

## My Christmas Project

Right before Thanksgiving, Miss Atwood said we each had to make a Christmas project that we would present at our Christmas Pageant. I fretted over my project for several days. I could sing, but I plan on singing in the pageant, so I don't want to hog all the singing. I can't dance, and besides, little Nancy Shoat dances every year. Walter will recite something from the Bible that his Pentecostal preacher daddy had him memorize. Billy Talley will show us something he whittled or made in his Daddy's wood shop. I'm holding off hitting him with a rock until he has made his project so as I don't damage his arms. I didn't know what I could do, but I had to come up with something. One day, sitting on the church steps, I went through my usual way of doing things. I always look up and down the road, dreaming about being like Miss Jean Harlow or working on one of those telephone things I saw in the movies, but today, I was hoping for a bright idea I could do for our Christmas project. I like rhyming words with my Daddy, so I decided to write a poem.

I usually do my lessons at the table. I do that for two reasons. One is that I don't want to miss anything someone says or does. Sometimes, Daddy tells what he hears at the sawmill, or Mama tells what she hears when someone stops by to visit. Sometimes, my brothers argue, and I want to hear and know everything that happens in case I can use it later. The other reason is that I might need help if I have to cipher anything hard, but tonight, I took my pencil and a sheet of paper and went to my bedroom. This was supposed to be a surprise, and I didn't want one of my brothers to spoil it for me.

Once I started writing, the words came quicker than a duck on a Junebug.

Santa will be coming soon.  
I feel it all around.  
I've been as good as I can be  
So, I know he'll come to town.

His suit is red.  
His beard is white.  
And he always comes.  
On Christmas night.

But Christmas ain't about Santa.  
The Bible tells me so  
But I'd still like to see him  
If I got the chance to go.

Jesus was a baby.  
He slept on a bed of straw  
His Daddy was in heaven  
But he had a real live Ma

At Christmas I want presents.  
The baby Jesus did, too.  
My present to give this Christmas  
I wrote my poem for you.

The end.

I was pretty proud I wrote a poem without asking anyone for help. It was a good poem, too. I mentioned Santa Claus and the baby Jesus, everything you needed for Christmas.

Our Christmas Pageant is always special. We sing and do our program, then we have cookies and punch, and everyone tells you how much they loved what you did. I hope I am not the star when I read my poem, but I could be. I wonder what my best friend Lacy will do. I don't know if she is a poem writer like me or maybe a dancer like little Nancy Shoat. I wonder if she will do something like they do in Chicago? I wonder what they do in Chicago for Christmas. What if Santa can't find her since she isn't in Chicago? I'll have to write to Santa to let him know my best friend, Lacy Cleaves, isn't in Chicago anymore.