



**folio**





Christmas - Talbot Street

## *Editorial*

Christmas is about to happen again. The whole country is going to go beautifully mad with the loving soft sadness and huge joy that is Christmas.

This issue of Folio was created from bits and pieces of that insanity. It is meant to be read on Christmas Eve when that quickening spirit won't let you sleep. And it is meant to be read on Christmas morning after the gifts and first excited laughter, while the chocolates and mints are being passed around. And if you are one of those beautiful people who like to play Christmas carols in July, it is meant to be read any time at all.

The happiness inherent in the imagination of the season is such a total emotional response that we would like to present these pieces in the hope that they may help you become more involved in that feeling. Get involved, let it absolutely overcome you and yours will truly be a happy Christmas.

*The Magus Who Never Went Back*

A star fell from the north like snow —

Somewhere we no longer go —

On a place we reached too late

For Christmas snow to matter.

The winter season takes its turn

At seeing if the sun can burn

Away the scarecrow fears which wait

At ends of roads where every tatter —

Strung on our years —

Stutters like icicles of corn

Around the hollow where love is born,

And the world disappears.

Ronald Bates

*Pietà*

Gentle Madonna,  
soft delicate,  
hold your being.

Weighed under angel prophecy  
young mother virgin, suffer  
the Apostle forgotten pains.

Ease your loins  
and wet spread life  
upon the floor.

O God.

O God.

What have I done?

my body sings

without the touch of man.

sweating brow

ease

ease

O God.

Christ

womb light

glisten white.

O God.

son of

Joseph?

these people

dazzled aura not belonging  
to the mind of Mary,  
gifts of aristocracy,  
sheep from shepherd huts.

this light

Joseph

Joseph

and so Madonna  
sat Giotto's way  
her eyebrows high  
her eyes soft-tired  
her lips just touching  
like the constant tone of time.

She bent her head,  
one-sided like a  
with Christ upon           leaning cross  
her breast.

Ray Sealey

## *Christmas*

The moon hangs over snow.  
Snowflakes chase  
like minnows in a stream.  
A night as usual as history  
unfurls about the air.  
Over the bleak drifts  
the wind hits  
like a packed fist.

John Ferns

## *You*

cotton clouds and cardboard moons,  
rivers of cellophane, mountains of wax  
little toy boats and windmills and fences,  
rows of brown houses  
    of toothpicks  
    and eggshells  
    and glue,  
grey paper smokestacks  
and  
you.

—T. Waugh



## *And You Wondered*

The snow was very white. It stuck to your big brown boots like it used to when you were a kid climbing up the toboggan hill or having a snowball fight down the street from the school. Snowball throwing on school property was forbidden.

Otherwise there wasn't much brightness. The street decorations swung in the wind and all the shops were lined with coloured lights and sparkling tinsel but too many buses and cars had come past and taken all the glow away with them. And you wondered why nobody ever threw snowballs any more.

Down the street a Salvation Army man with no gloves rang a little bell and stood over his donation kettle as the holiday shoppers shifted their parcels and hurried by with determination. As he brushed the snow from the top of his kettle a young mother yanked her little boy's arm and dragged him crying across the street. Xmas turkeys were on special.

If you listened you could hear the other sounds of winter. Somewhere near a car was stuck and the sharp whining of spinning wheels drowned out the Salvation Army bell. A distant Silent Night blaring from a toy shop a block away pervaded all, including the rough scraping of a metal snowshovel on the bare sidewalk. Chunks of ice crunched under foot.

And you wondered again why you couldn't just keep walking and close your eyes and when you opened them find yourself in that christmas card scene. With silent falling snow, and horses pulling sleighs, and little churches with towers, and people singing carols around green christmas trees, and fire-places and candles. And a snowman with a carrot nose and two chunks of coal for eyes.

But nobody has coal any more. And you stood there for a moment with that snowball in your hand. And you looked around embarrassed and waited till some children passed before you dropped it to the ground and hurried on your way.

## *Hymn For A Snow Wedding*

(for Grace)

Pipes the tall,  
the clean,  
organ of Winter:  
amber windows,  
meters helmeted in ice,  
priests on skis hoisting torches,  
mugs of hot wine  
where barrels of ancient rifles leak ivy  
into miniature sugar sleighs:  
to the unmerciful;  
to sleepers in doorways;  
to the heinous rich.  
We have buffalo robes though  
little freezing ships on the Seaway have none,  
and in our station oh our wild arms  
go round and round!  
that all should have these to forget  
what is popular now  
on the dazzling white earth.

Steven Osterlund

snow falling in flakes  
into a world  
ripe with laughter;  
bright with smiles.

snow falling softly  
dressing trees  
in surreal beauty:  
catching frost  
as a painter  
touches canvas.

sudden whiteness:  
virgin-pure  
half-snow; half-rain;  
wind-driven  
half-shapes appearing,  
disappearing  
with chameleon  
quickness.

the spirit flying high  
descends  
with the snow  
falling in flakes  
on a neoned world  
at christmas.

Mary Ellen Holland



Wisdom and simplicity

Crowns and shepherds' crooks

Come to Bethlehem to see

How a baby God looks.

James Reaney

## *Reflections On Christmas*

Christmas falls gathering darkness;  
Wind drifts in swirls of snow,  
Settles over blankets of innocence  
In radiant holy light reflected,  
Subdued on the sleepless city.

Wandering on lonely burning sands  
My eyes behold the blaze of torches  
And above he hangs,  
Dying in agony, suffering,  
Suffering forgiveness  
Lines his worn face.

We shall not worry, Hitler is in the grave —  
The world will be saved.

Mary alone, weeping,  
His disciples desert in fear  
And he cries for water;  
They give him the sting of vinegar,  
Acid from that first forbidden fruit.

There is food on our shelves today;  
China's hunger breeds oceans away.

At dawn he utters a final plea  
And the earth trembles and roars  
And a mushroom cloud lifts him to heaven  
Leaving the earth in chaos.

And I turn to my coloured Christmas tree  
Disturbed.

Larry Hutchman

*Christmas Eve 1962*

(to marcia)

candle-light service  
at St. George's —  
snow on stained-glass windows,  
the smell of polished floor,  
rows of velvet-red flowers,  
the choir,  
and families —

i'll never forget  
because i could still taste  
the salve you had  
rubbed on your lips  
before we kissed  
in the car.

rjs

here it is  
christmas.

again  
i'm happy you're here  
with me  
to share  
these moments of pretense:  
to laugh  
away the time in soft and gentle rhythm  
of living together

till tomorrow never comes  
to end the time of laughter.

Mary Ellen Holland



## *Good Night*

a child is a wishing well  
laughing up at me  
a child is a singing shell  
a pumpkin  
a bee

a child is a noisy brook  
leaping on its way  
a child is a quiet nook  
a secret  
a play

a child is a tinsel tree  
shimmering in the dark  
a child is a shopping spree  
a fireplace  
a spark

a child is a woollen sock  
hanging by the wall  
a child is a cuckoo clock  
a chuckle  
a doll

a child is a golden bow  
glistening in the light  
a child is a loving glow  
a soft kiss.

good night

sister doris shaver c.s.j.

## *A Gift*

(to ginny for christmas)

Old man walking,  
scooping through the sidewalk snows  
of Christmas Eve  
with huge galoshes flopping:  
leather skinned and hidden  
in the comfort of his great coat collar;  
plodding uphill  
through the last  
white leaves of Christmas  
shaken from the clouds;  
plodding past the last  
bursting pub,  
past the new & used shop,  
the flower shop,  
the department store  
with electric decorations;  
plodding uphill  
under the haloed street lamps  
into the candled and tinselled  
exploding neon suburbs  
where the last weary shopper,  
like a lumpy snowman,  
bagged and parcelled,  
shuffles at a corner,  
waiting for a bus.  
His old eyes riddle the ribboned gifts  
and flash at the shopper's careless ease.  
"God, don't forget the love," he says,  
and plods away,  
disappearing  
into the endless snows of Winter  
over the last forgotten hill.

Allan Fraser



Matthew tells of Christ's begetters  
They are known as Jesse's stem  
From this tree of old ancestors  
Came God's son

This tree still stands along the fence  
A gnarled lopped maple tree  
Each twig and branch a prince  
Pointing to glory

Glory over the winter fields  
Child of David and Solomon  
Glory over the fields of snow  
Point tree to the sun.

James Reaney

## *A Christmas Play*

Snow tinkled on the roof  
and sat in piles on the little trees;  
the wind wandered, waiting, and fled,  
quiet and swift.

some tiny animals  
left tracks over drifts.

a creek clicked under the cold,  
lost in its own forest.

a train, too, was lost  
in the distance.

on the hills lay the great sky,  
flat above gnarled toes of frost.

The sky-cape fluttered  
and a little village  
awoke in the dawn light,  
with coughs and whispers and bells:  
a small, jingling hearth,  
quiet and serene.

drifting smoke ringed the sun,  
and the ghost of winter  
glowed in its warmth.

mark kirk

Best wishes for a  
happy Christmas season  
from the staff of Folio

Allan Fraser  
Mike Quinny  
Marc R. Topham  
Ed Izrael  
Pat Stone  
Auddy Paton





