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SIX SERVINGS OF

Christmas

Sherrie Lee

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Sherrie Lee

*New Year,
New Home,
New Chapter*



SERVINGS



O CHRISTMAS TREE



Last Christmas



GIFTS




Christmas in the Summertime



TINSEL TOWN



Fall On Your Knees





O CHRISTMAS TREE

The not very tall green tree
Propped up by leftover courier boxes
Draped with tinsel - shiny, crinkly
Small toys, trinkets and bits that fit
Dangling from the edges - prickly, stiff

Pressing myself up close
I breathe in synthetic fibres
I breathe out wordless curses
I could say *'to hell with the plastic and pretence'*
But I don't say anything at all

As I straighten out the tips
And realise last year's tree revealed
Was this year's shrivelled up fir
I brave my conscience to buy bigger and better
That's just enough and not too much

For the love of tinsel, trinkets and things
To clothe the naked spruce
We fabricate magic and wonder
And precious sentiment
To remind ourselves it is that time of the year

Better the accumulation of fancied up material
Than the blatant sameness of passing time
To announce that Christmas is here



LAST CHRISTMAS

That first Christmas in Hamilton, New Zealand
In the rented house we occupied for barely a month
In the neighbourhood that went quiet quickly

That first Christmas without family
No boisterous conversation and unbridled laughter
No feasting and fussing over growing children

That first Christmas with nothing to do
Apart from being guided by junk mail advertisements
Apart from trying to recreate scenes from the past

That first Christmas was so distant
From the accumulation of Christmases since childhood
From imagined new friendships with gracious hosts

That first Christmas I hoped to be
The last Christmas which came and left
The last Christmas to remember



GIFTS

'Tis the season for gifting
The box wrapped up
With curly twirly ribbons
And wide strips of fabric
Turned into bows

'Tis the gift that says how much
You want to delight them
Or oblige traditions
Within the catalogue pages
And discount aisles

'Tis the time to wish for something
Because only now is there permission
To indulge, let go, and pin your hopes
On something nicer, brighter, lighter
That lasts as long as the season

'Tis the people who receive my gifts
With their smiles and nods
Or grimace and groans
With sincerity or in jest
Who give life to my gifts

'Tis the gift that lasts forever
That is the last gift we need to give
Instead we crave for ones that will fade away
So we can give all over again
The gifts that are neither simple nor free



CHRISTMAS IN THE SUMMERTIME

That song that only kids in this country will sing
At this time of year
Assuming the sun is up and I feel fine
That song of yuletide cheer

I'm not sure I can accept that it's Christmas in the summertime
When so many songs I've heard and sung
Have created a winter wonderland
Of romantic snowflakes touching my nose

Even though I was born in an endless summertime
And spent Christmas in sun soaked climate
It was the imagined coolness and frost of Christmas
That made it real and believable

So it is odd, no, just plain ridiculous
To match Christmas with the wrong season
When we would all do well to keep to the script
As we sing the songs that set the scene right

Christmas can be located in different climates
But it is the myth of winter that make Christmas
The hopeful event of feeling warm and safe
Against the icy blasts and blankets of snow

Forget this ditty and sing the stuff
That makes Christmas chilly with guaranteed warmth
The Winter Wonderlands will outlast
Christmas in the Summertime



TINSEL TOWN

It becomes a-glittering a-jingling
Banners bright and beautiful
Adorn the shopping streets

Each time the season of giving comes
We walk through the valley of earthly desires
The underpass lined with JCDecaux panels

The air is pregnant with anticipation of
Desires and temptations
Adventures and indulgence

It becomes all-frenetic all-devouring
Acquiring the next new thing
Bigger and better than last year's trends

I want to resist and give hope not hype
But the expectations fall on me
Heavy like bricks that break my resolve

My gifting starts small, deliberately modest
But quickly becomes embarrassed
In front of disappointed faces

It becomes o-weary o-dreary
As I overcome this malady
And exit Tinsel Town



FALL ON YOUR KNEES

FALL ON YOUR KNEES

Getting to the last page of the calendar
The year of many manic things
Ends with never enough days
To meet people who were put off
Until this every end of time

O HEAR THE ANGEL VOICES

My children become restless
Even unkind and unruly
As the weight of routine is flung off
And the aimless wandering mind takes over
Woe to me; self-pity I accept and flaunt

O NIGHT DIVINE

I'm in a fog of things-to-do and places-to-be
And wonder if I could get off at the next stop
Called don't-you-worry-'bout-a-thing
Alas the smelling salts of fear and responsibility
Yank me out of my stupor

O NIGHT, WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN

I seek redemption on the 25th
The day called Christmas
Marking the birth of Jesus Christ
The Anointed One of God
The King of Kings

O NIGHT DIVINE

But I need to seek redemption every day
Even if I have already been redeemed
The days seem wasted once they pass
And the accumulation of wasted days
Are a mountain of guilt and regret

O NIGHT, O NIGHT DIVINE

Be still my beating heart
Here come the ghosts of Christmas past
A heady cocktail of nostalgia and terror
But I'm drinking something else this Christmas
From the well of quiet rest

