

A Christmas Story

Christmas carols softly filled the air
As we put the finishing touch on the brightly colored Christmas cookies.
The grandfather clock struck the dreaded hour; I grasped her hand,
Hoisted him on my shoulders, and for the first time in ages
Whisked them off to bed without a sound.
As mom struggled to guide squirming limbs into their pajamas,
They begged for a Christmas story, and as so many tales before, it began with:
“A long, long, time ago, when I was just a boy
My heart raced with anticipation as
I finished my milk and cookies, prepared a final note
And sprinted up the endless stairway thinking of brand new toys.
My mind began its journey, I knew it would never rest,
I’d heard his travels would not begin until we were sound asleep.
But as I tossed and turned for hours, I thought I heard a laugh.
I squirmed out of my bed and peeked around the corner.
I rubbed my eyes a hundred times, but the vision did not disappear.
He looked just like his pictures, with snow white hair and dressed in red.
He ambled about so swiftly with a smile from ear to ear.
I marveled at his stature, his presence filled the room.
He read my note, he scratched his chin and took a sip of milk.
He filled each stocking carefully, then swiftly emptied his sack.
Around the tree he scattered the gifts with a section for each boy.
Finally his work had ended, my face lit up with joy,
He headed for the chimney, then took a final pause.
I saw him view the nativity, he walked toward the lighted star.
He braced himself on the window sill and
His knees cracked loudly as he knelt before the crèche.
His huge hand reached upward, he removed his crimson cap,
He clasped his hands, he bowed his head, and closed his eyes in prayer.
After what seemed like an eternity, he leaned forward and kissed the baby’s feet.
I brushed away a tear as I saw him walk away.
I whispered a final “thank you,” although it wasn’t for the toys.
He taught me a lasting lesson, Christmas never was the same
And even though I am older, the vision still remains.
The story now had ended, they had drifted off to sleep
I wondered what they were dreaming, and if they understood.
We tucked them in so snugly and kissed them tenderly
Then walked down to prepare for Santa and to pause at the Nativity.

Frank Allocco-Christmas 1981