

Heiss Holiday Humbug

Starting **these poems** can be tricky, for sure.
I asked Andrew for help. He said this (and no more):

“Roses are red. Christmas letters are blue.
Blahity-blah. Benjamin flicks poo.”

Misadventures in diapering have soured his spirits;
So I'll finish up twenty-thirteen's yule lyrics...

At the dawn of the year the girls **started ballet**
But the best news of all was they'd be in a play—
A choreographed tale of Barrie's Peter Pan!
Months of rehearsals made weekends quite bland
And a full load of course-work meant Andrew was swamped
With assignments and papers—too busy to want
To go anywhere cool, to do anything fun.
So right around April, I announced I was done!

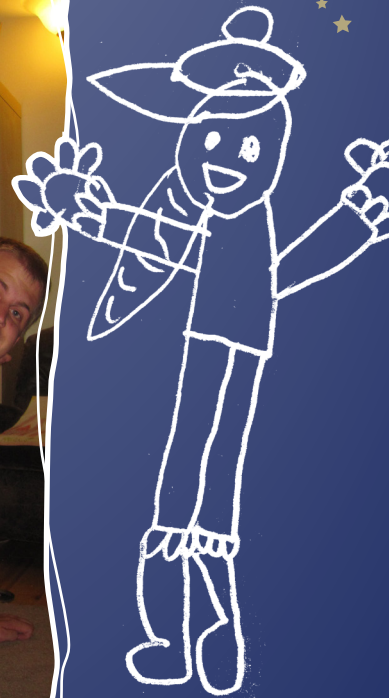
Benji and I left our family's devoir,
Boarded a plane and said “Au revoir!”
Entrusting the girls to Andrew's sweet mother
We headed to Utah to attend yet another
Wedding for Kelli—my dear older sis—
Who enjoys now, with Allen, matrimonial bliss.

Upon coming home (and post-Pan performance)
Romping and rollicking reclaimed their importance;
Weekend excursions at last were in reach!
Our first out-of-town trip was to **Wrightsville Beach**
Where Rachel just couldn't stay out of the water.

Shortly thereafter she gained alma mater
By **finishing kindergarten**, leaving her school.
Her new one is year-round and it's pretty cool.
But before school bells rang, calling all pupils,
Some grandparents asked if we had any scruples
In **going to Florida** with them to see
Our friends **Harry Potter** and **Walt Disney**.

Of course we said yes—we could not decline—
Had the time of our lives; it was really sublime.

Rachel was thrilled with The Wizarding World,
On carousels Miriam giggled and whirled,
The **Kennedy Center** had Andrew impressed,
And as for myself, I liked **Cocoa Beach** best.
But spending my birthday relaxing poolside
Was a close second, I have to confide.



Our birthdays all come in such rapid succession
That summer and fall are one birthday obsession.

Benjamin's first and in June **he turned one**.
He crawled, then he walked, but now mostly he runs.
He's still **rather short**, and he thinks this is bad
But, he can't open doors and that makes me so glad
'Cuz whenever he happens to hear the knob click
He escapes outside. Once he **picked up a tick**
From our yard. It's surrounded by **critter-filled woods**,
And that's great when the creatures remain where they should
But not when they venture too close to the house.
We've seen **deer**, squirrels and **spiders** (but nary a mouse).



Our first-grader, Rachel, **turned six in July**.
She took off with reading; we simply can't pry
Any book from her grip; she reads with such force!
She's consumed *Harry Potter* (the first through the fourth),
Completed the series called *Magic Tree House*,
And many more titles. We just cannot douse
Her **scholastic spirit**. She's athletic as well—
She can **pump on the swing** and she **rides her bike swell**.

Speaking of riding, Rachel took to the waves
On her new boogie board (she's really quite brave)
When we stopped by an island by name of **Topsail**
To celebrate summer with a last-minute thrill.



Mid-July school doors opened and **Rachel returned**.
Year-round summers are short (just a thing that we learned)
But September bestowed us **our first intersession**.
We used our four weeks to relax and refreshen,
Grateful for time spent enjoying each other
While grieving the loss of **our dear friends' sweet mother**,
Who left such a terrible ache in our soul.

We loaded our van and got ready to roll
To the coast (on the east) for a weekend of pleasure,
With camping and swimming—a family adventure!
We toured **Fort Fisher, the aquarium, too**,
And sat 'round the campfire with nothing to do
(Which was really quite nice 'cuz more often than not
I run 'round like a chicken whose head's been lopped off).



Sadly, our scheduled breaks do not jibe:
When Rachel is off, Andrew's in the school vibe.
We didn't do much between **camping excursions**
('Cuz Andrew was too busy plotting dispersions).

At break's end we managed a trip to the west
To discover which mountain chain's really the best—
Blue-ridged Appalachia? Our own native Rockies?
Turns out this is something you can't learn by proxy,
Instead it is better to find out firsthand.
We saw Blowing Rock, and spent time **hiking Grand-Father Mountain**. (These aren't federal attractions.
The Government Shutdown forced many adoptions
To plans that involved any national park).





October then dealt us a swift blow to the heart.
The death of Aunt Susan and our friend Dorothy, too,
Uncle Trevor's bike accident, my dad's scooter boo boo,
Had us all believing nothing else could go wrong.
But misery loves company, death loves to throng.
Grandma Sharon departed—quite fast, with no warning—
And we found ourselves thrown, yet again, into mourning.

Andrew flew to Utah to be there for the funeral,
While at home we applauded Miriam's newest numeral.
That's right—she's four now—she's no longer three,
One year closer to school-age and happy as could be.

Meme's hair grew so long—it was well past her waist!
She cut off ten inches and mailed it with haste
Off to Locks of Love, heeding Rachel's example.
Shoulder-length hair means we have half the tangles
Which means, in turn, we have many more smiles
Than before when their gnarled locks would have to get styled.

In the spare time we've earned by not doing hair lately
We've polished our skills on our new ukuleles.
Strumming and plucking each musical measure
Has furnished our home with much Christmastime pleasure.
We hope your home, too, has been chock-full of peace,
May two-thousand fourteen bring you all that you please.



Love from: Andrew, Nancy, Rachel, Miriam, and Benjamin



O Come
Let Us
Adore
Him