

## *Cherchez la femme*

You might think that it's an impossible feat  
To visit each village and every last street  
In all of the nations in just one night –  
But Santa Claus' annual Christmas flight  
Is not quite the hardest job on this Earth.  
It's actually second. There's one that is worse.

His wife has it harder they say, and it's true:  
She's Old Mother Christmas. She dresses in blue –  
a navy blue hat and a navy blue coat –  
with a long white beard growing over her throat.  
As Santa will tell you, his principal cause  
Is not pleasing children but *'er indoors*.

On Christmas Eve morn, when he is in bed,  
with the duvet pulled cosily over his head,  
It's Old Mother Christmas who makes him his toast  
And grinds up the coffee and sorts out the post  
From all of the children across the whole world  
Who say that they *have* been good boys and girls.

She wraps up the presents with paper and string  
(for wrapping up presents is not Santa's thing),  
She feeds all the reindeer and washes the sleigh  
And programmes the satnav to show the right way  
And polishes Santa Claus' boots till they're black,  
And, most of all, fills up her husband's big sack.

These things, I can tell you, take up the whole year.  
It's not just the season of goodwill and cheer  
But fifty-two weeks in a sweat on her feet,  
Feeding her hubby and keeping him sweet  
Researching which children haven't been friendly,  
And going online to see which toys are trendy.

If Mrs Claus were to meet Mother Theresa  
The things that she does would surely amaze her.  
All through the year she wraps and she sighs,  
Dreaming of sherry while cooking mince pies.  
So this year, let's hear it for Mrs Claus too –  
And everyone helping old Santa help you.

*Merry Christmas 2018*

*From Ian Mortimer*