

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
And went to the Eastown Mall,
The people were shopping in fury,
Buying items large and small,

The stores were crowded and busy,
The displays were glossy and bright,
What they lacked in Christmas message,
They made up in commercial blight,

The shoppers were eager and grasping,
For this, and this, and that,
A child with glazed eyes beaming,
Fondled gifts like a feral cat,

I turned with downcast humor,
And left the disgusting scene,
The retail vision of Christmas,
Is not the Christmas I mean,

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
And visited the home of a friend,
In the midst of a sea of wrapping,
And piles of cards without end,

The friend caught me up in the turmoil,
Addressing and stamping the cards,
Making lists and wrapping presents,
Surrounded by tinsel shards,

The work overshadowed the pleasure,
Of greeting and pleasing my friend,
And made me feel less joyous,
To see the pedestrian trend,

I left with a feeling of sorrow,
Of vague and nameless dread,
The eternal promise of Christmas,
Was dying, if not yet dead,

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
And entered a banquet hall,
Where tables were loaded and luscious,
And holly festooned the wall,

Indulgence dressed all of the people,
High piles of presents galore,
They noticed not in the alley,
Where a beggar had died at the door,

They went through all the right motions,
With greetings and presents and food,
But something important was missing,
The scene was ugly and lewd,

My exit was not even noticed,
I was glad to be out of the place,
My attention then turned to looking,
At the rest of the human race,

A church bell tolled In the distance,
Its tone was sharp and clear,
Perhaps there; in Christmas service,
A message of hope I would hear,

I entered the church door slowly,
So not to disturb the flow,
Of the message and pageant proceeding,
From out of the candle glow,

I listened and tried to decipher,
The themes I felt in the air,
“Belonging” and “group approval”,
But a price was paid to be there,

These joys are yours for the asking,
Please sign on the dotted line,
Believe as we, and pay your dues,
Your life will be just fine,

My heart sank even further,
No Christmas essence here,
I followed my quest in silence,
With trepidation and fear,

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
Where else should searching turn?
Who now will give the answers,
The knowledge for which I yearn?

The Christmas lights on houses,
Attracted my just concern,
The Santas, sleighs, and candles,
And scores of lights that burn,

Along the street the colors glow,
From houses and trees and signs,
Each more glorious than the last,
In endless blazing lines,

The display was competition,
The wastefulness and the show,
Reflected harsh and brittle scenes,
Upon the gentle snow,

If Christmas spirit exists at all,
It cannot flourish here,
This false and empty glitter,
Is not what I hold dear,

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
It brought me to a street,
Where only one small humble home,
Stood silent at my feet,

A man approached the little house,
And paused next to the door,
His manner and his mien implied,
He came this way before,

No presents did he have in hand,
No food or Christmas toys,
Yet did he knock upon the door,
Directly and with poise,

A lighted room then opened wide,
I heard a joyful cry,
Excitement, hugs and kisses flowed,
And laughter filled the sky,

The man was quickly drawn inside,
And through the drafty door,
I heard the joy of friends refound,
Which warmed me to the core,

I sought the spirit of Christmas,
And finally found the place,
No palace, church or banquet hall,
would every show a trace,

But in the arms of those we love,
Our family and our friends,
A Christmas spirit is always there,
Its glory never ends.

The Christmas spirit is easily found,
Its message loud and clear,
Be caring with love and acceptance,
Not one day, but all the year,

by John D. Boenke
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