

through the archways of timeless wonder our eyes peer once again into the edge of a mystery. the great mystery of love that is christmas. a God become a babe to save fools like you and me. in a birth with an underlying pathos, the faraway mute memory of a hill in Galilee shape like a skull.

can our hearts go dead within us as we stand stirred and rapt at a sunrise breaking the clasp of night at the margin tip of a tumbling horizon? the beginning of life. all life. or a life that is neither a beginning nor an end. but a life that figuratively began in time's soft awakening and swept forward in a mighty crescendo that enclosed eternity's walls. a life that is a Gift to mankind and gives still with all the reckless gallantry a heedless loan of life to the borrowers of time. encompassing as only the uninterrupted circle of love's embrace that is a God's existence. this is the birth of love Himself.

ramblings in lower case

engulfed by an impossible nostalgia, we are drawn to the secret enchantment that only christmas' tinselled fingers can weave, distilling from the ramparts of a crumbling world, a sense of the evocative in man's humanity — the hope of a lifetime — crystallized in the spirit of a faith unbroken by centuries. incarnate in this infant who flings wide the shutters of our hearts, walks the halls of our minds and knocks at the chapel of our souls. christmas, thy name is love.

the story of christmas sounds like a fairytale. perhaps that is why its message of hope and peace strikes no quiver of reality in our lives — because it sounds so idealistically incredible in its holy holly blabbering of "peace on earth to men of good will" balderdash. (well, what a lark! cute poetry isn't it?) shucks, we're a whole lot smarter than that. now look, don't look at us that way. Jesus is real enough when there's no one else but "peace, good will?" — what're you talking about? those two items are non-existent, strictly for the birds. don't you know or were you born yesterday? why are we so terribly proud to meet the rebuff of a mystery? is it because it mirrors the truth that we are frail and do not really know everything? this boulder of truth that limits the boundaries of ourselves. thoroughly sophisticated lots of us make up that spineless lot, commuters into religion, the little people who stay on the bleachers and can't quite make up their minds where to place Him — in the center of the court or at the sidelines and when to use Him — special occasions or everyday grind. in fear of

making so total a commitment or vowing so absolute an allegiance to Him, we tread the middle ground, both relieved but uneasy over our denial of His sovereign existence in our personal world. some can do it, why not you? there's our teller in the office (lita uy-comm. 2) who stretches her christmas tolerance to cover the 12 months of the year. quite a feat when one knows that she gets snobbed, insulted and subjected to sniping remarks from impatient students who pay her their tuition fees. lita who has seen the meanness and pettiness of campus figures from her window and says nothing... cesar salera (pre-law II) father John's uncomplaining shock absorber... betty antonio (law I) who'd give you the world if she had it to give...

we slumber our lives in capsules that often never break the thin casings of trivialities as we exist between the brackets of sunrise and sunset without a sense of fulfillment. without a vision, our hearts blind to the gift of life from the chalice of eternity. do i really believe in christmas? is God alive? or is He too busy keeping an eye on the russians? to all of us who are encased in an armour and feel so big while straining hard at the lease of mortality it must come as a shock that "it is only by being little that we ever discover anything big." something big like the meaning of christmas.

christmas with its generosity and fine display of social hypocrisy. let's be practical. too many people think of christmas as a yearly martyrdom of weary christmas gift and card listings — the best for whom we



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owe something or to those whom we can't afford not to give the best — classifying people according to their positions in the social chessboard instead of their rank in our hearts. and then they speculate on what they'll also get, whose birthday is it anyway? to the lonely little celebrant, no remembrance. no thanks. no love. nothing. the christmas tree is set up ablaze with glittering lights before anyone thinks of a crib.

christmas is in the heart. if that is the real essence of christmas then why haven't we a shred of thoughtfulness for our own classmates who'll chalk off this christmas as another empty one unless we remember? we aren't wide off the mark when we say it might spell the difference between that quality called memorable and something that they'd rather not say. many of us are resigned to facing another christmas away from home. "home" to many of us means an almost two days travel by boat. with the school closing so close to christmas, we run the risk of spending christmas eve in a strange boat in the middle of the sea, forlorn and very much alone. for those who stay behind, one can hardly imagine their acute sense of loneliness and sickening sense of isolation as they drift through the christmas season in a kind of desperation and urgency to push the flying days faster. a tribe of unhappy people with no friends, no family and Lord, Host of all-no money! last year, we meet ten carolinians stranded in cebu because their allowances didn't arrive on time. they spent christmas eve sleeping in their boarding houses and didn't even bother to greet each other. none of them received a single card. nobody came either. in their opinion

by lourdes jaramilla