

'Twas the night before Christmas,

when all thro' the Villa,

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The trees were set up in the Sunrooms with care,
With Santas and snowmen and angels also there;

The residents were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of family danced in their heads,
The nurse with her cart, and I with the lift,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's shift —

When out in the Rose Garden arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the screen to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I quietly peeked,
Not willing to wake up the newly asleep.

The moon on the concrete reflecting down there,
Gave the lustre of mid-day to tables and chairs;
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature work cart, with all of its gear.

With a short little driver, so lively and hale,
I knew in a moment it was Uncle Sal.
More rapid than eagles, his maintenance men came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name:

"Now! Ed, now! Bill, now! Bill and Ed,
"Grab hammers! And nail guns! It's time to mend;
"Fix the top of the tree! Paint the top of the wall!
"Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof,
The dancing and swearing with each little, "oof!"
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the gutter slid Sal, to land with a bound.

He was dressed in his cargo pants, pockets galore,
And his clothes were all striped, from the rainspout
and more;
Bundles of gifts hung out of his pockets,
And he looked Activities, selling candy and lockets.

His eyes — how they twinkled! His accent: how
merry,
With a greeting that can't help but make you feel
cheery;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the hair on his head was as white as the snow;

Not chubby nor plump, but a jolly old elf,
I laughed when I saw him in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye, and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know, I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
To fix what was broken; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a sneeze, out of the dust he arose.

He sprang to his cart, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down of a thistle:
But I heard him exclaim, ere he rolled out of sight —
Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night.

—Adapted from Clement Clark Moore

