

## Touching My Inner Festive: Karl Vasey

The boy lay rigid in his single bed, his eyes tightly closed, "*Your presents from Santa will turn to sand if you open them or even see them before Christmas morning*" was ringing in his head. In the distance he could hear faint tinkling of bells from the hallway below. He imagined them being Santa's reindeer bells, even though he knew it was a brass ornament merry-go-round, affected by the heat up draft from a kerosine heater.

He slowly, stretched out his legs and eventually experienced the thrill of the weight and crinkling sound of a large stocking filled with goodies. He rehearsed opening the gifts inside, a water pistol, a Christmas cracker, plasticine and an orange fitting snugly at the toe end.

His mind started wondering about how Santa was able to fit down the flue to our combustion heater. Why does he leave black footprints everywhere? He was early this year with his present request letter which had the strange address, 'Santa's workshop, Helpers Lane, Lapland' wherever that is.

Every year was comfortably the same, up early, hot drinks, waiting patiently to take turns opening presents. The boy corralled his presents in his armchair to preserve the glow while watching cartoons on the TV. Why do the grown ups go back to bed?

Mother would have that frazzled expression as she rammed a large bird into the oven. The table would take on a festive look with streamers, crackers and ancient Christmas napkins. Wearing a paper hat from a cracker, Father performs the ritual of carving the bird, hilariously pretending to cut a hair from his head with the blade. One year he missed with confronting repercussions. Why do the grown ups retreat again to bed after the meal? More TV followed by what was known as "The do-it-yourself kit." This entailed eating up leftovers that seemed to last weeks!

The boy felt the warm glow of expectation of the day ahead, feeling the buzz of a day which feels different. Happiness is fleeting, a lesson for us all to ponder.