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# Holiday Cheer

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*A Poetry and Prose Anthology*

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*As Compiled by*

4

*Old Mountain Press*



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1

# Poetry and Prose

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1 **THE COSMETOLOGIST SPEAKS AGAIN**2 *Shelby Stephenson*

3 I can't do but so much—  
4 have to stop, as I add the years—  
5 and get in there and try  
6 to swage down my baby-bump.

7 Christmas I put up a live-tree  
8 If someone brings me one.  
9 The old ones I get  
10 In the woods shed bad.

11 I store mine.  
12 Got it a Walmart.  
13 I do like a real tree, though,  
14 Love the smell the second I bring it in my house.

15 And I follow the bulbs.  
16 My mind turns on  
17 Like a commercial.

18 I like mousse on my hair too.  
19 It's like it loses consciousness  
20 And jumps follicles  
21 Beyond what to expect.

22 You can get pretty ornaments at the Dollar Tree.  
23 Kerr Drugs has a sale sometimes.  
24 Really, though, I want a ring for Christmas  
25 And I don't mean one that rings.

1 **Re-Incantation**2 *Sam Barbee*

3 Days later, owls scan.

4 Each princess abdicated.

5 Vampires cure in attics.

6 Jack-o-lantern on the porch stoop:

7 spooky sneer now dull, benign

8 fangs gum apparition of orange flame,

9 sinister eyes tamed.

10 After a few days of frost,

11 I remove the pumpkin's crown—

12 belly-full of candle wax,

13 black fringe lines the gut.

14 Fruit flies and leaves infiltrate

15 where scowling glow singed night air.

16 By stale stem, I replace the moldy lid

17 and hoist the autumn fruit

18 as I once did my child, ablaze

19 with celebration and triumph.

20 I leave it with the compost,

21 beneath the soft pines.

22 A frightened face stares back.

23 Possums and smaller scavengers

24 gather from secret places.

25 They will feast in night air

26 as we sleep incarnate sleep.

**1 Yellow Table**

2 *Terri Kirby Erickson*

3 Around our chrome and Formica table, in our tiny  
4 two-bedroom, one-bath house on Druid Hills Drive,  
5 our family sat—mother, father, sister, brother—

6 as history swirled around us like multiple tornadoes  
7 that never touched my brother and me. We passed  
8 the mashed potatoes, chattered about what we had

9 done all day, lifted our forks from that rectangular  
10 yellow surface with its shiny top and round edges,  
11 and ate what our mother offered. After supper, my

12 brother and I would leap from our chairs and rush  
13 outside again, in spring, summer, or fall, to lap the  
14 last drops of cream from the bowl of daylight. And

15 holidays brought cousins and grandparents, turkey,  
16 and pumpkin pie—adding, never subtracting, from  
17 our joy. Nothing terrible happened to us or would

18 ever happen, as far as we could tell. Yet, I am the  
19 last to remember the bright yellow table, how it lit  
20 our family's faces like comets that circled the sun.



1 **Winter in the Smokies**

2 *Tom Davis*

3 A bone-numbing chill  
4 Flows from the mountains  
5 And into the valleys

6 Where sycamores stand

7 Bare

8 Their brown bark shed  
9 Like sunburned skin

10 Their limbs stretch skyward  
11 Like fingers of a skeleton

12 Soon

13 Snow will come  
14 Blanketing all  
15 In stunning white

16 Selected for the Poetry in Plain Sight April 2021 through March  
17 2022

1 **Weathering the White**2 *Karen O'Leary*

3 My muse travels on,  
4 leaving me in an achromatic  
5 abyss of nothingness.  
6 I stare at the white sheet  
7 willing words to spill  
8 across the blank page.  
9 Even my favorite pearl pen  
10 can't carry me across  
11 the great snowy divide.  
12 Settling into my favorite  
13 ivory chair, I close my eyes.

14 .....The light dawns!  
15 I grab that white paper.  
16 Verse flows from my heart,  
17 honest and uncolored,  
18 as if carried on white wings.  
19 My muse has returned!

1 **December Sunset across the Blue Ridge**

2 *Nancy Dillingham*

3 Above frozen cobalt  
4 a flock of birds fly  
5 undulating like waves  
6 before settling  
7 in the black lace netting  
8 of tree skeletons  
9 silhouetted  
10 against a saffron sky

1 **Autumn Harvest Pow-Wow**2 *Barbara Tate*

3 Life is different since the gray crept in.  
4 I dance Traditional instead of Fancy Shawl  
5 or Jingle. Intertribal? My feet sometimes get away.  
6 I want to be the wind, heartbeat joining drumbeat,  
7 holding hands with the past in the dance circle.  
8 I want to be the wind again  
9 setting the butterfly free.

10 We danced at the "49" last night, Old Man and me,  
11 wrapped in our Pendleton blanket, Chief Joseph design.  
12 The drumbeat entered our hearts, we were young again  
13 listening to hundred year old echoes,  
14 what was lost was found as we slid into a dream  
15 where the eagle waited.  
16 We danced on the outer fringes  
17 where we could slip away in the shadows like we used to.

18 Life is different since the gray crept in.  
19 Happy crows feet dance around my eyes  
20 and I am wind again holding hands with Old Man.  
21 I'm back, I'm home,  
22 the butterfly is free.



# 1 **Space Helmet**

2 *Michael Potts*

3 Sunday afternoon I search stores for something  
4 interesting, find a plastic space helmet modeled  
5 on NASA's, its mirrored surface reflecting  
6 ceiling lights. That helmet takes me back  
7 to Christmas, age ten, opening a package to find  
8 a Sears space helmet, surface sunglass-yellow,  
9 looking just like those the astronauts wore  
10 on the moon. Putting on a coat for the cold,  
11 cloudy, humid outdoors, that strange planet  
12 to which I would travel, I don the helmet  
13 and run into a too-dark world, the shiny face-  
14 shield blocking too much sun. The surface  
15 steamed up, and running ahead became a risk  
16 of falling into mud, clipping the coal pile,  
17 or ramming a rock jutting from the ground.  
18 Disappointed, I go inside to wait for another  
19 planet with better weather, sunlight bright  
20 as the lunar surface. The thought returns me  
21 to the present, as I try on the helmet, check  
22 the price, and prepare to pay for a hint  
23 of childhood memory, of Christmas joy.

1 **Holiday Lights**2 *Jill Jennings*

3

4 We all follow the same star.

5 East or West,

6 Christian or Jew,

7 we're all waiting for

8 a messiah, some

9 for the first time, some

10 for the second.

11

12 So strike a match,

13 light a candle for

14 Advent or Hanukkah.

15 The flame of hope

16 burns bright enough to

17 bring the whole world

18 out of the shadows.

**1 Christmas at Granny Bassett's**

2 *Frederick W. Bassett*

3 I don't remember those Christmas gatherings  
4 before grandfather died, but knowing Dad,  
5 I'm confident I never missed one.  
6 I do vividly recall how my siblings and I  
7 would set the alarm clock for daybreak,  
8 and when it sounded, we scrambled  
9 to see what Santa had brought us.  
10 Mother and Dad would join us for a while  
11 and then head for the kitchen.  
12 Christmas was the only day of the year  
13 when Dad helped Mother with breakfast.  
14 He cooked a platter of country-cured ham  
15 and made a bowl of red-eyed gravy.  
16 Mother cooked the biscuits, grits, and eggs.  
17 Soon we were off to visit Granny Bassett—  
18 my only grandparent yet alive.  
19 Dad would enter the big farmhouse,  
20 loaded with gifts and shouting, Christmas gift.  
21 There, my aunts and uncles and cousins  
22 would be gathering from near and far.  
23 The adults were always in a festive mood—  
24 telling tells on each other, joking, laughing.  
25 While the women were preparing dinner,  
26 the men ambled about in the yard  
27 until they ended up behind the cotton house  
28 where they swallowed big swigs of whiskey.  
29 Noontime, we feasted in the big kitchen—  
30 the men and kids in the first shift,  
31 and then the women and babies.  
32 Those Christmas gatherings continued  
33 until Granny Bassett died at eighty-eight.  
34 Occasionally, her last words echo in my mind:  
35 I'm not afraid of dying, not in the least,  
36 but I do hate to leave family and friends.

1 **It has come round again**2 *Janet Joyner*3 after *Chanson d'automne*

4 — Paul Verlaine

5 this flaming lament

6 of that first rip

7 the rent letting day

8 into the dark

9 underworld

10 where the roots lay

11

12 with all our dead

13 to conjure anew

14 this blue dread

15 of Verlaine's sobbing

16 violins quivering in golds

17 pomegranate reds

18 parched brown

1 **Quiet Appreciation**2 *Lois Greene Stone*

3 Sunlight warms my skin,  
4 while raindrops remind  
5 me of summer sprinklers.  
6 Snow on my eyelashes, and  
7 autumn leaves clinging to  
8 sweaters make me smile.  
9 Cloud patterns constantly  
10 change.  
11 Inside myself, as seasons  
12 mark time, I stay the same:  
13 content, and grateful.

14 published Fall/winter 2006 *Shemom*  
15 reprinted July 2016 *Whispers* .  
16 reprinted Nov. 2019 *Scarlet Leaf Review*

1 **Two Christmases**2 *Robert Demaree*

3 Shreveport 1982: a downtown church  
 4 On Christmas eve, well loved, well cared for,  
 5 Worshippers in fine clothes crowd together  
 6 In the old walnut pews—it is too warm for furs:  
 7 Married daughters, handsome nephews  
 8 In from Houston, people we do not know:  
 9 Of all the places one could be this night,  
 10 As lonely as any bus station or manger.  
 11 But there is this:  
 12 The particular tears of Christmas,  
 13 The precise fragrances, the harmonies  
 14 That make it palpable,  
 15 That release memory's stubborn catch  
 16 Differ for us each  
 17 And for every home far from home.  
 18 I hear the sound, thin and sweet,  
 19 *O Holy Night,*  
 20 Scored for the voices of teenaged girls,  
 21 The white light of candles  
 22 Dancing on their faces.

23 Raleigh 2008: There are twelve of us  
 24 For Christmas,  
 25 Three generations, ours the oldest.  
 26 A benign weariness:  
 27 Food and gifts, family jokes and tales,  
 28 Small stresses let quietly pass.  
 29 Cousins cavort, careen, compete.  
 30 Our daughters, friends too, consider vegetables;  
 31 Their husbands assemble a soccer goal  
 32 While the gravy cools.  
 33 As we are leaving, I think I see  
 34 Traces of a tear on Julie's cheek;  
 35 Her smile lingers, quiet, faintly moist.

**Make us Angels of Christmas***Kathy Ellis*

1  
2  
3                   Weave us a carpet  
4                   So magic flows sunsets of scarlet  
5                   Float us in the seas  
6                   So kisses fall from rain trees  
7                   Paint masterpieces  
8                   So beauty never ceases  
9                   Grant each of us peace  
10                  So wrongs are released  
11                  Cultivate us into British landscapes  
12                  So blooms open their magnificent shapes  
13                  Savor the serenity of a Magnolia tree  
14                  So a hundred white doves rest on broad leaves  
15                  Share secrets of alchemy  
16                  So magical powers transform into reality  
17                  Play sonatas of cellos and violins  
18                  So vibrations enter within.  
19                  Make us sweet angels  
20                  So their wings flutter  
21                  Like an accordion of paper dolls  
22                  Strung on a Christmas tree.

1 **Joy**2 *Gloria Harrington*

3 I love your delighted eyes,  
4 sounds of laughter,  
5 warm house with  
6 Christmas lights blinking and  
7 baking smells.

8 Web of closeness

9 I love red and green shiny decorations,  
10 getting up early to unwrap presents,  
11 finding what you really wanted,  
12 listening to relatives  
13 sharing pictures and stories.

14 Love's connection

15 Being in the moment,  
16 Joy balances the "pow!" of change,  
17 fills in a torn web  
18 caused by missing faces and  
19 keeps clear memories of holidays past.

20 May yesterday's tomorrow be joyful as these holidays!



1 **The Blue Room, 1958** (reprinted from *Cave Wall*)

2 *Michael Gaspeny*

3 They tolerated me, a white boy, at the turquoise shack  
4 on Granby Street—wood-stove, jukebox, pool table,  
5 snack bar—where beer bottle-brown Mack Sweeny ruled,  
6 across from the high school with manacled doors.  
7 Virginia was resisting integration.

8 All winter, Mack led me to the warped cues.  
9 Thirteen, scared, four years younger,  
10 I put my quarter where he tapped his stick  
11 beside his coin on the rail. We played nine-ball,  
12 or, to be accurate, I watched him stroke  
13 and the balls disappear 'til his aim shifted  
14 to a cosmetician's hips. She shook  
15 to James Brown, bought a take-out hot dog;  
16 Mack sank to his knees, sang, "Please, please,  
17 don't go," aimed from the floor and finally missed.

18 I begged inside for my shots to fall  
19 and when I failed, hissed damns and hells  
20 to show I lacked luck, not manhood or skill.  
21 Mack muffed enough shots to stir my hope  
22 but won every game. Sometimes for kicks,  
23 he let me reach the money ball and choke,  
24 then applied the killing stroke with one hand.  
25 He collected my coins in the most pleasant way,  
26 asking, "One more time?" 'til I was broke.

27 I wanted to stay, but I had nothing to say.  
28 I couldn't call Jackie Robinson a credit to his race,  
29 or tell the cosmetician about the mammy doll  
30 I used to hug after Edna the maid had gone.

31 Outside, in the dark, sea-wind scraped the chains  
32 against the high school door. I scuffed toward home.  
33 In the Blue Room, pool balls clicked like castanets  
34 and "Love Is Strange" was always playing.

1 **JOE**2 *Preston Martin*

3 the smell of whiskey  
4 reminds me of Joe, the heft  
5 of the scarred shot glasses,  
6 of Dutton's smooth pour,  
7 the short beer beside

8 of how at 10AM on Christmas Eve  
9 the neon signs and strings of lights  
10 swam like tropical fish  
11 in the dark amber  
12 if you were to lift the shot,  
13 consider it  
14 as we considered that Christmas

15 Joe's hands quivered  
16 on the nicked bar,  
17 his crinkled voice spoke  
18 the sour jazz score of his recent days,  
19 life's inanity, accidentally  
20 he touched my hand

21 carols floated from ceiling speakers,  
22 Dutton came around again,  
23 and as if it were wine,  
24 we lifted the shot and sniffed

25 whiskey made  
26 warm beer taste sweet

1 **OCTOBER STIGMATA**2 *Harry Brown*

3 Euonymus bleed at the skin  
4 to astound the town.  
5 Maples' tattered seepage  
6 of heart's beauty  
7 at leaf's edge everywhere  
8 serves foil to mottled gold  
9 in quiet proof of life,  
10 in silent shout  
11 on behalf of Heaven  
12 who burns to give the lie  
13 to Sister Year's alleged failing.  
14 Rejoice, dear heart.  
15 They reign.

16 First published in *Wind* (No. 84-85, 2001).

1 **The Box**2 *Dena M. Ferrari*

3 The amazing gift was offered in great anticipation  
4 The box contained all the things the children loved best  
5 The card on top of the box said the secret was carried  
6 The dried ink was smeared with tears from the deliverer  
7 The energies to untie the bow was done with enthusiasm  
8 The first thing out of the box was a farkleberry from the  
9 fairies  
10 The gift that gave the children a blue toothed grin  
11 The happiness that poured out of the box was hilarious  
12 The imps gave the children an understanding of inspiration  
13 The jumping beans made the children so playful and jovial  
14 The knight on horseback was smaller than a grasshopper's  
15 knee  
16 The love the children felt when they saw a real leprechaun  
17 The magical cauldron of golden coins of luck was massive  
18 The naiad gave the children shells they could wear as a  
19 necklace  
20 The ogre contributed stones of rainbows of black and red  
21 opals  
22 The phoenix found a piece of coal in its nest to give as a  
23 present  
24 The roc gave them a feather with hues of dark black richness  
25 The source of magic this box held was surprising  
26 The troll gave the children a map to their treasure  
27 The unicorn gave them a small vial filled with understanding  
28 The velvet bag was filled with gems and jewels of great value  
29 The wishes the children had were granted with great wonder  
30 The xoanon soldier raised his dagger high like a xiphoid  
31 The yeti had a note to the children from their Nona from  
32 yonder  
33 The zillions of answers numbered the animals in the  
34 Universal Zoo

35 \*Anaphora poem/second and last word in alphabetical order

1 **SEASONED**2 *Joanne Kennedy Frazer*

3 I

4 Autumn's multi-hued leaves drift to earth,

5 compost in winter's dormant soil,

6 prod spring's green to emerge,

7 promote summer's bounty,

8 then transmute afresh to fall colors.

9 II

10 As my well-seasoned life celebrates its autumn,

11 meditation becomes an excavation of soul,

12 digging for any remaining seeds I can sow

13 that will bear the fruit of compassion

14 in a world mired in twisted vines of discord.

1 **While Nihilists Play *Rook***2 *Paul Sherman*

3 The priest confesses to the cockatoo in cage  
4 of Christmas' fling with the president's  
5 husband.

6 The countdown approaches, players  
7 argue over points. Flushed, the exuberant  
8 man stands

9 abruptly, tips his chair over backward,  
10 silences the gawking constellations.  
11 The game's dangling

12 bulb flickers; universe ruffles,  
13 wobbles on its swing. Squawks,  
14 *matters not.*

**1 Barleymaze**

2 *Farley Granger*

3 The fall's the time of Barleymaze,

4 A fiery harvest flay.

5 The colors molded jealously

6 In hot and cold display.

7 Soysquash and baccoweed grow

8 Left and right, here-there.

9 With a sassy wave to the woods nearby

10 They seek its oakpine stare.

11 Melonbeans are near the ground

12 And turnsnips under deep.

13 A pond nearby holds snakerfish,

14 A protein catch to keep.

15 This farm is not so different

16 From those you use to see.

17 Just five hundred years ahead of us,

18 Reared by chemistry.

1 **Valentine Choice**2 *Mona Miracle*

3 Don't go to Google  
4 looking for origins  
5 and find the horror  
6 hidden beneath;  
7 seeing fruits on limbs  
8 of knowledge drip wet  
9 not dew but tears, tears  
10 masquerading as dew.

11 Don't delve so deeply,  
12 watching the dreadful,  
13 finding catharsis,  
14 to feel satisfied  
15 that headless Valentine  
16 is sainted forever, forever  
17 spawning chocolate sales.

18 Cherish scenes that tasted  
19 like lumpy sweet school paste  
20 we dripped on paper lace  
21 that embraced red hearts  
22 we scissored out  
23 in elementary  
24 innocence.



1 **Lira in the Fall**2 *Mary Ricketson*

3 I love the sun in the autumn sky.  
4 Streaks of warm, sheets of gold  
5 embrace my face, conspire me  
6 to get outside all day long,  
7 no matter the broom and kettle inside.

8 Glow and shine that burned and blistered  
9 all summer is welcome gold after a frosty night  
10 under quilts of stars and running stitch.

11 Cold morning air crisps the mood—  
12 Apple time, shorter days, longer nights  
13 for love, or page after page of books,  
14 buttered biscuits, and tea with honey.

15 Tethered to this cove, sourwood reds its leaves,  
16 still veiled in strands of summer gone to seed.  
17 Hickory glistens clusters, leaves of gold.  
18 Dry oak leaves scrunch and scramble under foot.  
19 Rabbits run to hide; mules stand still through it all.  
20 Walnut arms, already empty, reach for sun's caress,  
21 fire and desire in the wide blue sky.

22 Published in *Lira, Poems of a Woodland Woman*, Mary Ricketson,  
23 Redhawk Publications 2021

1 **Christmas Trees**2 *Carroll S. Taylor*

3 I stroll past shops and look into their windows.  
4 Fake winter berries, snow, and silk poinsettias  
5 sparkle with sequins and a dusting of glitter.  
6 Symmetrical trees stand straight, adorned  
7 with ornaments and feathers from faraway countries.  
8 In a bigger store, carols play in a music box  
9 tucked away somewhere among *themed* trees.  
10 A silver tree with twinkling lights  
11 changes colors at the touch of a phone app.  
12 A white tree bears nothing but plaid bows  
13 and identical red and black nutcrackers.

14 Not one of those trees compares to the prickly cedars  
15 of my past—cut from the homeplace woods,  
16 their decorations messy and smudged by the fingers  
17 of a child who painted them just for us.  
18 A tinsel star, hung long ago by a little boy  
19 held high enough in his father's arms to reach  
20 the topmost branch, still shimmers in the light.

21 Four pastel angels have graced our tree  
22 for fifty years, never failing to fold their hands  
23 in prayer. The angels mingle with their old friends:  
24 Ornaments turned so their cracks and chips don't show,  
25 others passed down from grandparents and aunts.  
26 Fading reindeer candy canes, no longer edible, their  
27 antlers made from pipe cleaners. A cotton-bearded  
28 Santa Claus face created by a kindergartner.

29 Now the boy is a man with a young child of his own.  
30 He's home for the holidays from far across the country.  
31 He lifts his daughter in his arms and helps her hang  
32 the tinsel star on our spruce from the corner store.  
33 Our Christmas tree is a themed tree.  
34 Its theme is *memories*.

1 **Grail**2 *Jo Koster*

3 Reverently she takes it down  
4 from atop the bowfront cabinet  
5 A year's dust glazing the porcelain  
6 Faded pink roses and crazing  
7 More apparent every year

8 For more than a century  
9 it has graced the tables of her mother's kin  
10 the good china too precious for everyday use  
11 brought out only at Thanksgiving  
12 and Christmas to feed gathered  
13 family and friends

14 It has become a ritual  
15 this lifting down  
16 this washing  
17 this placing it full of meat and gravy  
18 in the center of an ironed linen cloth  
19 just so  
20 and she now the Grail maiden  
21 inheriting the dish and the mantle

22 This year the family cannot gather  
23 This year care keeps them apart  
24 Too fragile in age and health and spirit  
25 to risk the journey

26 But she will reach it down nonetheless  
27 Prepare it lovingly  
28 Lay the table and light the candles  
29 Fill it with food  
30 As long as she is able  
31 fulfill this sacrament

1 **First Camping Trip With My Son, Late Autumn, 2012**2 *Steve Cushman*

3 We huddled in the cold by the campfire,  
4 ate hotdogs and S'mores with dirty, sticky  
5 fingers, slept fitful, the ground unforgiving.  
6 In the morning, I could barely open my eyes,  
7 the sunshine through the orange and red  
8 leaves beautiful as anything I'd ever seen.

1 **Home for the Holidays**

2 *Bill Petz*

3 A fond return to home  
4 is simply where I already am.

5 My good old whatevers  
6 are gone, rarely accept visitors.

7 Glory days once waived in joy  
8 now wave a fond goodbye.

9 Nostalgia used to be a diagnosis,  
10 a damaged brain longing

11 for what never was. But warm memories,  
12 tender moments, objects of gentle recall,

13 habits of love are gems in the mosaic of me  
14 placed not with longing, but gratitude.

1 **Autumn Leaves**2 *Rebekah Timms*

3 A small clearing at the edge of the forest invites  
4 me to enter the vibrant spectacle of autumn. The  
5 trees brandish their color like a dancer's scarf.  
6 I move among them, stretching tall and raising  
7 my arms in celebration of the season.

8 What am I to make of the nostalgia that overcomes  
9 me as I watch leaves swirl gently to the ground?  
10 My path is covered with a visual cacophony of  
11 colorful symbols of renewal one by one validating  
12 the eternal rhythms of the earth. What beckons me  
13 to acknowledge the beauty of each leaf as it finds  
14 its resting place?

15 Looking up at my companions, I am called to take  
16 part in their ritual. I breathe in their earthy  
17 smells and long to revive passions of life grown  
18 brittle with time and to exhale my harbored,  
19 withered dreams. The warmth of expectancy creates  
20 fresh sensations within me.

21 The angled rays of the sun shed new light on the  
22 fallen leaves. They become my foibles, my wasted  
23 intentions, destined to dwindle beneath the winter  
24 snows, to be ever washed away by the spring rains.

# 1 **Mama Loved Christmas**

2 *Patsy Kennedy Lain*

3 Mama decorated traditionally most holidays,  
4 only once putting up a shiny silver limbed with blue  
5 ornaments hanging, sparkling from a rotating wheel  
6 changing hues slowly; she splattered strings  
7 of old timey large bulbs outside, later replaced  
8 by mini light cords, covered our house, bushes;  
9 Dad made a huge star she lighted on the garage.

10 Shopping all year, she bought gifts, goodies;  
11 Dad celebrated, taking a drink for his birthday,  
12 their anniversary happening only a week before;  
13 days ahead Mama baked coconut, chocolate,  
14 lemon pies, big nutmeg flavored tea cakes, a white  
15 frosted cake covered by freshly shredded coconut;  
16 sometimes she sipped a little homemade wine.

17 Mama delighted every year in making a huge  
18 Japanese Fruit Cake, two large sheet sponges  
19 cut in half, stacked, filled with chopped black  
20 walnuts, raisins, dried fruits, fresh squeezed  
21 orange juice, hand grated coconut and whole  
22 pecans between, atop four white iced layers;  
23 no one hardly ate but her and Dad for days.

24 She labored all day, created a feast, everything  
25 we loved for Christmas Eve, boiled a yummy,  
26 corned ham, skinned, peppered, plus collards,  
27 chopped cabbage, coleslaw, creamy chicken  
28 pastry, rice, speckled butter beans, potato salad,  
29 deviled eggs, crispy fried cornbread, brown biscuits;  
30 Daddy fried chicken in his outside fryer.

1 **Goddess of Autumn**2 *Suzanne Delaney*

3 Gliding down amber, leaf strewn lanes

4 Her wild hair flowing in golden tones

5 Goddess of Autumn awakens again

6 To soothe the sound of Winter's pain

7 She lingers in woodsmoke of promises made

8 Where trees are shedding their Summer shade

9 She paints their green with a crimson tinge

10 Beside oaks that stand all acorn-ringed

11 Her voice is whispering in every glade

12 Her frosty eyes and spicy smile

13 Her ragged, leaf brown rustling gown

14 Her brisk, bright, essence floating down



1 **Winter**2 *Grayson Jones*

3 Frozen beauty, bleak and bare  
4 standing stiffly, holding care  
5 beyond one's feeling. Harsh, yet sure,  
6 are Winter's ways, effecting cure  
7 for lingering melancholy left  
8 inside us, empty and bereft  
9 of former joys.

10 Winter reigns to regain poise  
11 as soft snow all scars obscure,  
12 bitter kindness we must endure.  
13 We stand in Winter on the edge...  
14 freeze inside or make the pledge  
15 to know raw pleasure, survive the season,  
16 hone our senses, cling to reason.  
17 We may find that all's not lost.  
18 Diamonds sparkle in the frost  
19 on a hill at night. The valley below  
20 is robed in stillness, and we know  
21 Winter's sharpness will soon cease  
22 leaving in its wake a peace  
23 that comforts, eases Winter's sting  
24 and instills new hope for Spring.

**1 Christmas is a State of Mind**2 *Dwight L. Roth*

3 When I think of Christmas

4 I am carried to that special place

5 hidden somewhere in the past

6 \*

7 Christmas is a state of mind, you know

8 those childhood memories

9 packed away in a boxes, like decorations

10 brought out to celebrate the season

11 \*

12 Christmas is a time when a tune or a song

13 will open the window of my mind

14 to images seemingly forgotten, yet vividly clear

15 Music does that, you know

16 The song always remembers

17 \*

18 Christmas is that feeling of reliving

19 school days, of pictures to color

20 decorations on the wall...

21 recalling church programs with four-line

22 recitations dressed up as Mary and Joseph

23 with the baby Jesus in a manger

24 and frightened shepherds and Wise Men

25 \*

26 Christmas is a feeling of comfort and joy

27 being loved and appreciated

28 singled out and given special gifts

29 remembering the smiles on people's faces

30 \*

31 The joy of giving and receiving

32 is what Christmas is all about...

33 God's gift of love and grace to us

34 is now our gift to share with others

35 \*

36 Christmas is a state of mind

37 lived out every day of our life.

**1 New Year's Day**

2 *Trude McCarty*

3 Could be exhaustion from a late-night party,  
4 or the stillness of an empty house; might be that  
5 the holidays are finally over, it doesn't really  
6 matter why—the year has ended and I am blue.

7 Dusty cardboard box, full of carefully packed  
8 ornaments, sits in a dark corner. What will happen  
9 before this box is opened again? New people to love,  
10 new places to visit? Or will there be loss?  
11 Blaring TV interrupts my thoughts—  
12 I struggle to close the old box.

13 Evening comes early, crisp and cold; glad this day  
14 is ending soon. Golden light pierces through bare,  
15 black tree limbs landing in patches on the dry, grey  
16 grass. Time to fry bacon, stew tomatoes, and boil  
17 black-eyed peas for one last holiday tradition—  
18 the Hoppin' John.

19 Children explode through the back door like  
20 a thundering locomotive, full of life, energy, and joy.  
21 Around the old pine table we settle into laughter,  
22 reflections, and resolutions. Back to love,  
23 gratitude, and hope with this family of mine.

**Minnesota Morning***Peggy Dugan French*

3 For Hugh

4 a dark winter morning  
5 quiet and cold awaits  
6 outside the kitchen window  
7 overworked hands surround  
8 the familiar coffee cup  
9 before heading out  
10 to the cows  
11 awaiting  
12 the morning ritual

13 with a well-worn cap  
14 pulled on snugly  
15 jacket collar up against the wind  
16 the walk to the barn begins  
17 with the crunch of snow underfoot  
18 and crisp air afloat

19 inside the barn  
20 it's peaceful  
21 the rhythm of milking machines  
22 and the scratchy radio  
23 make good company  
24 until the last cow  
25 saunters from the barn  
26 into the field

27 then the farmer returns  
28 to the cozy kitchen  
29 and a warm breakfast  
30 just in time to see  
31 the morning sun  
32 peek over  
33 the winter woods.

## TO EACH OF US OUR OWN TRADITIONS

*Elizabeth B. Watson*

3 IN THE LAST CENTURY, we bought a house on a busy route in  
4 a Massachusetts town. The origin of that house, at 589 Main  
5 Street, dated back to 1761. Charming homes on that heavily  
6 traveled road were officially designated to be in a Historic  
7 District. Such a designation means owners can not change the  
8 exterior of the house, siding, color or construction, without  
9 authorization of the town's strict Historic Society. This we  
10 learned after signing the contract. When we moved in we  
11 inherited a lengthy history of our *new* home.

12 In this old town, Christmas is a season of deeply rooted  
13 traditions. Families follow their own traditions, passed down  
14 generations. When two families blend to form yet another,  
15 habits get sorted out to become "ours." Christmas greetings,  
16 fresh trees and wreaths, candles in the windows, "stockings  
17 hung by the chimney with care," colorful wrappings, tinsel,  
18 turkey, cranberry sauce, a crowded dining table with  
19 poinsettias and so forth. Add a white Christmas to that list.

20 Although we moved with our electric candles, we  
21 purchased more for *all* the windows exposed to the street on  
22 the corner lot. Unaware of protocol, our bulbs were white,  
23 **the proper color** for Main Street. Orange, red or blue were  
24 out of order. Citizens gossiped about *the poor taste* of those  
25 whose houses didn't glow in white. We joked that the critics  
26 felt the non-conformers should be fined.

27 There was a handsome spruce tree at the corner of our  
28 house. The former owners neglected to inform us that they  
29 strung lights on that tree every December. Consequently, the  
30 tree was not lit up our first Christmas. It took little time  
31 before we got questioned about our failure to honor that  
32 tradition. We thought about it and decided no Historic  
33 District edict required us to keep in line with that history. So  
34 our spruce didn't glow. It took several years for passers-by to  
35 get over their disappointment in our renegade decision. But  
36 we did plug in our white candles diligently every night for a  
37 month.

**Christmas 1968***Dorothy Barrow*1  
2

3 Simply the crackle of bullets in Vietnam and close cannon fire  
4 near the Dead Sea interrupted Christmas 1968. Our soldiers  
5 feasted on turkey and all the trimmings, somehow that day.

6 Returning from orbiting the Moon, the three astronauts  
7 wished the world “Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah!”  
8 Their meal was turkey with a spot of the trimmings.

9 In a cold and sobering Antarctica, the US Navy outpost of 50  
10 men sat down to turkey and sweet potatoes, cornbread and  
11 cranberry sauce.

12 Expressions of hope for peace were echoed by clergy of all  
13 religions, nations, and ethnicities.

14 President Lyndon Johnson and family spent a quiet and  
15 simple dinner of turkey, etcetera, for their last and final  
16 Christmas in the White House.

17

18 Thank goodness for fine seasoning and the fair reasoning.

## Pop's Thanksgiving Spirit

*K D Kennedy, Jr.*

1 WE ALL CAME today to Mother/Grandmother“Mana’s”  
2 house for our annual traditional grand meal and  
3 Thanksgiving.

4 This year will be different in that there will be no “Pop”, our  
5 Father/Grandfather and leader of our pack.

6 He died in September at 94 and his dominant personality will  
7 be so greatly missed.

8 His robust greeting, his straight forward grabbing of each of  
9 us to welcome us to his warm event, will be missed and  
10 cannot be replaced.

11 His short but sincere food blessing, his banning of sensitive  
12 subjects that come up with his loud “let’s change the subject”  
13 sneer, will be sorely missed and irreplaceable.

14 His carving the turkey, serving everyone’s plates, and starting  
15 the passing of the vegetables and condiments with a sly grin  
16 to each were historic and were handed down from his father  
17 Alonzo from La Grange.

18 So we will press on without him. But long will we love his  
19 memory, smile at his photos, savor his funny ways, and share  
20 great stories of him.

21 He will always be with us as long as one of us who knew him  
22 is still alive or has kept a record of his life for future  
23 generations to come who we must properly inculcate.

24 Pop was the best. And yet we all are...and we will be forever.  
25 As we continue gathering, giving thanks, and sharing turkey  
26 together, our family will carry on, be a loving unit, and savor  
27 our special Thanksgiving spirit...for Pop’s sake.

## To Celebrate ALL Seasonal Holidays

*Annie Chambers*

- 3 I SEE A lot of holidays from November 1st through New  
4 Years Day, although I don't celebrate, think about, or observe  
5 many of them.
- 6 A few are...
- 7 Nov 2nd: International Day to End Impunity for Crimes  
8 Against Journalists. (It is needed!)
- 9 Nov 6th: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation  
10 of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict. (Duh!  
11 But Liberals must glorify it)
- 12 Nov 12th: World Pneumonia Day. (We need more I guess?)
- 13 Nov 16th: International Day of Tolerance. (Not observed by  
14 many, obviously)
- 15 Nov 27th: Small Business Saturday. (Would be more  
16 appropriate M-F)
- 17 Dec 9th: World Genocide Commemoration Day. (Hopefully  
18 being Agin' it)
- 19 Dec 18th: International Migrants Day. (Sure to be popular  
20 depending on your political party)
- 21 Dec 20th: International Human Solidarity Day. (Has  
22 obviously done wonders in the past?)
- 23 I'll have to say I love the old standards like Thanksgiving,  
24 Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Christmas, but I sure would like to  
25 know why International Men's Day and World Toilet Day  
26 both fall on Nov 19th. Happy holiday!



**Forties: A Musing***Celia Miles*1  
2

3 FALL. CLEARLY SUMMER'S over. Days darken earlier, sunshine  
4 is weaker. It's the dusty time before the snows. I remember  
5 fall as a cooling, calming time after the hard hot work of  
6 spring and summer; the "laying by" is over, the "putting up"  
7 is done. Time to rejoice in being ready for icy blasts and  
8 home-bound days.

9       The root cellar is full. Bushels of Winesaps, MacIntoshes,  
10 sheepsnose apples line the sides. Piles of black hulled walnuts  
11 are corralled in a corner. Around the solidly packed dirt floor  
12 sit crocks filled to the brim with pickled beans, pickled corn,  
13 pickled beets, okra, sauerkraut, chow chow, each top tied with  
14 a clean cloth, covered with an inverted plate anchored by a  
15 flat stone.

16       Shelves sag under the weight of gallons of blackberries  
17 and molasses, jars of waxy honey, grape juice, and cherries.  
18 Sausage patties snuggle in quart Mason jars, surrounded by  
19 snow-white lard. Some Irish potatoes, turnips, and cabbages  
20 may be stored in the cellar, but often they're "holed up" in a  
21 nearby steep bank, with layers of straw and dirt heaped on  
22 them ("cold storage," for sure).

23       Strings and strings of half-runners green beans hang from  
24 rafters to dry, to become tough "leather britches." Bunches  
25 of onions keep them company. Salted hams are suspended  
26 high in an outbuilding.

27       My mother reviews her food supply, sniffs appreciatively,  
28 sighs: "We're ready. Bring on winter."

## Grandmother's Christmas Chili

*Nancy Jo Dederer*

1 CHRISTMAS EVE WAS always hectic when I was growing up.  
2 The schedule was tight for Mom hosting company and  
3 getting four children dressed for church and out the door  
4 early for choir practice.

5 Grandmother's way of helping was to bring a big pot of  
6 chili for supper. She and Grandpa packed up the well-worn,  
7 stainless-steel pot, cushioning it with sauce-stained oven mitts  
8 and additional dish towels. They placed it in the trunk along  
9 with a bag of Fritos and their suitcases and then traveled  
10 ninety minutes to our house. The chili was still warm upon  
11 arrival.

12 As regally as magi bearing gifts of gold, frankincense and  
13 myrrh, Grandmother stepped into our kitchen and proudly  
14 set her offering on the stove. *Christmas gift!* she'd exclaim with  
15 her Texas drawl. *Christmas gift!* —She said that every year,  
16 explaining that it was a southern expression, though I've  
17 never heard any southerner repeat it.

18 The adults happily dug into their meal at the kitchen  
19 table. My brother, sisters and I munched on the Fritos and  
20 stared unenthusiastically at our bowls, wishing the thick, red  
21 slop would just disappear. —It was the kidney beans! Those  
22 dark red, mushy, tasteless things made us gag. United in our  
23 annual rebellion we complained, *Why chili?*

24 One Christmas Eve, Dad brought home McDonalds for  
25 us kids: cheeseburgers, fries, and chocolate shakes. *Christmas*  
26 *gift, indeed!* Chili plus McDonald's became my childhood  
27 family tradition.

28 On my first Christmas Eve away from home a church  
29 family invited me for dinner. I sat down to a table beautifully  
30 set with silver and Lenox china. In the center were two  
31 punchbowl-sized, crystal serving dishes filled with steamed  
32 shrimp and oysters. Champagne was poured.

33 I enjoyed that fancy meal, but I'd be lying if I didn't admit  
34 that on my way to candlelight service that holy night, I  
35 hankered for a bowl of chili and a chocolate shake!

## Purple Violets

*Barbara Ledford Wright*

1  
2

3 AT ROCK CREEK SCHOOL, my first grade teacher assigned me  
4 to water the pot of purple violets. The purple added beauty to  
5 the room. Outside the cold winter dusted snow on the  
6 mountaintops.

7 The teacher said Christmas was coming soon and wrote  
8 our names on strips of paper. We'd buy a Christmas present  
9 for the one we selected and bring it to the Christmas party.

10 Dad drove Mom, my brother and me into the town of  
11 Ellijay, GA to do our shopping. I sped into the 5 and 10 cent  
12 store to select a gift for my classmate. I saw a tea set painted  
13 with purple violets. I asked, "Mom, please may I get this for  
14 the present?" Mom gave permission, and bought the tea set  
15 and some wrapping paper and ribbon.

16 We had sugar cookies and red punch for our party. Then  
17 it was time to get our gifts. The teacher handed presents to  
18 everyone but me. I waited and waited. I interrupted. I waved  
19 my arm in the air. I told her I didn't get one.

20 She asked the children who had drawn my name, but no  
21 one confessed. I choked on a sob and tears stung my cheeks.  
22 The next thing that I did was unlike me. I sprang out of my  
23 seat and ran to the girl that had received the tea set. I jerked it  
24 off her desk and hugged it to my chest. The teacher pried the  
25 tea set from me. "No, no, you must not do that! You gave the  
26 tea set to her for a Christmas gift."

27 The teacher went to her desk. She pulled a white  
28 handkerchief from her purse and handed it to me. The edges  
29 were embroidered with purple violets just like the ones I had  
30 faithfully watered.

31 Since that time I can't look at purple violets without  
32 feeling both sadness and joy.

## The Christmas Blowup

*Brenda Kay Ledford*

1  
2

3 I HAD MANY things on my plate before the family arrived.  
4 Mama told me to just fix TV dinners. No way. I would  
5 prepare a home-cooked meal like Martha Stewart.

6 Mama sighed. Due to a broken foot, she couldn't help  
7 me.

8 "No problem, Mama. I have it under control," I said and  
9 winked at her. I rushed to the kitchen to check on the turkey.  
10 In my haste, I yanked out the pan without a potholder. Yikes!  
11 I poured cold water on my hand and wouldn't you know it?  
12 Ring! Ring! Ring!

13 "Who's calling?" asked Mama. "The family may have car  
14 trouble."

15 "I'm glad you're home. Could I speak to the lady of the  
16 house?"

17 I wondered how the caller got my unlisted number. I was  
18 hot, tired, and ready to meltdown. "There's no lady in this  
19 house," I shouted and slammed down the receiver.

20 "Who was that calling?" asked Mama.

21 "Just an old spam call," I retorted.

22 I wiped away sweat from my forehead and raced to the  
23 kitchen. I checked off my menu. Potatoes creamed. Peas  
24 cooked. Salads fixed. Rolls baked. Yams, dressing, gravy  
25 prepared. Pecan pie cooling. Fruit cake sliced. Table set.

26 The family arrived at last. We hugged, laughed, and  
27 exchanged Christmas presents. Little Regan Blanche clapped  
28 her hands, jumped up and down as she opened her gifts.

29 "Dinner will be served in a minute. I fixed it myself." I  
30 ignored the shocked looks.

31 Suddenly we heard an explosion like a gun shot. I ran to  
32 the kitchen and almost fainted. The turkey exploded in the  
33 oven. Meat hung on the racks, sides of the oven, and only a  
34 skeleton remained on the pan.

35 Brother-in-law Randy said, "Guess that turkey flew the  
36 coop."

37 Family members snorted. As a unit we broke out with  
38 belly laughs.

## Good Will toward Men

*Sandra Dillingham*

1  
2

3 THE LIGHTS DIMMED except for those over the pulpit, and  
4 the “angels,” dressed in white sheets with attached wings  
5 made of coat hangers wrapped in tissue paper and tinsel,  
6 raised their voices for a beautiful rendition of “Hark, the  
7 Herald Angels Sing.” Then the narrator started reading the  
8 story of Jesus’s birth. The spotlight shone on Mary, wearing a  
9 blue sheet, and Joseph, dressed in farmer’s overalls, as they  
10 stood at the manger looking down at the baby Jesus (a child’s  
11 doll). “Wise men,” dressed in blue jeans and Levi shirts, stood  
12 to the side, watching over their cardboard sheep. As the  
13 narrator spoke of the three wise men who came bearing gifts  
14 of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, three boys who had been  
15 giggling and pestering girls on the school bus the day before  
16 solemnly walked in wearing borrowed bathrobes, their white  
17 socks peeking over their scuffed loafers, carrying their gifts of  
18 gold (a cigar box), frankincense (an oil lamp), and myrrh (a  
19 decanter of bath salts), their faces pink, their eyes downcast.

20 When “Silent Night” was sung, signaling the end of the  
21 pageant, the lights all came back on. Once again the pageant  
22 participants became innocent, self-conscious children and  
23 teens, excitedly waiting for their Christmas bag. There were  
24 no Toys for Tots, Ingle’s Giving Trees, and Eblen Charities  
25 at that time to make sure every child received something for  
26 Christmas. So this Christmas bag was all some children would  
27 receive. The younger children squealed with delight when  
28 they opened their brown paper bag that contained an apple,  
29 an orange, and a stick of peppermint candy. Although the  
30 older children were quieter, their smiles also betrayed their  
31 pleasure.

**The Fencerow***Bob Garrett*1  
2

3 THE DUCK POND, a place known for memories of field,  
4 water, holidays, and special occasions. To the southwest side  
5 of this South Georgia paradise sat an old fencerow,  
6 encumbered with tree saplings, briars, and brambles. It still  
7 remains, but now is surrounded by planted pines, rather than  
8 fields of agriculture.

9       Years ago, when wild Bob-white quail were abundant in  
10 number, this most beautifully colored of all game birds could  
11 be found here. Many an afternoon was spent walking up and  
12 down this one hundred or so yard stretch of real estate  
13 following bird dogs with such names as Jack, Buck, Ranger,  
14 and Rebel. Good dogs for certain sure. Maybe not field trial  
15 capable, but certainly worth their salt.

16       The feel and smell, and chill of Fall in the air, with the  
17 sun setting to the west, or on an overcast afternoon in the  
18 misting rain. Even on those few occasions when no point was  
19 to be found, this stretch of property gave all the feel and  
20 expectation of potential success.

21       Yes, to the outdoorsman, this is the things dreams are  
22 made of for sure. To many, this may not stir the soul. But I  
23 am more than thankful to have experienced such times  
24 growing up.... Walking the Old Fencerow.

## An Innocent Time

*James N. Gibson*

1  
2

3 IN ANOTHER TIME prior to September 11, 2001, I was posted  
4 to a 3-year management assignment at a Taiwan  
5 manufacturing complex. My wife and I were flying home for  
6 the Christmas holidays in the U.S., and our itinerary included  
7 a 3-day stop in London. We landed at night and proceeded by  
8 cab to our hotel on Cadigan Place near Harrod's.

9 Upon arrival, I was surprised when hotel security  
10 inspected each piece of luggage prior to allowing it into the  
11 hotel. When I inquired, they courteously explained there was  
12 a Security Alert, but we should not be alarmed; they were  
13 merely being cautious. I thought this strange, as we'd flown in  
14 and out of several Asian countries without a care, but I  
15 dismissed the thought as we proceeded to our room.

16 During our stay which included visiting our fellow expat  
17 friends from Taiwan and sightseeing, we attended a  
18 multi-course traditional British Christmas dinner in the hotel  
19 dining room composed of squab, roast goose with dressing,  
20 white wine, Christmas pudding and coffee. As we dined, my  
21 wife and I discussed what life must have been like during  
22 such opulent Christmas celebrations in bygone days.

23 We departed through Gatwick and again I was struck by  
24 the tight security and serious demeanor of airport personnel.  
25 But all went well and we completed our flight to the U.S.  
26 without incident. Years passed; we repatriated to the USA,  
27 and then came 9/11. The reality of hidden dangers in past  
28 years suddenly surfaced, and the world changed forever. We  
29 had been innocents abroad, trusting while dangers lurked.  
30 Recently a friend said: "I just want all this to be over so we  
31 can return to normal!"

32 I remained silent as I thought back to a simpler time. I  
33 realized this *IS* the new normal. The times of genteel British  
34 Christmases and flying around the world without anxiety and  
35 caution are in the past. Even so, for a point in time—it was a  
36 blessed Christmas!

**“Cheers”***G P Whelan*1  
2

3 HOLIDAYS, THE TWENTY-FOUR hour period that arrives each  
4 year when acrimony, hate, bitterness, and sometimes even  
5 war is put on hold, if not banned for the moment. Eyes  
6 engage in laughter, heart sing songs of joy, and joviality is  
7 meted out in smiles, alas, now hidden behind masks.

8 “Happy Holidays” she greets me. Her eyes are laden in  
9 frustration. Her spirit haggard and seemingly broken. An  
10 older woman still working well past her day.

11 “Merry Christmas to you!” I returned, having noticed her  
12 “keep Christ in Christmas” pin, fastened next to the more  
13 innocuous Happy Holiday, scripted in red letters across her  
14 black mask.

15 She stood next to a stool I sensed she wanted to sit on.  
16 “Take your rest,” I motioned to her. Her eyes suggested she  
17 stabbed at a smile.

18 “Life is humorous, isn’t it?” I offered. “Here we are  
19 celebrating the birth of Christ, and the profiteers forbid you  
20 to mention His name, for fear of offending the purchasers of  
21 what? Christmas gifts! So they sanitize it to reduce both it’s  
22 consequence and offensiveness without ruining its profit. We  
23 engaged in small talk of remembrances. I dazzled her with my  
24 brilliant soliloquy of knowledge. How the origin of Christmas  
25 is in fact a pagan holiday. How the Romans started  
26 celebrating it 336 years after the death of Christ. I then  
27 confessed to her that I’d been banned for life in the  
28 philosophy class I once attended. She laughed and cast her  
29 eyes past me in worry of the line that was growing.

30 “I’ve stolen enough of your time, and filled your head  
31 with much useless knowledge” I quipped. “And, I managed  
32 to snatch you a ten minute respite!”

33 I retrieved my card and purchases and wish her a Merry  
34 Christmas, and tossed her a flirtatious wink. She cupped her  
35 hands over her mouth, and whispered me the same...





## 'Twas The Nightmare Before Christmas

*A play on words\**

*Martha O'Quinn*

4 JOY TO THE world, jolly old St. Nicholas, it's the most  
5 wonderful day of the year; says who? It's Christmas Eve and  
6 my daughter, Suzy Snowflake, informs me that Grandma got  
7 run over by reindeer while driving home for Christmas. Suzy  
8 says Grandma's upset because she was to perform the  
9 Christmas Polka in a local dance competition. Her stage name  
10 is Calypso Carol.

11 I'm overwhelmed and see a blue Christmas ahead; itching  
12 from an allergic reaction to mistletoe and wine, and the holly  
13 and the ivy, which was overdone at the office party. I bit into  
14 a brownie and broke two teeth on a nut shell. My Christmas  
15 list is simple; all I want for Christmas is my two front teeth.

16 All through the night I'm bombarded with dreams about  
17 animals. Alvin and the chipmunks, Dominick the donkey,  
18 barking dogs singing jingle bells, all fighting for top billing.

19 On Christmas morning I awake to strains of Ave Maria  
20 and lo how a rose . . ., that's my Suzy. She opens the door to  
21 my bedroom singing white Christmas. I look outside and  
22 behold a winter wonderland. Sleigh bells ring and the aroma  
23 of chestnuts roasting on an open fire wafts through the door.  
24 I snuggle back into my covers and smile, comforted with the  
25 knowledge that there's no place like home for the holidays.

26 Suzy says that Grandma is resting comfortably in her  
27 condo, surrounded by all of her elderly men friends. There's  
28 Father Christmas, good King Wenceslas and, Grandma's sure  
29 that after the havoc wreaked on her by his herd, Santa Baby  
30 will hang around for awhile with some TLC.

31 Because it's Christmas, bells will be ringing and there's no  
32 room for Mr. Grinch. Let there be peace on earth; don't  
33 forget to feed the reindeer. Most of all, remember, we wish  
34 you a merry Christmas.

35 \*There are thirty-two Christmas song titles in this story. Can you find all  
36 of them?

## The Christmas Box

*Marian Gowan*

1  
2

3 THE PACKAGE ARRIVES battered, the box crushed, and the  
4 brown paper wrapping torn. It is the last week of November,  
5 1957.

6 “Just in time for the start of Advent,” says my mother.  
7 “This is a package from Tante Hannie in Germany.” She  
8 gingerly opens the box, careful not to spill any contents.  
9 Hand-knit sweaters for each of my three brothers tumble out,  
10 next four little mesh bags of chocolate coins (one for each of  
11 our stockings), then a length of light blue fabric for my  
12 mother’s sewing imagination to create a dress for me. At the  
13 very bottom is an Advent calendar.

14 My mother has spoken of Tante Hannie many times,  
15 explaining how her aunt helped her escape from Germany in  
16 August of 1939. Mom had been visiting from Massachusetts,  
17 and needed to return to continue with college. To us, Tante  
18 Hannie was a mystery in a far-off place, and we wouldn’t truly  
19 understand the events of 1939 until we learned about them in  
20 history class years later. For now, this package was enough.

21 “Starting December 1, we will open a little door each day,  
22 to see the picture underneath. You four kids will take turns.”

23 Each morning, before breakfast, we wait in anticipation  
24 for the next little door to open, being careful not to tear the  
25 fragile cardboard. We uncover laughing dolls, evergreen trees,  
26 a bicycle, elves at work. We all wonder what will be revealed  
27 on Christmas Eve.

28 At last, the day arrives. We each take a turn at opening the  
29 final window of the Advent calendar. A full manger scene  
30 greets us, with baby Jesus in the center, Mary and Joseph, and  
31 the attendant barn animals.

32 “Now you see the true meaning of Christmas,” says  
33 Mom. Years later, I realize that the package had been sent  
34 from Zittau, in East Germany. Now its battered condition  
35 makes sense.

**BEGINNINGS***Beverly Ohler*1  
2

3 IF YOU ARE an American, you are also something else. Your  
4 ethnic beginnings are across an ocean or over a border.  
5 Somewhere deep in your being you share a kinship with all  
6 who live or lived in that place—the place that birthed your  
7 ancestors, whether long ago or back one or two generations.

8 That was the concept behind a Heritage Festival I was  
9 once a part of at the small college where I lived. Months  
10 before the festival, ethnic groups met to study the culture  
11 from which they originated. Music, food, crafts, dance,  
12 entertainment of all sorts were discovered in order to create  
13 the many events that comprised the festival. It was a  
14 magnificent community celebration culminating in a world  
15 bazaar that was truly a potpourri of delights from Norwegian  
16 krumkages to the Samoan fire dance! More than providing  
17 the excitement of celebration, the whole event encouraged its  
18 participants to touch a taproot within. It brought to the heart  
19 a primal feeling of belonging ... belonging to a place, to a  
20 culture, to a significant beginning.

21 Once, at Disney World, I witnessed that feeling of  
22 belonging. I was walking around Epcot, enjoying the unique  
23 cultures, each representing, its essence, its ambiance. There  
24 was one moment that I will always remember. It was at the  
25 Mexican pavilion, where a mariachi band was playing with  
26 great gusto. As crowds gathered, listening and enjoying, I  
27 noticed one Mexican family, obviously transformed from  
28 dullness into an epiphany of joy! Their faces radiated their  
29 feelings within as the music encased their hearts. They  
30 clapped and sang and danced to their familiar tunes, hugging  
31 each other, laughing. Their laughter was infectious as the  
32 crowd joined them, some through tears of joy—a joy of  
33 belonging—in that moment—to their culture.

34 Christmas is that time when I truly know my tap root,  
35 when an inexplicable joy overwhelms my being and its  
36 holiday cheer engulfs my German heritage and tells me where  
37 I began.

# 1 Authors' Biographies

## 2 B

3 SAM BARBEE has a new collection, *Uncommon Book of Prayer* (2021,  
4 Main Street Rag). His previous poetry collection, *That Rain We*  
5 *Needed* (2016, Press 53), was a nominee for the Roanoke-Chowan  
6 Award as one of North Carolina's best poetry collections of 2016.  
7 He received the 59th Poet Laureate Award from the North  
8 Carolina Poetry Society for his poem "The Blood Watch"; and is a  
9 Pushcart nominee.

10 DOROTHY BARROW was born in Zebulon, NC and loved to write  
11 from an early age. She graduated from Wakelon high school at 16  
12 and from Duke University at 20. She wrote her college senior  
13 paper, thoughtfully, about the strengths and weaknesses of  
14 Mormonism. A longtime moderate Democrat, she registered as a  
15 Republican two decades ago because she realized the country was  
16 becoming too lax, too liberal, and was not valuing daily work. She  
17 hopes for the return of the principles and values our country was  
18 built upon.

19 FRED BASSETT, a retired academic, turned to creative writing late in  
20 life. His poems have been widely published in journals and  
21 anthologies. His revised and expanded edition of *The Old Stoic Faces*  
22 *the Mirror* was published in November, 2019. He has two published  
23 novels—*South Wind Rising* and *Honey from a Lion*—and is editing the  
24 third novel of this trilogy—*The Winter is Past*. Widowed, Bassett  
25 currently live in Greenwood, SC, near his son Jonathan and family.

26 KERRI HABBEN BOSMAN is a writer in Chapel Hill, NC. She is a  
27 graduate of Peace College and North Carolina State University. Her  
28 work has been included in the *News and Observer* and regularly  
29 appears in publications throughout the United States and Canada.

30 HARRY BROWN holds degrees in English from Davidson College,  
31 Appalachian State University, and Ohio University. He has  
32 published six poetry collections and co-edited an anthology of KY  
33 writing. After teaching for over forty years in the ECU English  
34 Department he has returned to NC and lives with his wife Alice in  
35 Burlington, NC.

## C

1

2 ANNIE CHAMBERS was born into a poor family, but was given a  
3 chance by a blind neighbor lady. Annie was an average student until  
4 she found that she could express through writing. She moved up  
5 the business ladder from stock girl to marketing vice-president as  
6 her skills were discovered. She enjoys everyday and all her  
7 gentleman callers who bring her presents.

8 STEVE CUSHMAN lives in Greensboro and has published three  
9 novels and the poetry Collection, *How Birds Fly*.

10

## D

11 TOM DAVIS' publishing credits include *Poets Forum*, *The Carolina*  
12 *Runner*, *Triathlon Today*, *Georgia Athlete*, *The Fayetteville Observer's*  
13 *Saturday Extra*, *A Loving Voice Vol. I and II*, *Special Warfare.*, and  
14 Winston-Salem Writers' POETRY IN PLAIN SIGHT program for  
15 2013 & 2021. He's authored several books. Tom has completed his  
16 memoir, *The Most Fun I ever Had With My Clothes On A March from*  
17 *Private to Colonel*. He lives in Webster, NC.

18 NANCY JO DEDERER lives in Greensboro, NC. She is a  
19 Presbyterian pastor serving a church in Lexington, NC. While most  
20 of her writing is for sermons and prayers, this is her second  
21 submission to Old Mountain Press Anthology.

22 SUZANNE DELANEY is a Retired Registered Nurse certified in  
23 Med/Surg. She began writing poetry in 1998. Originally from  
24 Australia, Suzanne ne now lives in NC. Has previously contributed  
25 to OMP and has her own Anthology together, with Carol Mays  
26 titled, *Poems of Nature, Enchantment and Mystery*, available in  
27 Paperback and Kindle on Amazon.

28 BOB DEMAREE is the author of four book-length collections of  
29 poems, published by Beech River Books. He is a retired educator  
30 with ties to North Carolina, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania. He  
31 resides in Burlington, NC, and Wolfeboro, NH.

32 NANCY DILLINGHAM'S poetry, short fiction and commentaries  
33 have appeared in many venues including *The Asheville Poetry Review*,  
34 the "Poetry in Plain Sight" project, *News and Observer*, *Mountain*  
35 *Xpress*, and *Asheville Citizen-Times*. She is coeditor of four

1 anthologies of WNC women writers. Her latest works include *Like*  
 2 *Headlines: New and Selected Poems* and the chapbooks *Revelation, I Can't*  
 3 *Breathe*, and *Vantages*. Her collection of poems *HOME* was  
 4 nominated for a SIBA. She lives in Asheville.

5 SANDRA DILLINGHAM'S work has appeared in Victoria Press and  
 6 the anthology *It's All Relative: Tales from the Tree from 50 WNC*  
 7 *Women*. Sandra was the editor of Haywood Press at Haywood  
 8 Community College for five years. Sandra lives in Asheville, NC.

## E

10 KATHY ELLIS was often nagged by the universe to pick up the  
 11 poetry pen. Decades later and just seven years ago, Kathy listened  
 12 to her internal whims. To Kathy's surprised delight, she received  
 13 recognition for her wacky poetry and has published two books  
 14 listed on Amazon. In Kathy's real life, she is an ESL language  
 15 coach and cross-cultural communication trainer. Kathy is a  
 16 Motown girl that resides in Atlanta with her two multilingual cats.

17 TERRI KIRBY ERICKSON is the author of six collections of poetry,  
 18 including *A Sun Inside My Chest* (Press 53), winner of the 2021  
 19 International Book Award for Poetry. Her work has appeared in  
 20 many literary journals, magazines, newspapers, and anthologies,  
 21 including "American Life in Poetry," *The Sun*, and *The Writer's*  
 22 *Almanac*. Her awards include the Joy Harjo Poetry Prize and a  
 23 Nautilus Silver Book Award. She lives in Pfafftown, North  
 24 Carolina.

## F

26 DENA M. FERRARI is a regular contributor to OMP. Dena's poetry  
 27 are featured in Westchester Community College of NY *Phoenix*  
 28 (1975), Writers Alliance Poets World-Wide anthologies has many of  
 29 her published works. Dena's own books, *Poems From the Hearth*  
 30 (2010) *Come Closer My Dearies* (2013), *Charmed Times Three* (2015),  
 31 and her newest book *Wyld Earth Magick* (2018) shows diversified  
 32 writing styles, leaving a Living Legacy for her grandchildren. She  
 33 and her husband, Peter live in Vass,  
 34 NC.

35 JOANNE KENNEDY FRAZER is a retired peace and justice director  
 36 and educator for faith-based organizations at state, diocesan and  
 37 national levels. Her work has appeared in several anthologies,

1 journals and e-zines. Five of her poems were placed into a song  
 2 cycle, titled Resistance, by composer Steven Luksan, and performed  
 3 in Seattle and Durham. Her chapbook, *Being Kin*, (Creation Rising)  
 4 was published in 2019. She lives in Durham, NC.

5 PEGGY DUGAN FRENCH is a California girl with Minnesota roots.  
 6 She has been the editor of the small print zine *Shemom* since 1997.  
 7 Her work has appeared in *Lilliput*, *bear creek haiku*, *Shemom* and  
 8 *Whispers*. She has worn many hats over the years, but raising her  
 9 children has been one of her greatest pleasures. Peggy lives in  
 10 Cardiff, CA, with her husband, cat and wild garden and blogs at  
 11 [peggyduganfrench.com](http://peggyduganfrench.com)

## G

12  
 13 BOB GARRETT lives in Sylvester, GA. He is a nurse practitioner  
 14 with Phoebe Ortho and Sports Medicine, and also Urgent Care. He  
 15 is an avid outdoorsman, with a certain affection for hunting and  
 16 fishing. I have previously entered works in previous Old Mountain  
 17 Press Anthologies *The Unforgettables* and *Old Tales*.

18 MICHAEL GASPENY is the author of the novella in verse, *The*  
 19 *Tyranny of Questions* (Unicorn Press) and the chapbooks *Re-Write Men*  
 20 and *Vocation*. He has won the Randall Jarrell Poetry Competition  
 21 and the O. Henry Festival Short Fiction Contest. His novel, *Postcard*  
 22 *from the Delta*, is forthcoming from Livingston Press.

23 JAMES GIBSON, private pilot, scuba diver, and retired corporate  
 24 manager, writes from Northville, Michigan. His first five novels  
 25 featured Native American culture in the epic “Anasazi Quest”  
 26 series. His eighth novel, *To Live or Die in Taiwan* was published in  
 27 2018, and a sequel, *To Live or Die in Panama* is drafted. Review all his  
 28 published books at [www.PentacleSPresS.com](http://www.PentacleSPresS.com). *Anasazi Princess* and  
 29 *Anasazi Journey* are now available as E-Books on Amazon.com.

30 MARIAN GOWAN is author of *Notes from the Trunk*, published by  
 31 Old Mountain Press. Her work has appeared in many Old  
 32 Mountain Press anthologies and southern regional publications.  
 33 She retired to the NC mountains from western NY in 2001, but in  
 34 2017, returned to western NY to be near family.  
 35 ([mariangowan1@bellsouth.net](mailto:mariangowan1@bellsouth.net))



1 FARLEY GRANGER thinks more than he writes, and he writes more  
 2 than he sees other people. He grew up in a depressed country town  
 3 and understands the struggles of poor, heartland folks. But he has a  
 4 lot of hope. Farley lives in La Grange, NC.

## 5 H

6 GLORIA HARRINGTON has been a member of both the Georgia  
 7 Poetry Association and John's Creek Poetry Group for over ten  
 8 years. Her poems have been published six times in the yearly  
 9 anthology: *Reach of Song*. Also, she placed 3rd in a national poetry  
 10 contest several years ago. She lives in Tucker, Georgia, and is a  
 11 retired teacher.

## 12 J

13 JILL JENNINGS' work has appeared in *Atlanta Review*; *Oberon*;  
 14 *Calamari*; and *Please See Me* journals. Her 3 full-length books include  
 15 *The Poetry Alarm Clock*; *Dead Man's Flower*; and *Pineapple Wine: Poems*  
 16 *of Maui*. She has received numerous awards including the U.S  
 17 Congressional Commendation. A GA native, she now lives in Fort  
 18 Myers, FL.

19 GRAYSON JONES lives in Young Harris, GA, and teaches biology at  
 20 Young Harris College there in the north Georgia mountains. Her  
 21 poems have appeared in *Appalachian Heritage*, *Corn Creek Review*,  
 22 *Poetry South*, *Slant* and *The Healing Muse* and in anthologies by Old  
 23 Mountain Press.

24 JANET JOYNER'S *Waterborne* won the Holland Prize in 2016, and  
 25 was followed by her *Yellow*, from Finishing Line Press in 2018.  
 26 *Wabee Neck* was published by Hermit Feathers Press in 2019, which  
 27 also released her fourth collection, *Now Come Hyacinths*, in 2020,  
 28 and plans to publish her fifth, *Omohundro's Siding*, in 2022. Janet  
 29 lives in Winston-Salem, NC.

## 30 K

31 K. D. KENNEDY, JR. has published Eight Books (8) books of  
 32 poetry, short stories, and essays: *Our Place On Time*, *Waiting Out In*  
 33 *The Yard*, *For Rhyme Or Reason*, *Progenitors: A Kennedy Genealogy*, *The*  
 34 *Works Of K. D. Kennedy, Jr.*, *Poems Worth Remembering*,  
 35 *Family...Forever's Lovesong*, and *Truth Instead*. He has also published  
 36 works in over forty anthologies and periodicals.

1 JO KOSTER AND her cat Max live in Rock Hill, SC, where she  
2 teaches at Winthrop University. A new chapbook of her poems is  
3 forthcoming.

## L

4  
5 PATSY KENNEDY LAIN resides in Hubert, North Carolina and  
6 recently released her first book, *BACKROADS*. She continues to  
7 paint as well and is working on a second book. Patsy is truly  
8 inspired by her surroundings as well as everyday life.

9 BRENDA KAY LEDFORD lives and writes in Hayesville, NC. Her  
10 work has appeared in all of the Old Mountain Press anthologies  
11 and other journals. Her children's picture book, *The Singing*  
12 *Convention* was published by Catch the Spirit of Appalachia. She  
13 blogs at: <http://blueridgepoet.blogspot.com>.

## T

14  
15 BARBARA TATE is an award winning artist & writer and long time  
16 contributor to the Old Mountain Press Anthology Series is  
17 currently a member of the British Haiku Society, The Haiku Society  
18 of America and the Australian Haiku Society. Her two latest books  
19 of haiku, tanka and haibun *FAR MORE THAN I EVER WAS*  
20 and *DARKNESS IN A NOONDAY NIGHT* were published this  
21 year.

## M

22  
23 PRESTON MARTIN has published poems in *New Ohio Review*, *Iodine*,  
24 *Tar River Poetry*, *Chaffin Journal*, *Kakalak*, *Broad River Review*,  
25 *Appalachian Review*, *Pine Mountain Sand & Gravel* and other journals.  
26 He has poems in *Every River on Earth: writings from Appalachian Ohio*  
27 (Ohio University Press) and other anthologies. He lives in Chapel  
28 Hill, NC.

29 Trude McCarty is an artist living in Greensboro, NC. This is her  
30 second submission to Old Mountain Press Anthology.

31 CELIA HOOPER MILES is a Jackson County native who lives, writes,  
32 edits, and travels from Asheville, NC. A retired community college  
33 instructor, she has published nine novels, and is working on the  
34 fourth "grist mill" mystery; she has co-authored a college textbook  
35 and co-edited four anthologies of western NC women writers.  
36 [www.celiamil.com](http://www.celiamil.com)

1 MONA MIRACLE has lived in Kentucky, California, Michigan,  
 2 Tennessee, and Florida; and since 1989, Asheville, N.C. Mona was  
 3 a featured presenter at South Florida Poetry Society, and a  
 4 four-category winner in Florida Freelance Writers Annual  
 5 Competition. Enjoy sample pages of her publications, including the  
 6 novel *Wesley's Gift* at [www.Monaraemiracle.com](http://www.Monaraemiracle.com). The character  
 7 Wesley deals with challenges of race, obsession with cats, and  
 8 modern technology, and a wife pressing for equality. Amazon  
 9 provides her ebook and print formats.

10

## O

11 BEVERLY OHLER has spend most of her life in the theater, mostly  
 12 at Warren Wilson College, where she designed, taught and directed  
 13 festivals. She has published five books, written for magazines,  
 14 anthologies, playbills, programs, pamphlets and other publications.  
 15 Her artwork has been widely published as well. Having grown up in  
 16 the Northeast, she loves living in Black Mountain.

17 Karen O'Leary is a writer and editor from West Fargo, ND. She  
 18 has published poetry, short stories, and articles in a variety of  
 19 venues including *Frogpond*, *Setu*, *A Hundred Gourds*, *bear creek haiku*,  
 20 *Shemom*, *Creative Inspirations* and *NeverEnding Story*. Karen has been  
 21 published in several The Old Mountain Press anthologies. She  
 22 edited an international online journal called *Whispers*>  
 23 <http://whispersinthewind333.blogspot.com/> for 5 ½ years. She  
 24 enjoys sharing the gift of words.

25 MARTHA O'QUINN has been a contributor to OMP anthologies  
 26 since 2007. She concentrates on poetry and non-fiction prose. Her  
 27 work has appeared in many regional publications, including four  
 28 anthologies edited and published by Nancy Dillingham and Celia  
 29 Miles. After retirement, Martha and her husband moved to WNC  
 30 where they lived for 22 years, and in 2018 moved to the Atlanta  
 31 area to be nearer family.

32

## P

33 BILL PETZ had careers in ministry, higher education, public health,  
 34 and criminal justice. He has used poetry as a bridge to awareness  
 35 and understanding with folks with chronic illness, men facing  
 36 prison time, health care providers, and men's groups. Bill teaches  
 37 poetry at the College for Seniors of OLLI at UNC-Asheville. He is  
 38 a long-time resident of the Asheville area.

1 MICHAEL POTTS lives in Coats, North Carolina, and has numerous  
 2 novels and poetry collections published. His latest publications are  
 3 *Hiding from the Reaper and Other Dark Tales* and *Slipknot and Other*  
 4 *Dark Poems*, both published by Heartsblood Press.

## R

6 MARY RICKETSON lives in Murphy NC, works as a mental health  
 7 counselor and a blueberry farmer. Her poems often reflect the  
 8 healing power of nature, surrounding mountains as midwife for her  
 9 words. Her published collections are *I Hear the River Call My Name*,  
 10 *Hanging Dog Creek, Shade and Shelter, Mississippi: The Story of Luke* and  
 11 *Marian, Keeping in Place*, and *Lira, Poems of a woodland woman*.

12 DWIGHT ROTH is a retired elementary school teacher of 29 years,  
 13 who grew up in the mountains of Southwestern Pennsylvania. He  
 14 enjoys writing poetry, painting, and music. His work appears in  
 15 several OMP anthologies. He has self-published four memoirs and  
 16 several books of poetry, as well as children's books. Nine books or  
 17 booklets are published on Amazon Kindle. Dwight and his wife  
 18 Ruth live near Monroe, NC. He writes daily on his blog:  
 19 <https://rothpoetry.wordpress.com/> .

## S

21 PAUL SHERMAN reads and writes poetry from the north side of Mt.  
 22 Mitchell and works in Little Switzerland, NC at a retreat center  
 23 where he meets artists and writers, musicians and others from  
 24 around the world. His most recent collection of poetry, *Executive*  
 25 *Sweets*, a rough draft, was stolen by hurricane Fred but found face  
 26 down in the creek close by weeks later.

27 SHELBY STEPHENSON'S recent books are *More* and *Shelby's Lady:*  
 28 *The Hog Poems*. He lives near Benson, NC.

29 LOIS GREENE STONE, writer and poet, has been syndicated  
 30 worldwide. Poetry and personal essays have been included in hard  
 31 & softcover book anthologies. Collections of her personal items/  
 32 photos/memorabilia are in major museums including twelve  
 33 different divisions of The Smithsonian. The Smithsonian selected  
 34 her photo to represent all teens from the 1940's-50's

## T

36 CARROLL S. TAYLOR'S publishing credits include young adult  
 37 novels, *Chinaberry Summer* and *Chinaberry Summer: On the Other Side*,

1 as well as a children's book, *Feannag the Crow*. Feannag teaches  
 2 children the importance of making diverse friends. Carroll's novels  
 3 emphasize generational storytelling and anti-bullying. Her stories  
 4 and poetry capture her love for nature, including reptiles and  
 5 amphibians. She retired after teaching for more than forty years,  
 6 from kindergarten to university classes. She lives in Hiawassee,  
 7 Georgia.

8 REBEKAH TIMMS has regularly contributed to OMP anthologies  
 9 since the beginning of 2016. Since then she has published two  
 10 poetry collections to add to the memoir of her mother, *Effie, Her*  
 11 *Life, Her Legacy*, which she published in 2014. Her contribution to  
 12 this anthology expresses well the contemplative, peaceful pleasures  
 13 of life she enjoys in her lengthening autumn years.

## 14 W

15 ELIZABETH B. WATSON lives in Greenville, SC, where she and her  
 16 husband Doug escape the snow of New England. The Watson  
 17 traditions have been adapted to apartment living in The Woodlands  
 18 at Furman, a CCRC. No more tree, live greens or flaming candles.  
 19 Aka Betty, she has been published many times in Old Mountain  
 20 Press and a number of other anthologies, for which she is very  
 21 grateful. Raising four accomplished daughters took a lot of her  
 22 time. Now there's more time to write and write some more.  
 23 **CHEERS** to all this season. Be well.

24 G P WHELAN is a full time dreamer, and part time wanderer. He is  
 25 the author of two self published works: *In Search of a Spanish Kiss* (a  
 26 novel) and *Tales of a Boy's Heart* (short stories and poetry). Both are  
 27 available on Amazon Books. Comments on this or any other stories  
 28 are welcomed: gepawh@gmail.com G P Whelan resides in  
 29 southwest Florida.

30 BARBARA LEDFORD WRIGHT is inspired to write her stories  
 31 through research. She has visited libraries and cemeteries far and  
 32 wide, which led her to Ireland and Scotland. She's a frequent  
 33 contributor to the Old Mountain Press anthologies. Barbara resides  
 34 in Shelby, NC.

1 To all OMP Anthology Contributors  
2 and Readers,  
3 HAVE A GREAT 2022!

