

## *A Christmas Gift*

It was a cruel, cold winter in the Midwest.  
He pulled his tattered coat against the chill of the wind.  
Deep in his heart, he felt the anger and frustration  
Of not being able to provide for his family during these troubled times.  
He reminisced of the joyous times of Christmas past;  
How he longed for those days...

As he ambled on, his reflections were disturbed by the voice of a young boy.  
They exchanged words, the young boy had a maturity well beyond his nine years.  
He lived alone, the alleys of the cluttered streets were his home.  
With the little money that the man had, he purchased a sandwich for his new friend.  
The time slipped by as they shared their stories so easily.  
The man believed he knew this gentle orphan from another time.  
They walked on to the man's home where the young boy  
Delighted the man's two children with his stories of the road.  
For two days, he mesmerized them with his fondness for life as  
He became a part of their lives.

They sympathized with his incredible loneliness and  
Decided that they would stretch their meager savings  
To make this a Christmas he would always remember.  
There was never a quiet moment in their tiny apartment  
As it bustled with a spirit that had been gone for months.

On Christmas Eve, his stocking was hung proudly along with the others.  
As the man tucked the three children into bed with one last Christmas story,  
He kissed them and smiled as he had never done before.  
As he and his supportive wife sat before the tiny tree  
They wondered how they could bring this boy into their lives.  
They quietly discussed it until sleep had overtaken them.

When the family awakened bright and early to a new Christmas filled with hope and love  
They discovered....he was gone.  
The children cried, the mom was filled with confusion.  
He wondered why the boy would leave them after all they had done for him.  
As his frustrated feelings mounted, the children noticed a note in the boy's empty stocking.  
The crumpled note was short and direct:  
"I will never leave you, you need me."

During this holiday season, may all of us remember those we need and those who need us.

**Frank Alocco-Christmas 1983**