

## Santa's True Vocation

Santa walked in sadness through the drifted snow.  
Tears were frozen in his beard; he had nowhere to go.  
The chancellor had told him his department would face cuts.  
But one third less of Santa meant no fun. No ifs or buts.

'The fact is, Santa,' Osborne said, 'we don't need guys in red.  
For kids these days send Christmas lists to Amazon instead.  
Companies sell goods online and post them, safely tracked.  
I hope you see it's for the best: I'm sorry but you're sacked.'

'We'll auction off your flying sleigh and privatise your beard.  
As for all those reindeer, which so tenderly you've reared:  
we've sourced some tasty recipes; they'll soon be a bestseller.  
How proud you'll be when they're in Sainsbury's, cooked *a la Nigella*.'

So Christmas came – and so did snow. Deliveries got stuck.  
Stockings hung by firesides. The midnight bells all struck.  
Public houses closed their doors and stoppered up their barrels.  
How silently the day arrived (George Osborne had taxed carols).

Up and down the country, there was a deathly quiet.  
But every single house with kids experienced a riot.  
As every child below fifteen was waiting all a-quiver,  
each learned with shock: on Christmas Day, despatch vans don't deliver.

In Clarence House, Prince Charles himself called for an explanation.  
'Where *has* the Yuletide spirit gone? This is a gloomy nation.  
And why's my stocking empty? My mother says the same.  
She says she will decapitate whoever is to blame.'

In Downing Street, the PM held his sad and empty stocking.  
He stomped around to see next door. 'George, this is simply shocking.  
All of Britain is aghast. The polls are looking flatter.  
I'm going to give the queen your head upon a silver platter'.

The chancellor fell to his knees. 'Have mercy! Pity me!  
I only meant to save some cash! We *need* austerity.  
Santa's beard, it seems, is real. I couldn't sell the sleigh –  
it didn't have an MOT. The reindeer flew away.'

The PM shook his head. 'I know you didn't mean to fail.  
But no one sane would trust so many gifts to Royal Mail.'  
'How *can* I make amends?' cried George, 'for all this tale of woe?'  
The PM said, 'I have a plan. Can you go "Ho Ho Ho"?''

'I see it now. In shopping centres, every boy of three,  
will get a present from you as you bounce him on your knee.

And just as we associated red with Santa Claus –  
Blue will be the colour of the robe of Santa George!

'But who'll take care of business? The economy – who'll fudge it?'  
George gasped. The PM chuckled. 'Yes, thinking of the budget,  
what we need's a man with a big heart to govern spending,  
not someone whose sole vision is austerity unending.'

As Santa walked in sadness through the drifted snow,  
he saw his sleigh approaching, as fast as it would go.

And in it was the PM with a case of fine old sherry,  
'Santa, you're now chancellor. Please make the nation merry'.

*Have a jolly good Christmas in 2015*

*and a prosperous New Year*

Ian Mortimer