

# Heiss Holiday Humbug

The book of two-thousand nineteen now is closing  
And thus 'tis the time for us to be exposing  
The highs and the lows of this jaunt round the sun.  
We shed a few tears, true, but had lots of fun.

Alex **shunned walking** in favour of crawling  
But that was alright, for there's no risk of falling  
When you're on the floor. Can't get hurt, can't be harmed.  
Just kidding—cuz crawling's how **he broke his arm**.

He spent six weeks rocking a bright **purple cast**  
And picked up biped'lism really quite fast.

Months later while wrestling with his older brother  
Our poor **baby boy about fractured another**  
Bone, leaving him howling and hobbling.  
(That's what I get for ignoring their squabbling.)

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Let's rewind...

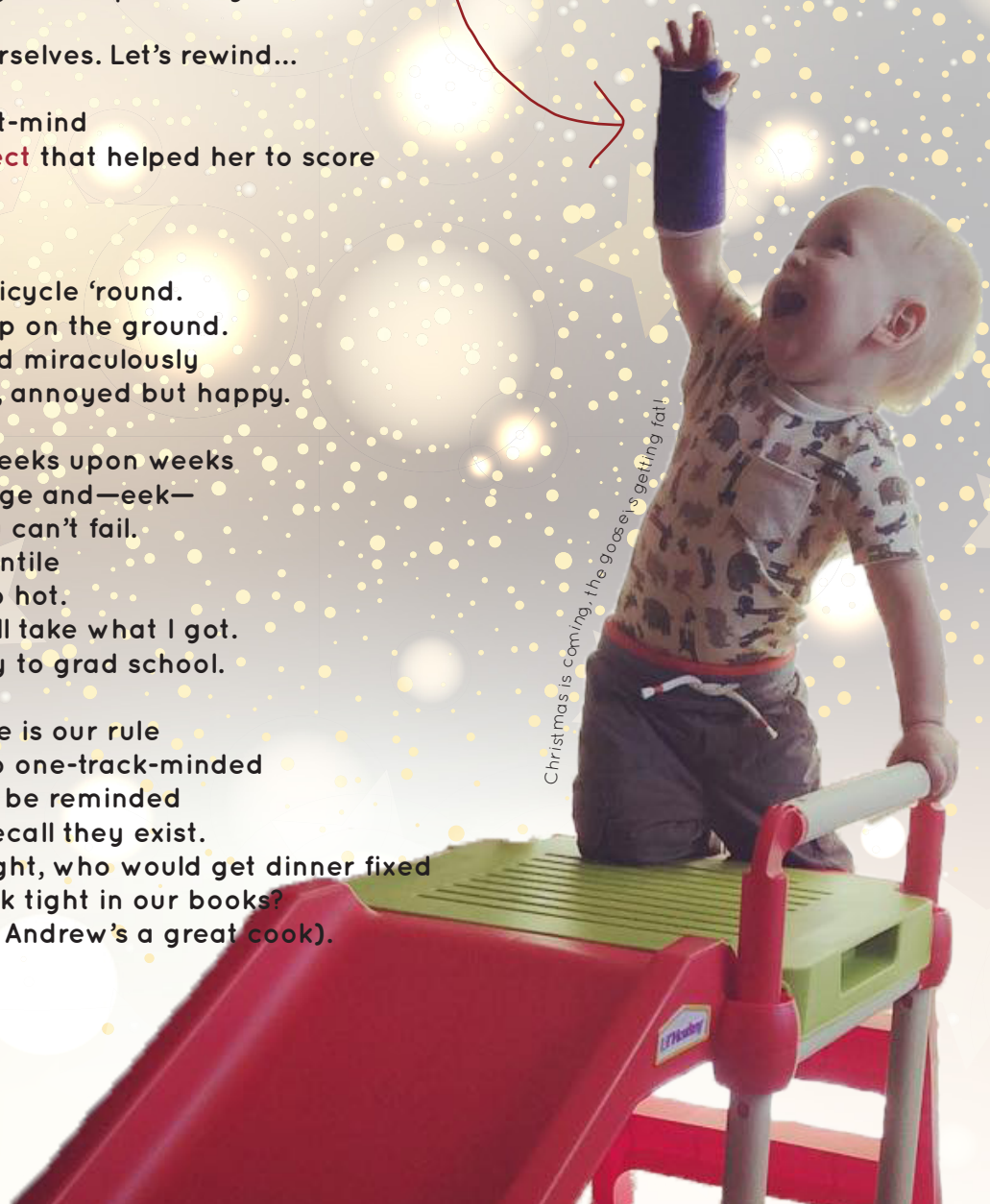
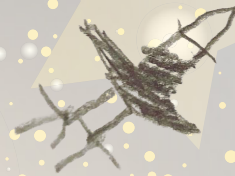
Rachel expanded her scientist-mind  
With **a cool math-based project** that helped her to score  
First place at the fair.

We were happy Zo wore  
Her helmet while riding her tricycle 'round.  
**She was hit by a car**, ended up on the ground.  
But things worked out fine and miraculously  
She zoomed off minutes later, annoyed but happy.

After studying non-stop for weeks upon weeks  
I finally screwed up my courage and—eek—  
**Took the ol' GRE**, an exam you can't fail.  
I scored in the top 95th percentile  
...in language. In math? Not so hot.  
But it's over now (phew!) so I'll take what I got.  
I have five years now to apply to grad school.

One parent in school at a time is our rule  
'Cuz Andrew and I are both so one-track-minded  
We study so hard we have to be reminded  
To care for our offspring, to recall they exist.  
Who would kiss them goodnight, who would get dinner fixed  
If we both had our noses stuck tight in our books?  
(Fret not! I'll put them to bed; Andrew's a great cook).

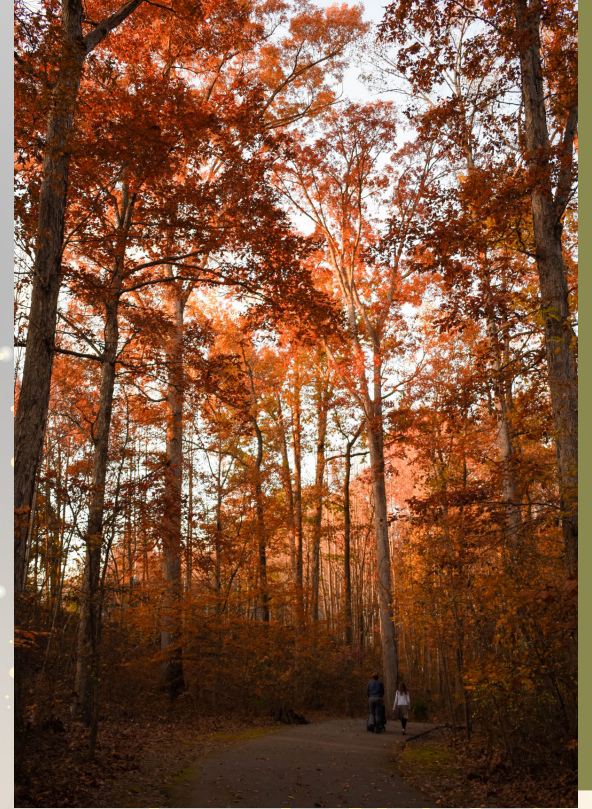
Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat!





When Rachel got home from her first year of girls' camp,  
 We packed up the van, **waved goodbye** and then we scamp-  
 -ered off—just like that; no more Utah for us—  
 To the south by southeast! Peachtree Corners or bust!  
 We're Georgians now because we live in Georgia  
 Where we've got **a job**, and **a house** with a mortgage, a  
 Basketball hoop and a trampoline, too.  
 In fact, we have plenty of "home" things to do,  
 Which is good 'cuz I pulled the kids out of their school,  
 So **we're homeschoolers now**, which was no miniscule  
 Verdict to come to. Oh, my! How I laboured  
 Over that choice, but in no time we've inured  
 A schedule that's really quite manageable.

So far Benjo seems to be amenable  
 To learning when he is not forced to sit still.  
 He really digs science, but if we're being "rill"  
 His passion is history. He likes reenacting  
 Battles with Nerf guns, and going bushwhacking  
 With neighbourhood friends through our forested 'hood.



Andrew and Rachel enjoying a stroll in Pinckneyville Park

All of these trees in the summer are good  
 But fall brings about an acute abscission.  
 When leaves coat the driveway—our steep-sloped munition—  
 We cannot get out, cannot drive, cannot leave. In  
 Fact you could say that we're sometimes **"leaf-ed in."**

And those pernicious leaves didn't stop their games there!  
 They made Andrew crash—not on his derrière,  
 But—one leg went this way, the other went that,  
 And as he did the splits, **a ligament snapped**.  
 I suppose you could say 'twas the foliage that won  
 That challenging scrimmage of badminton.



*Something told the wild geese /  
 It was time to go... —Rachel Field*

Miriam's finally reached double digits  
 And speaking of digits, well, hers are prodigious.  
 She loves playing keyboards: piano and organ  
 (Lesson fees—ugh, guys!—are really no bargain).  
 She's in **orchestra**, too, our sweet li'l cellist,  
 While Rachel is crushing it as a **violinist**.

She's in seventh grade—at a public school, yes—  
 I kind of don't love it, I have to confess,  
 But she's really involved and I think there's a chance she'll  
 Prove her worth while on student council:  
 Rachel's vendetta 'gainst collective punishment  
**Went rather viral** to our great astonishment.

Zoë and Alex, our scholars so tiny,  
 Sometimes feel ignored and get kind of whiny  
 When the big kids have school work to do but they don't,



2 4 7 10 12



So their colouring skills are extremely well-honed.  
They also spend hours with marbles and play-dough,  
Blocks, books, and cars. They are toddler tornadoes,  
Ensuring our house is a consistent mess  
(And my kids only clean when they're under duress).

In May **we pet-sat** for my sister's sweet cat;  
Now the kids want one. Ha—good luck to that!  
I told them they could if they'd keep the house clean,  
A quid pro quo scam (if you know what I mean).

Andrew's a charming assistant professor  
At GSU; at church, he's director  
Of choir. But when they sustained him  
They called Alex's name and now we can't restrain him.  
**He loves to stand up there** and wave his arm round  
Pretending he's making the choir make sounds.

And speaking of Alex, **he loves to call Naanii**.  
Whenever he stumbles upon my cell phone he  
Says, "Wanna call Naanii!" He thinks she's exquisite!  
We were happy to have her **come out for a visit**  
'Cuz we're lonely out here and find we're still grieving.  
It was nice to have someone know why we're bereaving.

If all truth be told, this year was the worst.  
Though Grandma passed last year, this was our first  
**Year without her**. But we all got through it  
And Grandpa's engaged now (wouldn't you know it?!)  
So we'll get to welcome—let's hear y'all holla!—  
a new family member. Her name is **Karolla!**

Next year holds new promise, new chances, new dreams.  
Nothing is ever as bleak as it seems.  
As Benji might say—missing two teeth up fronty—  
**Merry Chrithmuth**, and happy two-thousand-and-twenty!

Love from, *The Heiss Family* Benjamin, Rachel, Andrew, Alexander, Nancy, Miriam, and Zoë

Winter's a-coming, the wild geese  
know, we've had a long fall and it's  
time to go... —Wade Hemsworth

