**The Polar Express**

Once upon a time, one late Christmas Eve,

A young boy lay listening, longing to believe.

That the beloved Kriss Kringle that we all have heard tell,

Is real and exists and will ring his sleigh bell.

Although on that night, the bells were not heard,

The arrival of a train was mysterious and absurd.

The screeching of metal could be heard that cold night,

As the boy left his house wrapping his robe nice and tight.

A conductor was standing at the train’s open door,

The boy had never seen anything like it before.

Pocket watch in hand, the conductor smirked,

His last stop, a success, the plan had worked.

‘This is the Polar Express’ he cried out,

‘Hop aboard and here you will learn all about,

‘The true spirit of Christmas, in all of its wonder,

‘The greed and the jealousy that we all blunder.’

The conductor cried out, ‘C’mon, all aboard!’

As the whistle blew its final chord.

Naïve and unsure, the boy reached for his hand,

This Christmas eve, was certainly unplanned.

The boy could hear laughter as he boarded the train,

The excitement of children could not be contained.

In pajamas and nightgowns, they squirmed in their seats,

While waitresses served them hot cocoa and treats.

The train raced onwards, headed north for midnight,

And the surprise that awaited, would be a delight.

The Polar Express, like a bobsled careening,

Along the mountain accelerating, the cold steel screaming.

The children spread rumors of meeting Saint Nick,

Anticipation building, who would he pick?

Through forests and hills, the train sped through the night,

Over oceans and ice caps, it was quite a site.

A light could be seen growing brighter in the distance,

The adventure of a lifetime, that would change the whole of their existence.

‘There it is!’ cried the conductor, ‘The North Pole, we are here!’

The children watched in awe as the train drew near.

The boy pressed his face against the foggy glass window,

Alone stood a warehouse covered in snow.

A grumbling structure, so dark and eerie,

Made the boy’s mind begin to worry.

The Polar Express had reached its destination,

At the glorious workshop that supplied toys for the nation.

Mind you, it wasn’t quite what the children imagined,

As they disembarked the train in an orderly fashion.

The factory was crawling with hundreds of elves,

They were children of all ages, depressed, not themselves.

Like robots the elves slaved away in the workshop,

Creating millions of toys, they were working nonstop.

The children followed the conductor, he gave the grand tour.

The boy took in his surroundings, still feeling unsure.

He was beginning to realize the truth about Christmas,

Santa and his elves were strictly about business.

‘Are we gonna meet him?’ the boy cautiously questioned,

‘Why of course, very soon,’ the conductor suggested.

‘These elves were once children like you,’ he proclaimed,

‘They were chosen by Santa to work under his name.

‘Like you, they once listened hoping to hear,

‘A mythical sound that never existed my dear.

‘How could you have been so naïve to believe,

‘That the meaning of Christmas was to give not receive.

‘Writing a list of every present that each child wanted,

‘Is a tradition that years ago Santa had started.

‘Saint Nick’s only goal was to earn as much cash,

‘As he possibly could before doling gifts in a flash.’

The conductor looked around at children’s grinning faces,

He ushered them onstage where they took their places.

Unlike the others, the boy seemed concerned,

His palms began sweating, as the old man emerged.

Heavy footsteps were heard against the solid metal floor,

A grumpy old man, appeared at the door.

In a red and white suit, he approached the stage,

His curly white beard, showing his age.

The room filled with excitement, ten minutes to midnight,

Would Saint Nick pick the boy? It’s not certain, he might.

‘Let your greed be your guide,’ Santa yelled out.

Unveiling his sleigh of toys, making the children all shout.

He said to the children, ‘Take all that you’d like,

‘For when you return home later tonight,

‘Your parents will pay for the toys that you chose.

‘Making me the rich man, not everyone knows.’

The old man loved this part, he would soon rejoice,

As the clock struck midnight Saint Nick made his choice.

‘I choose you.’ Santa bellowed, pointing to the boy,

‘You will become the next slave to make all my toys.’

The children erupted into thunderous applause,

The next elf had been chosen by old Santa Claus.

As the children were loaded back onto the train,

It dawned on the boy, he was to remain.

The conductor called out, ‘All aboard and goodbye!’

The boy’s eyes filled with tears, he started to cry.

The old train shuddered and started to steam,

The tears down his cheek, continued to stream.

Mission accomplished, the Polar Express slowly departed.

Soon the boy’s work for next year would be started.

For the past hundred years on each Christmas eve,

The conductor had only one goal to achieve.

He was ordered by Santa, ‘A selection of kiddies,

‘Use the Polar Express to make the deliveries.’

One lucky child, Kriss Kringle would choose,

This unlucky boy his freedom he’d loose.

Left behind by the train to slowly grow old.

Making presents and gifts, as many as told.

He would work every day as an elf and a slave,

He would work for Saint Nick, until in his grave.