scream, "Alvin!" in an empty apartment.

*Palma Vaccaro*

### **The Day of Selfless Giving**

The day of selfless giving,  
when the world stops to breathe,  
and hearts open wide,  
offering what they can,  
with no thought of return.

The gift of life provided,  
in every moment shared,  
in the laughter of children,  
the warmth of a hand held close.  
But what is a gift, if not  
to be given to another?  
It is the act of passing on love,  
a quiet, unspoken exchange.

The gift of family, time spent together,  
the gentle rhythm of voices around the table,  
the stories woven in every glance.  
We are here, we are now,  
and this is enough.

The gift of whimsy, sparkling in a child's eye,  
the wonder of simple things  
a snowflake falling,  
a song sung just for joy.  
The world is full of magic,  
if we only take the time to see.

The gift of Mercy, however we may define it,  
a forgiveness offered,  
a hand lifted from the darkness.  
It is a grace we all need,  
more than we know,  
more than we are ready to give.

On the day of giving, we wish for peace,  
the kind that rests in the quiet of the night,  
the peace that settles like soft snow,  
blanketing all that came before.

And in the distance,  
a glimmer of tree lights shines  
a beacon, small but steady,  
reminding us that light remains,  
even in the darkest of times.

A candle in the window, flickering softly,  
a reminder of hope,  
that in giving, we receive,  
and in hope, we are made whole.

The one that would give,  
and the one that would receive  
a simple truth that binds us all.

*Emily Avakian*

### **The Girl Who Had Never Seen Snow**

I knew a girl who had never seen snow. She dreamed of Christmases buried in powdered sugar like the movies. She longed for the cold. She was unprepared for her first New England winter. The cold had found her and her poor nose was blue. Often she would implore with her voice begging like a child as I wrapped her in my own scarves like a knowing mother, “When will it snow?”

She caught a cold that December. It dragged on, her blue nose constantly wet. I tried everything to warm the girl who longed for the cold. I lent her my quilt, brought her soup, doubled her socks. Through chattering teeth her congested voice again asked, “When will it Snow?”

Winter crawled forward as she slept through December and Christmas drew near. Soon she would return to the warm green to celebrate with her family without ever seeing snow. Just as well—she was tired of the cold anyway and I was tired too. The dead grass and barren trees felt lonely. I decided to clench my teeth until I felt spring’s warm embrace. I’m embarrassed to admit I lost hope in winter.

But the miracle of snow finally came. So I ran to find the girl who had never seen snow. When she answered her door, I saw in her weary eyes that she had lost hope too. But I’d barely delivered the news before she ran outside. For the first time, she pressed her shoe into untouched fresh snow. Then, right next to her brand new footprint, I saw a tear land in the white. I borrowed her eyes and tried to see what she saw. The girl who longed for the cold saw that in a bleak winter, snow is the warmest blanket.

*Madeline Whitmore*

### **The Snow Holding Still**

Soft white snow falls as I sit by a window. Smells of Christmas slithering into my nose, spices from the kitchen and my cup as I drink tea. Winter has finally arrived with its flavors, friends, and fun. I can finally bundle up in my sweaters as my dog playfully paws at his. He finally settles down once it's on him. The purple going well with his old grey and yellow fur as he lays down

comfortably on a fuzzy blanket on the couch that he thinks was strategically placed there for him. Soon I adjust, I join him there covering myself with the bit of blanket he isn't on. Still I drink my tea, still I watch the snow, hoping the world with hold this moment still forevermore.

*Bailee Guerrera*

### **The Wish**

An eyelash rests on  
my daughter's cheek  
in early December.  
She's five years old for  
two more weeks. By  
Christmas she will be six.  
She doesn't yet know about  
wishes on eyelashes,  
so I tell her. She makes  
her very first one.  
After she blows it from  
my finger she whispers  
in my ear, "I wished for  
the best Christmas ever."

My daughter is the exact  
age of magic. The age of  
letters to Santa, the age of  
snowmen in hats, the age of  
eyelash wishes.

Lately I'm the grownup in  
the Christmas movie. I no longer  
remember. I no longer believe.  
Life has made me tired. Worn down  
my capacity to see and feel magic.

But as the film crescendos  
towards a close, the magic is  
undeniable. Snowflakes  
envelop the sky, and the sun  
seems to glimmer off each one.  
The child in the film  
looks up at me in this moment and  
her expression says, “You see?  
It’s real. It’s always been real.”  
And before the credits roll my  
eyes, like the snowflakes, glimmer.  
I laugh through tears. I won’t be able to  
believe it, but I won’t have a way to deny it.  
Magic is real.

Something like that happened in real  
life when my daughter made her wish. Something  
came alive inside of me. I like to think  
it’s always there, always waiting.  
Some days it’s a practice to find it.  
Some days it’s ever present.  
Some days it’s an eyelash that has fallen.  
A girl experiencing her wishes for the  
very first time and never doubting for  
one moment that they will come true.

*Maribeth Theroux*

### **What I Dreamt on Saint Nicholas Day**

"As I left the underground train  
On a day that presaged a winter sight  
The darkened eve and listless sun lain  
On a crooked horizon at the edge of night.

Across the park to my waiting abode  
A lure of promised warmth amidst gale  
Of arctic wind, too soon, had strode  
Into this season's promise frail.

And in the clearing, there, it stood tall  
Evergreen and bedazzled bright  
Draped on limbs tender tossed ribbons all  
With strings and strings of crystal light.

My eyes feasted on the reverie  
Of the past pouring forth from mind  
And closed my eyes to summon memory  
Of young child's vision to once more find.

Then, lo! Saint Nick! Radiantly basked,  
Bore bishop's crook, with lantern's light.  
"Are you a good child?" he gently asked,  
A question posed...I was left aghast.

As humble plea, I loosed a sigh.  
He smiled, and knowing, kindly gazed,  
"I wish to be," I stammered, shy.  
"You are an honest child," he praised.

Then our eyes saw the cradle bare,  
Waiting, waiting for a world anew  
Laid sanguine robe to swaddle there  
What soon stop death and mercy accrue.

"Remember well, this sacred sight;  
Forever keep this vision's grace.  
Prepare! Prepare! Await the night!"  
Then parted, the Saint, without a trace.

In innocence, I, in wonder stood,  
Unsure of what to make of scene;  
Then star beamed on the cradle wood  
And I, cried "Joy!", in the space between."

*Robert Goodman*