

A Huntcliff "Night before Christmas"  
(with apologies to Clement Moore)

1. 'Twas the night before Christmas,  
When down in the lobby  
White heads were bent over,  
Engrossed in a hobby.

2. One bloke was perusing  
His junk-mail with care  
In hopes that his end-of-month  
Check might be there.

3. Outside, it was raining,  
(With no sign of snow)  
Which just doesn't fit  
With this poem, as you know.

4. The moon, on the crest  
Of the new~~x~~-fallen .....rain?  
No, no, that's no good!  
Let me try this again:

Warm rain th~~u~~ndered down  
With a tropical roar  
And wet, doggie paw-prints  
Adorned our clean floor.

Some folks stood around  
In a sociable way,  
And one elderly gal  
Was discussing her day:

"Did you notice that "hunk"  
As we stepped off the bus?  
He whistled at someone,  
I thinkit was us!"

" Hold on, my dear friend!  
For an error you've made:  
That whistle came out  
Of your own hearing aid!"

5. A pair was engrossed  
In a lively debate  
Of an issue concerning  
Each senior, of late:

The relative virtues,  
And also the flaws,  
Of new dentures,  
Compared with original jaws.

Whilst I with my walker,  
And you with your cane,  
Had just ended a stroll  
And come from the rain,  
When a voice from the front desk  
Let out such a shout,  
We gathered around  
To learn what 'Twas about.

We were told, "There's commotion  
Above the Veranda."  
So we hustled on up there  
To take a quick gander.

The bridge games were silenced,  
The bar was a-gog,  
The bartender had halted  
Dispensing egg-nogg---

For up on the roof  
Was a miniature sled ,  
A jolly old elf,

And his team, -----up ahead.

He grabbed up his bag,  
Without making a stop,  
And straight down our chimney  
He slid, ----with a PLOP!

(He was not quite as agile  
As you, or as me,  
For right here at Huntcliff,  
We're taking Tai Chi!)

He pulled up a chair  
Alongside the fire, <sup>for our holiday wishes</sup>  
He'd come to inquire.

(The goldfish were nestled,  
Quite cold, in their tank,  
Where he dumped his pipe ashes,  
And, slowly, ----they sank.)

"New bones, please, for me,"  
I hastened to say,  
"For old age has wasted  
My own all away!"

New ears would be nice,  
And some eyes that can see,  
A bladder that holds,  
Would rejuvenate me!

And, besides that, I'm missing  
My keen sense of smell,  
And peripheral vision  
Is all shot to hell.

My trim figure vanished

A long time ago,  
And why it abandoned me,  
I'll never know."

With an eye slightly raised,  
He took note of my wishes,  
(Dumped a little more pipe ash  
Down onto the fishes)

And, turning his head  
To the next one in line,  
Hoped her list  
Was more realistic than mine.

He heard every request,  
And then--- thoughtful, he turned,  
And a bit of his wisdom  
We finally learned:

"My dears, do not ask me  
For things I can't give.  
But, if with a heart full  
Of kindness you'll live,

Forgiveness and empathy  
Show to your brother,  
Respect and generosity  
Toward one another----

You will generate gifts  
That are richer by far  
Than any I offer.  
And some of them are:

The love and devotion  
Of all that you know,  
(For truly we harvest

The seeds that we sow),

Grandkids who are eager  
To follow your way.  
I'll grow up to be like you",  
You may hear them say.

So your soul will live on,  
Long after you're gone.  
They'll be laughing your laughter,  
And singing your song.

And these are the gifts  
I can offer tonight.  
May your days brim with gladness,  
With joy and delight,

With memories that bless you,  
And folks you hold dear.  
Now, Merry Christmas to all,  
And to all, a good year!"

Then he leapt to his team  
Whom he roused with a whistle,  
(Though fog had enshrouded  
That "down off a thistle".)

But we heard him declare,  
As he sped through the skies,  
"I think when I age,  
I shall live at Sunrise!

Anne Ter Weele