

A visit from

When Santa falls into the river, is Christmas lost?

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(WITH APOLOGIES TO CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE)

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'Twas the night before Christmas where river meets sea,
and we were out on the boat — just my small crew of three.
The fog, it was thick, and the waves were a beast,
but we needed fresh crab for the holiday feast.

When out on the deck there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the wheelhouse to see what was the matter.
And there in the sea, on the side we call port,
was a little old man, who gave a wave and a snort.

Then over the rail a gloved hand appeared,
then a red-suited arm, then a snowy white beard.
And I turned to my mates and I ordered them quick:
“Fetch the blankets and cocoa, we’ve rescued St. Nick!”

We brought him aboard and he coughed and he sputtered,
then out of the surf all eight reindeer fluttered.
The bow was quite full, so we put them in back,
and placed a tow on the sleigh, which still held his sack.

And once he was settled well out of the gale
we all leaned in closer to hear Santa’s tale:
“I’m not sure what happened, things had all gone terrific,
in fact, my very last stop was the Columbia-Pacific.”

“But this fog is so heavy, I missed the river’s mouth,
and when I checked on our course, we were way too far south.
Then I set us aright, or so I did think,
but the next thing I knew, we were all in the drink.”

He looked quite defeated and didn’t say more,
so I offered: “Don’t feel bad, it’s happened before.
Many captains have failed here, there’s been an assortment
just think of John Meares, who named Cape Disappointment.”

“It’s not about pride,” Santa said with a grimace,
“the trouble, my friend, is that Christmas is finished.

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