

# The Week Before Christmas

By Joyce Luke

'Twas the week before Christmas and all through the school  
Not a pupil was silent, no matter what rule.  
The children were busy with paper and paste;  
The mess that they made with it couldn't be faced.

The teacher half frantic and almost in tears,  
Had just settled down to work with her dears,  
When out in the hall there arose such a clatter  
up sprang the kids to see what was the matter!

Away to the door they all flew like a flash;  
The one who was leading went down with a crash.  
Then what to their wondering eyes did appear  
But a green Christmas tree! (To decorate I fear!)

When the teacher saw this, she almost grew sick.  
She knew in a moment it must be Old Nick!  
She ran to the door (all her efforts were vain)  
But she shouted, and stamped, and she called them by name;

"Now Tommy! Now Sandy, Now Judy and Harry!  
Stop Billy! Stop Robert! Stop Donny and Sherry!  
Now get to your places get away from the hall  
Now get away! Get away! Get away all!

As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly  
The pupils, pell mell, started scurrying by.  
They ran to the blackboard and skipped down the aisle;  
Their faces were shining and each had a smile.

First came a basket of popcorn to string  
-Then came the Christmas tree (menacing thing).  
As the tree was brought in there arose a great shout;  
The pupils were merrily romping about.

The state they were in could lead to a riot;  
The teacher was sure, if allowed, they would try it.  
Her nerves how they jangled! Her temples were throbbing!  
The rush of her breath sounded almost like sobbing!

The lines of her face were as fixed as a mask;  
It was plain that she didn't feel up to her task.  
The look in her eye would have tamed a wild steer,  
But the children ignored it; they did every year.

A tear from her eye and a shake of her head  
Soon led me to think that she wished she were dead.  
She spoke not a word but went straight to her work,  
Strung all the popcorn which broke with a jerk.

But at last it was finished and placed on the tree;  
Then came the bell and the children were free.  
Their shrill little voices soon faded away  
And peace was restored at the end of the day.  
As she looked at the Christmas tree glistening and tall,  
She smiled as she whispered, Merry Christmas to all!

