

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the flat
Not a creature was stirring - not even a rat.
The light had gone off on the silent TV
(We'd seen 'Back to the Future' and 'Jaws 23')
I'd had three Peperami, a litre of Fanta
And now I was ready and waiting for Santa.
I knew he was coming - I knew I was right
For Mummy and Daddy had kissed me goodnight
And Mum had said "That noise - I heard it again, dear".
To which Dad replied - "No, it's only the rain, dear".
I tried to ignore my digestion's loud rattle
(For three Peperami put up quite a battle).
And that's when I heard them - the sleighbells a-jingling.
The shouted instructions that set my scalp tingling -
"Come Rudolf, come Romeo, come Posh Spice, keep prancing -
Come Matt & Alesha, come Brucie, come dancing.
Come Biggins, Capello, Wayne Rooney, don't slack -
Graham Norton - keep up at the back!"
I heard their hooves clatter and scrabble for grip
(For our roof is quite steep and it's easy to slip).
I heard Santa alight and I heard my heart beating
For then I remembered - we have central heating!
The flue-pipe is tiny - he hasn't a hope
But surely he's magic - of course - he can cope.
He'll squeeze down the chimney - he has - that's the noise
Of a very small man with a sack of small toys.
He's got to the boiler - I heard a small cough
Poor Santa - I hope that the gas is turned off.

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Go back, Santa Claus - it's not too late to jump
Oh, no! I can hear him - he's caught in the pump.
He's off on the circuit, through all of the rads -
The hall, then Sam's bedroom and then Mum and Dad's.
He's going through mine now - I heard a small clank!
It's the towel rail next, then the hot water tank.
Then back to the boiler - now, gasping for breath -
He can't have survived. What a horrible death.
Hush, listen! - Exactly, there isn't a sound -
Poor Father Christmas has definitely drowned.
How shocking! No stockings, no gifts anymore
No presents for me, or for Kevin next door.
The kids of the world will be simply appalled
And blame us, for having the heating installed.
My brain in a fury, I had a small weep
And, pale and confused, must have fallen asleep.
I woke to the sound of the pipe's early knocking
Remembered the horrors, then noticed my stocking.
The varicose sides and the end-of-toe tumour
That speaks of the Rolos, the Twix, the satsuma!
I cried "Santa lives - it was only a dream!"
(The heating cheered too with a small hiss of steam!)
What a nightmare - but my fault. I must have been barmy,
Last thing at night to eat three Peperami.

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