

## *Memories*

My grandfather's house still stands proudly atop a small hill by a deserted park.  
The aging train clanks by every day as it winds  
Its way through the suburbs to New York City.  
The New Jersey snow surrounds the ancient structure and  
The bitter cold wind whistles through the air.  
On those Christmas nights, generations gathered around the family room  
Sharing the warmth and security of our large family.  
The young ones entertained their elders with Christmas songs and plays;  
And aunts and uncles listened intently attempting to  
Record a priceless moment in their memories.  
It's been years since I shared a Christmas memory with them;  
But I feel the spirit of that proud Italian family every year.

My father's house sits royally on a wooded corner lot.  
His pot belly stove still battles the frigid winter nights.  
Every December, he unboxes years of Christmas memories and  
Carefully spreads them throughout his cozy home.  
Throughout the holidays, the smell of Christmas cooking permeates his hallowed walls.  
The traditional Christmas Eve dinner table now turns the corner  
Into the living room as the family extends larger and larger.  
As the gifts were unwrapped and the multi-colored paper cluttered the floor,  
The excited eyes of their children slowly changed from astonishment to weariness  
As they faded off into their Christmas dreams.  
I miss those struggling parents and I miss those young brothers  
Much more than I would have ever guessed.  
We smile when we are together, and many times  
We talk of the past.....and we remember.

My house exists thousands of miles from those memories.  
The mild California winter sun beams down gently upon the wooded roof.  
Inside, the fireplace flickers and the brightly colored Christmas tree  
Stands by quietly like an old friend.  
Christmas carols play softly, the children chatter, and  
I mesmerize them with tales of Christmas past.  
The traditions live on, despite the passing of time.  
Memories of other days fill the Christmas mind and  
All are young once again.  
As I look in my children's star filled eyes,  
I enjoy their wonder, I enjoy their warmth and love,  
And I fondly think of the day when I will fill their Christmas memories.

May your holiday season be filled with happiness, love, and gentle memories of years gone by.

**Frank Allocco-Christmas 1985**