

## SILENT NIGHT

Dolores M. Ouellette

The aged, like me, listen to the silence,  
of that midnight hour when, in the past,  
a bearded stranger parked on roofs  
and a few shingle edges broke from hoofs  
that dug in, seeking security, over  
the precipitous, V-shaped parking place.

Oh yes! I can prove it! Ask me  
and my siblings who heard the shingles fall,  
and stones tumbling in gutters,  
from "roofside" hiding places, cluttered  
by chipmunks who filled our downspouts  
with nuts, debris and berries, rotted, yet tasty.

After eighty years who needs to prove it?  
Like last year, tomorrow will bear evidence of  
pretty pieces of paper, that flutter in the snow,  
bearing torn tags of ribbon and written words we all know.  
A neighbor's new puppy manages to find the back door,  
and somebody, a bearded guy,(?) leaves the aged, a bottle of wine.

Tonight, we sigh, turn in bed for that quick peek  
at the skylight, where shadows waver against the moon.  
Old feet wear sleeping socks, a present from the Dollar Store,  
a treat from a widow who can't buy more,  
who is alone, not yet old, who seeks to warm my spirit,  
and sings hymns, at church, with me and the aged.

Today, we too, broke the silence of the night.  
We filled our hearts and minds  
with "Joy to the World" from pews where  
we enjoyed "Babes" dressed in finery,  
for a visit with the aged, waiting to embrace their "delights,"  
giggles of happiness, gifts of Mom and Dad's loving, Silent Nights.