

The Night Before Christmas

John Anderson

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there

The children were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of sugar plums danced in their heads
And mama in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap
Had just settled down for a long winter's nap

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the luster of mid-day to objects below
When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer

With a little old driver so lively and quick
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name

Now Dasher, now Dancer, now Prancer, and Vixen
On Comet, on Cupid, on Dunder and Blixem
To the top of the porch, to the top of the wall
Now dash away, dash away, dash away all"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas too

And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof
As I drew in my head and was turning around
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot
A bundle of toys, he had flung on his back
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack

His eyes, how they twinkled, his dimples how merry
His cheeks were like roses and his nose like a cherry
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed like a bowlful of jelly

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf
And I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work
And filled all the stockings and turned with a jerk
And laying his finger aside of his nose
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle
But I heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a goodnight"