

Heiss Holiday Humbug

Two-thousand and twenty-four zipped right on by! It's time once again for me to summarize / the annual trip that we make 'round the sun, / explain where we've been, who we've seen, what we've done:

We had a good visit with our friend Amanda who wanted to bid fond farewell to the pandas—we bundled up warmly and **went to the zoo**.

The very next day we came down with the flu! Just kidding, my friends. It was **COVID—round two**.

The timing was poor, for you see we were due **to see Hamilton**. So with Dad we sent Rachel while I went with Reid and his "special friend" Darla / (and Miriam, too). It all worked out well, but I'm sure you are thinking, "Nancy, please tell me more about Darla!" I will. Here's the sitch:

They met last December. By March **they were hitched!** / She's lovely. He's happy. What more could we ask?

She joined us for "beach week!" We splashed and we basked / **on Edisto Island**. We had a great time! But let's backtrack a bit in this ol' Christmas rhyme...

Phoebe wakes up every morning as "**Puppy**"; she really loves dogs and so it was quite lucky some neighbours of ours got a puppy and **we get to walk her** around the block three times weekly. / That kind of a pet is superior to / the ones that are apt to find their way into / our basement. They're slimy and crawly and creepy. One day Alexander called out, rather weepy, "I think **there's a skink in my pants!**" And there was! / He flailed around 'til it came out (as one does).

In April sweet Phoebe, while riding her trike, swerved into Miriam, who totally, like, / tripped and then landed wrong, **breaking her arm**. The timing was poor and we had a few qualms 'bout sending her casted self **traipsing 'cross Europe** / but the tickets were paid for so she still had to do it. / Thus with Aunt Josie and Rachel in tow / she headed to Österreich to visit my brother Patrick. They toured around Znojmo, Freilassing, Salzburg, and Bratislava.

The cast came off days before her **spring recital!** For organ and piano, hand health is vital.

Besides all her music stuff, **Miriam's driving** around with her permit while Rachel is thriving



Andrew
& Nancy

Rachel (17)

Miriam (15)

Benjamin (12)

Zoë (9)

Alexander (7)

phoebe (3)



as a licensed driver. She's been my chauffeur / to campus this year—where'd I be without her?

First Benny and Zoë **joined swim team** and then Alex decided he'd also join in! / He made lots of progress and improved his strokes / 'til one day he lagged behind, clung to the rope, / dragged himself down to the end of the pool, / and announced that he wasn't feeling too cool.

The boy had pneumonia! He was miserable, but soon had some company—ain't that great luck? **Benjamin** got it, and **Rachel** did, too! / Our family was sick the whole summer through, / clear into October. So starting up school / was a bit rocky, but life—as a rule— / never stays tricky or easy, but swings / from one to the other of either extreme.

Our homeschool kids started their work in July to get some devoted-mom time before **I / started my PhD** studies—go Dawgs!

This year Rachel also was in for a slog. / She took a full course load at Idaho's Y, / and what was the class that most oft made her cry? / Sewing. That's right. The -ologies were fine. / She aced all her courses. I also aced mine, / but that hasn't made me feel more self-assured. / (My imposter syndrome will never be cured).

Zoë, our resident author de jour / wrote **a Halloween tale** that was far spookier / than anything I could have dreamed up and won **first place in a contest!** Not to be outdone, Benjamin entered a brick building challenge. Through buckets of LEGO we foraged and scavenged / to find the right pieces for his winter scene. / **He came in third place!** We avoided a threne, / listening instead to his triumphant yells.

If you'd like to listen to something as well, I recommend **Miriam's YouTube channel** where **she shares her music** (her playing is swell).

Andrew's still at GSU and consults / on outside projects like **election results.** / At church he's been called to be the family / history leader. I'm in primary / where **I lead the music**—the best calling ever!

And that about sums up this year's endeavours. If you're reading this, then we hope that you find peace and success in all that you do. May your Christmas be joyful, and may we all strive / for a wonderful two-thousand and twenty-five!