

## THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Tw'as 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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