

A Christmastide

A long time ago in a land far up north
Pine trees were cut and by boat were sent forth.
A three-masted schooner bound for Chicago
Was laden with holiday greenery as cargo.
T'was the captain's favorite run for very good reason-
His ship heralded the joy of the Christmas season.

Big water was restless; it was time to go
Before being stalled by ice, wind and snow.

As sails were hoisted high in the sky
An ominous warning on the wind seemed to cry,
The waves fitfully tossed; the lake roared with fury.

Each weather omen bid the captain to hurry.
A fierce winter gale tragically ended tradition
As a powerful storm plunged the ship to perdition.

Life was extinguished and hope was dashed
In the blink of an eye by that harsh wintry blast.

No trees in Chicago that Christmas arrived -
Neither ship, nor captain, nor sailor survived.

A hundred years later with heads full of lore
A small band of people would history restore.

They sought trees to revive the legend of old
To rekindle a gift in this season of cold.

Spruce, fir and balsam of magnificence great
Would be cut, baled and shipped, not a moment too late.

Families were waiting at the south end of the lake.

They needed some trees, for yuletide's sake!
Shouts of "Merry Christmas" rang with good cheer
As a ship of glad tidings docked alongside the pier.
To welcome the *Mackinaw* an eager crowd gathered.

This Christmas vessel was a ship for all weather.
Hearts swelled with joy and eyes filled with wonder

To see humble pine trees again proud in splendor.

A long century passed, but now complete is the trip -
From Thompson to Chicago sails the Christmas Tree Ship!