

# *Songs of Our Seasons*





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A half a century ago, the excited shrieks of my brothers and cousins  
Frolicking in the wintry park seemed like Christmas carols to my frozen ears.  
Our tiny frosty fingers, held up to reddened lips, were surrounded by  
A smoky mist that quickly encircled them as our warm breath tried to fight the bitter cold.  
As the crunching of footsteps on packed snow softly subsided, the creaky kitchen door opened and  
Grandma called, summoning us in to hot chocolate and melting marshmallows.  
Upon entering the home, we were greeted by the ceaseless rounds of hugs and kisses as  
The house warmed swiftly, filling with aunts and uncles, defeating the chill of the outside world.

With our clothing finally thawed and our skin slowly returning to its natural color,  
We eagerly retreated from the crowded kitchen to produce our annual Christmas show.  
Moments later, carols were sung, jokes were told, and unpolished skits performed as  
The laughter and love of family filled the crowded parlor.  
The small children seemed like they would retain their youth forever.  
Our young mothers and fathers beamed delightedly, a cherished snapshot of time, while  
Our revered grandparents sat like Immortals, proud of what they had created.  
All of the players seemed frozen in time, relegated to their roles forever...

But as the years quickly melted, those little children became parents,  
Struggling to keep the traditions of family alive against the demands of a changing world.  
The youthful parents became aging grandparents who  
Now assemble as the custodians of their own Christmas traditions...  
The Christmas celebrations in the old house by the park continued, but chairs changed as  
Loved ones passed, bestowing their memories, providing the example of their love,  
Hoping that their children would follow the way,  
Leaving us the timeless lessons of family, love, respect, and honor...

Years later and thousands of miles away, the rocking chair creaks rhythmically by the warmth of my winter fire,  
Slowly keeping time with the pace of my Christmas memories.  
It seems like yesterday that I was that young boy with a squeaky voice,  
Holding a pretend microphone, introducing my little cousins to the beaming audience.  
Too swiftly I became an adult standing along a wall covered with aging photos of years of family,  
Proudly watching my own children perform on that same "stage."  
And now, the comforting recollections of my youth are interrupted by the sound of a little baby, crawling excitedly,  
Raised arms and legs pumping powerfully, like a proud Clydesdale galloping toward her grandpa.

As I tenderly pick up "grandpa's little girl" and snuggle her close to my chest  
I realize how quickly the roles of my life have changed.  
Rocking her gently, I think of the special years ahead for this precious little miracle.  
Our eyes meet lovingly as the blinking of her big blue eyes gradually concedes to sleep.  
I contentedly drift back to my past, treasuring the special memories of my grandma and grandpa,  
Who were the magnet of our gatherings, keeping our families centered.  
I appreciate my parents who worked so hard to keep the family traditions alive  
And never lost sight of the real lessons of life....

I reverently reflect, so grateful for the many lessons they have given to me,  
For teaching me that this journey through life is a swift one,  
That our roles change rapidly, but the core must remain the same;  
Family, love, respect, and honor...To cherish every day because the clock ticks so quickly.  
Entranced in my reflections, my little Molly Madeline softly stirs,  
Her sigh of peace and comfort bring a smile to my aging face.  
I hum a Christmas lullaby and look forward to the Christmas carols that I will soon sing with her  
As the songs of our seasons continue....

*Frank Allocco, Christmas 2007*