



# Heiss Holiday Humbug

Issue XVII ★ December 2022

Two thousand and twenty-two's now winding up  
Which means that it's time for me to deconstruct  
The delights and discomforts of fifty-two weeks.  
I hope this short prologue has managed to pique  
Your engagement. You ready? Let's go:

We live in the south. It's warm here, the snow  
Rarely sticks—if it happens at all—  
So we were excited to see enough fall  
To make a tall **snowman**, our first winter guest.  
**Kelline** and **Rosie and Irie** were next.

Soon after they left, **Grandpa** moved to our 'hood.  
He's right 'round the corner and it has been good  
To have him so close. The kids like to do  
Movie nights with him and school field trips, too—  
To **Kennesaw Mountain! Fort Yargo State Park!**  
While hiking "**the fall line**" they missed the trail marks,  
Got stuck in a loop hiking round and around  
Until they were lucky enough to be found  
By a ranger, who tsked, shook his head,  
And helped them all clamber up into the bed  
Of his truck. They rode back in style!

The girls and he went to **DC** for a while,  
Met up with Diana and Michael and Richard,  
Saw all the sights and took lots of pictures.



In May the whole family went to the **beach**.  
It's taken me years, but I've managed to teach  
Each of the older kids to **stay afloat**.  
Babies are fun, y'all, but we were so close  
To actually relaxing ourselves at the beach.  
Instead we have Phoebe, who if she can reach  
Something eats it; we have to surveil her.

She once saw a fuzzy, hirsute caterpillar,  
Grabbed it and popped it right into her mouth.  
**That was a mistake**, as she found out, 'cuz—ouch!—  
Those vile hairs stung her. They clung to her tongue  
And made her quite sad. That poor bug got flung  
Cross the room, then coaxed into a bottle  
Where he sits to this day, all nicely cuddled  
Up in a cocoon.



I can't say I blame him—  
That's how we spent June when **Omicron** came in  
And ravaged our household. Not one soul was spared.  
We sheltered in place, we fevered, despaired  
We would ever get well, but sure 'nough we did,  
Though energy-wise we still feel depleted.  
But life keeps on moving, so we, fresh imagoes,  
Put on our "hard pants."

Then off to **Chicago**  
Went Andrew for NASPAA, then **Denver** for Peace  
Science Society. Meanwhile, Greece  
Is not where I went for **my conference**, although  
It was held in Athens, but...Georgia. Also,  
Phoebe and I took a **week-long vacation**  
To Utah, to make **crucial kin-introductions**  
To cousins and uncles, grandparents and aunts,  
**Great-grandparents** and, frankly, to give me the chance  
To write a bit, nap a lot, and just delight  
In mothering one child (quite the **respite**).



Phoebe, age 1



Alexander, age 5



Zoë, age 7

The children, you ask me, how are they all doing?

Our sweet **Phoebe** girl, when she's not pursuing  
Small things to choke on, is aptly described  
As exuding general baby-like vibes:  
She crawls, babbles, **toddles**, and has the best laugh.

**Five-year-old Alex** is into Minecraft,  
Loves reading and biking, can add and subtract,  
And interjects often to offer "fun facts!"  
His "Owl-Man" persona's a real helpful guy—  
He puts away dishes and [thinks] he can fly!

**Tooth wiggling**'s an ardent obsession of **Zo**. It  
Keeps her hands busy. Our resident poet,  
She's always composing **late into the night**.  
*(Don't know where she gets that from...can't be me, right?)*  
She really loves music so practices daily  
On both the piano and the ukulele.

**Benjamin** flexed his authorial biceps,  
Submitted a **spooky story** to a contest,  
Ended up winning first prize. Were we proud?  
Yes, but then later we really were wowed  
When Benjamin noticed some **smoke from a wire**





Benjamin, age 10

And stepped in before it turned into a fire.  
Aside from his genius for pyre and prose  
There's just one more hobby that I will disclose:  
He uses a jar to ensnare untamed critters—  
Like butterflies, lizards, **chipmunks** and **spiders**.

Little Miss **Miriam** sits at her console(s)  
Tickling keys with both fingers and tarsals,  
Making fine **music** or fine-tuning **code**.  
(I also should tell you about how she sewed  
Some **cute matching jumpers** for Zoë and Pheeb.)  
She's TA for R class (don't call her a dweeb),  
And assists with her organ tutor's library.

**Rachel**'s fifteen now (which is kind of scary).  
She's thriving in high school, does dual enrollment,  
And justifies open and ample extolment  
For tending to Phoebe when I'm in my meetings.  
Her passion for baking shows no sign of fleeting—  
She's baked every **birthday cake** needed this year.  
She's also been learning how to engineer  
Textiles from yarn; yes, she's into **crochet**.



**Josie's stay** prompted an impromptu day-  
Trip to see **Lookout Mountain** in **Chattanooga**!  
The high from her visit will last us all through the  
Holiday season.

I've chatted your ear off  
Telling you all of the who, what, and where-ofs  
Of our wacky family, so here's where I'll stop  
And wish you a happy *deux mille vingt trois*.\*

\*(duh-mill-van-trwah) Two-thousand and twenty-three



Miriam, age 13



Rachel, age 15

Love from,

*The Heiss Family*

Andrew, Nancy, Rachel, Miriam, Benjamin,  
Zoë, Alexander, and Phoebe

