

## APOLOGIES TO CLEMENT MOORE ONLY

T'was the eve of election, and all through the House  
Everyone had gone home but a small lonely mouse.  
The pledges all hung from the rafters with care  
In hopes that their authors would soon return there.

The union-owned boys stroked their soft featherbeds  
While visions of future plums danced in their heads.  
Some dreamed about honors, the gown and the cap,  
While some merely planned on a long winter's nap...  
Provided that nobody raised such a clatter  
That snoops would be sent to see what was the matter!  
Provided no agency raised such a clatter  
That agents would come to see what was the matter!

Such thoughts made one spring from his bed in a flash;  
He threw on his bathrobe and knotted the sash.  
"My motives were pure as the new-fallen snow,"  
He cried out the window to objects below.  
He thought how his stand on the debt would appear,  
And his sleigh rides to visit old allies so dear--

But his steamroller staff was quite lively and quick,  
And peopled with folks who were full of Old Nick.  
Astride of the Eagle his courses they came  
To chasten and castrate opponents by name:  
"Incompetent," "Dunderhead," their phrases blitzed 'em;  
The talk got so hot on the networks it fritzed 'em.

From rooftops to war zones, to each City Hall,  
They'd thrashed away, gnashed away, hashed away all.  
Let shibboleths clash, let the wild charges fly--  
He'd surmount any obstacle clear to the sky!  
He'd make 'em forget all those junkets he flew;  
He'd give 'em a tax break and subsidy too.  
He'd promised each house and each barn a new roof.  
He'd promised to fatten each steak on the hoof.  
He wagged his head as he paced all around,  
Then pleased, he returned to his bed with a bound.

He dreamed he was cold from his head to his foot;  
His raggedy clothes were all covered with soot.  
A bundle of junk he had flung on his back,  
And he looked like a peddler untying his pack.  
His eyes lost their twinkle, the scene was not merry.  
The garbage pail yielded the pit of a cherry  
And one bone he clenched in his chattering teeth.  
His chilled breath encircled his head like a wreath.

(cont.)

He'd once promised chicken for every lean belly  
From platforms as firm as a bowl full of jelly.  
He'd been chubby and charming, a magical elf  
Who laughed at the people, believed in himself.

A wink of the eye and a nod of his head  
Would end this fool nightmare, this feeling of dread.  
If that didn't do it, oration would work.  
He mouthed flowing phrases with never a jerk.

A beggar who heard him was thumbing his nose.  
From his squat at the foot of a chimney, he rose;  
With dignified manner he started to whistle  
While snow swirled about like the down of a thistle.  
He tweeted a dirge as he faded from sight,  
And left the Old Boss to the bitter cold night.

--Glenna Holloway