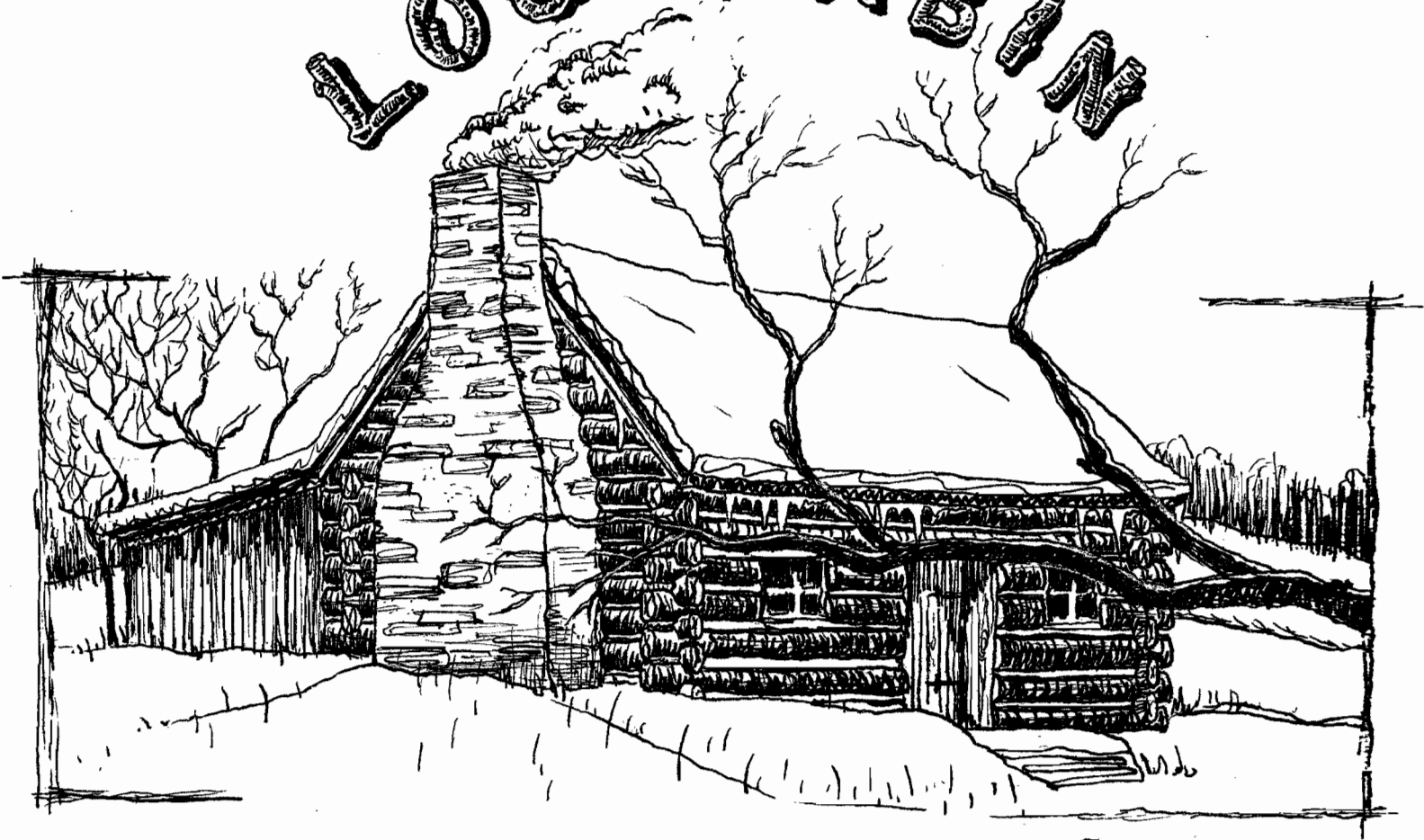




LOG CABIN



CHRISTMAS

Short ^a Story
in poem
by

Kerry L. Kistler



Dedicated to
my love...

Jil



My waking this morning came dreamy and slow,
As I looked out the window at sparkling white snow.
A peacefulness seemed to surround my small bed,
As a warm goose-down pillow nestled my head.

A quilt was my cover, so downy and soft,
I slept in a small, cozy, warm, little loft.
I looked toward the ladder which led down below,
And then at the window sill laden with snow.

I sighed very softly, my eyes changed their gaze,
To the fireplace downstairs brightly burning ablaze.
The warm, spicy scent of bayberry and pine,
Reminded me somehow that Jesus was mine.

I remember last Christmas, a prayer that I prayed,
On my knees with my Dad, the commitment I made.
I felt the deep love He so greatly outpoured,
When I took Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord.

This morning brought 'membrance of all that I had,
My mother and brother, my sister and dad.
A warm bed, a safe home, some day even heaven,
I really felt blessed as a young lad of seven.

My brother awoke with a grin on his face,
He felt warm and happy in his little place.
He said with a whisper, his voice small and low,
"It's Christmas Day, Jeremy!" his face all aglow.

We crawled out of bed without making a noise,
Then giggled and laughed like a pair of young boys.
We crept to the edge of the hard oaken loft,
The silence was broken when Tim gently coughed.

My mother was humming a hymn by the fire,
T'was sung very often by folk in the choir.
She was sewing on something, it looked like a quilt,
As she rocked in the rocker my grand-dad had built.

I smelled the familiar old Christmas time scent,
Tim smelled it too and then toward me he bent.
"Do you smell it Jeremy?" his eyes opened wide,
"It's gingerbread men!" young Timothy cried.

With that, our dear mother glanced up with a smile
She wittingly knew we'd been spying a while.
"Get dressed and come down," her soft words seemed to flow,
"Why Annie's been up the last hour or so."

Around from the corner then peeped our small sister,
She ran up to mother, then smiled and kissed her.
With crumbs on her cheeks Annie giggled with glee,
"Look at what mommy has given to me."

And with that, she lifted her small pudgy hand,
Holding within it a gingerbread man.
Her blonde hair, her blue eyes, her frame very small,
Made my sweet sister look just like a doll.

Both Tim and I dressed in much less than a flash,
And toward the oak ladder we made a quick dash.
I hooked my suspenders, climbed down from the ladder
For Christmas in our house was no little matter.

I stopped in my tracks, and then silent I stood,
I heard the faint noise of my dad chopping wood.
My brother ran over, kissed mom on the cheek,
I glanced out ^{the} window and took a small peek.

Tim hadn't noticed and ran on ahead,
Wanting to taste the brown spice gingerbread.
I looked at my mother, she said with a smile,
"Your dad will be finished in just a short while."

I walked to her slowly, my feet on bare pine,
So polished and smooth over long years of time.
The floor softly mirrored the fire's orange glow,
Mom smiled, looked down and continued to sew.

With hugs and a kiss I then greeted my mother,
My sister had run out to be with my brother.
Then gently my mom pulled me into her lap,
And from the rough plank porch my ear heard at,

My dad quickly opened the door with a flair;
My face felt a nip of the cold winter's air.
And there my dad stood, such a strong handsome man
With an armful of wood and an ax in his hand.

The blanket of snow on his shoulders was thin;
It started to melt on his coat of buckskin.
He put the chopped wood in a box by the door,
The snow from his shoulders dripped onto the floor.

He hung his large ax on the wall by two pegs,
Then brushed the small hickory chips from his legs.
He took off his coat and his hat with much care,
Then brushed his big fingers across his black hair.

Daddy walked over and squeezed my small hand,
Then he opened the flue till the fire was fanned.
From the kitchen ran Annie and Tim with loud squeal
They stopped and then rocked on their toes and their heels.

Their hands behind them, they asked with great vigor,
"Guess what we have." and their eyes got much bigger.
They giggled as daddy suggested a hen,
"I know!" he said "You've got gingerbread men!"

He lifted all three of us close to his chest,
Then I closed my blue eyes and I felt a sweet rest.
He let us down slowly, gave mom a warm kiss,
The Spirit of God had brought feelings of bliss.

The only faint noise in the room we could hear,
Was the noise of the fire, to us it was dear.
The sizzle and pop of the hick'ry and oak,
Would grow even louder with each little poke.

The Christmas tree stood in the corner so grand,
One which had grown on my father's own land.
Such a good tree with a fine even taper,
The star on the top was of shiny white paper.

It was laced with popcorn and cranberry strings,
Apples and candles and other bright things.
Several glass bulbs which had come from the east,
And snowflakes of paper, so carefully creased.

I saw the patched stockings which hung in their places,
Some old tin-type pictures of loveable faces.
An aunt and an uncle, a cousin named Terrance,
And there in the middle my loving grandparents

We had sat as a family an hour or so,
While talking and laughing and singing so low.
Then off in the distance we heard a horse neigh,
And the jingle of bells attached to a sleigh.

Before us was all of the foods we adored,
And in my small mind I again praised the Lord.
Roast goose and warm biscuits made out of corn meal,
Sweetbread with walnuts and bits of orange peel.

Greenbeans and dressing and golden glazed yams,
Cranberries, applesauce, jellies and jams.
We talked and we ate and when we were through,
We walked to the tree where the presents were few.

I looked in my stocking, the rim which was belled,
A cane made of candy, my blue eyes beheld.
My nose really loved that great peppermint smell,
An orange and some nuts which were still in the shell.

Small Timmy and Annie had gotten the same,
Then each found the package which bore his own name.
Around the stone hearth with a gift in our laps,
Gramps, with his ^{cane}, gave the floor two quick raps.

We shared this story on each Christmas day,
Said Gramps with a gesture "Hear each word I say.
This story is more than a legend you know,
It started in Bethlehem long years ago."

He told us the story 'bout a small baby boy,
And how through his birth he was still bringing joy.
He picked up his Bible and read us the part,
Where Jesus was born, and it warmed every heart.

Then grandma said "That was God's gift to mankind,
And no great gift could our Father God find.
So that is the reason why once every year,
We give of ourselves to the ones we hold dear."

"Exchanging these presents is more than just fun,
It's reminding us all that God gave us His son.
Continue to think of the gift from above,
Remember it always, tell those that you love."

We opened our presents, each one in their turn,
It seemed every Christmas, a truth I would learn.
A new birth was wrought in my heart last Yuletide,
I understand now, why for me Jesus died.

The evening had come and the day slipped away,
In chatting and singing and much family play.
Then grandpa and grandma shared part of their life,
The time years ago they became man and wife.

Our grandpa told stories of when he was young,
And how I was hanging the sock he had hung.
He had done quite a lot in all of his days,
My grandpa is special in many fine ways.

And grandma was there by his side all the time
Both now in his old age, as well as his prime.
T'was God that had joined them and not just blind fate,
For each was a warm-hearted, kind, loving mate.

The time for us children to sleep had come 'round,
Now singing below is the cabin's lone sound.
My mind has been dwelling on thoughts of the day,
The things which had happened each step of the way.

My worn mind returns to the here and the now,
I thank you Creator for showing me how,
Your love, through your son, was poured out upon us,
This special, my seventh, log cabin Christmas.



Christmas 1980