



A NOW CHRISTMAS STORY

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'Twas the night before Christmas  
And throughout the North Pole  
The elves were all shouting  
"It's not true:" "Bless my soul!"  
See Santa, in anticipation  
Of the tough night to come,  
Overreacted by taking  
At least four Valium.  
With a small smile on his face  
And uncommonly mellow,  
He attempted, in vain,  
To be a jolly old fellow.  
"To deliver the packages...  
That would be niiicccee."  
And with that bit of wisdom  
He pulled shut his eyes.

"To deliver the presents,"  
Moaned the reindeer in tears,  
"With Santa in that state  
We know will take years.  
He's too stoned to travel --  
What's to be our fate?  
Santa can't even stand up,  
Much less navigate.  
We can't do it ourselves,  
We're just not that clever.  
Will we have to cancel  
The first Christmas ever?"

Amidst all the panic  
Mrs. Santa walked in,  
Took one look at Nick  
And then said with a grin,  
"What's all the commotion?  
Perk up, you reindeer!  
You don't have to worry,  
We'll have Christmas this year.

"I've still got my license,  
I'm able to drive --  
Don't look that way, Vixen,  
You'll come back alive.  
For years I sat home  
And my state I berated.  
But, like Rosalynn and Bella,  
I'm now liberated.  
Though Santa's in limbo  
The show must go on.  
So hurry up! Move it!  
We've only 'til dawn!"

Rudolph taking the lead,  
The toys packed in the back,  
"Up and away," Ms. C. shouted,  
And hopped in the back.

Over Paris and Bangkok  
Her sleighbells did ring --  
Through London and Moscow,  
And on to Peking.  
Up and down chimneys,  
Like she'd done it before,  
She dropped off some presents,  
And then dropped off some more.

Calling home around midnight,  
She checked on St. Nick.  
He seemed more coherent,  
Though his speech somewhat thick.  
"I'm proud of you, darling,  
You knew just what to do  
Now don't forget Iceland  
And Kalamazoo.  
And remember Hawaii,  
You'll pass by if you blink --  
Do try to keep warm --  
And what else? Let me think."

"I've the map," she assured him,  
"The blanket's tucked tight.  
Now have some more coffee --  
See you later tonight!"  
"You've saved Christmas," he added,  
"Congratulations, my dear."  
"The job's exhausting!" she answered,  
"Let's share it next year."

Encircling the globe,  
She continued the route,  
Her gray hair in a tangle,  
Her clothes covered with soot.  
New York the last stop,  
Toward the wee morning hours  
She maneuvered the buggy  
Through the World Trade Center Towers.  
Throwing gear into high,  
She flew over Nome,  
Then made a sharp right  
And headed toward home.

She was heard to exclaim  
Flying off in her sleigh  
"Merry Christmas to all --  
And pass E.R.A.!"