**The World Remains Colder**

By: Rebekah Crowley

Gingerbread houses, singing and trees

At morning meeting, we sit on our knees

Holiday spirit floating the halls

Lists filled with games, GI Joes and dolls.

Booming noises cause great upset

We’re rushed into cubbies and told not to fret

“I want to go home for Christmas,” I say

“I want all the bad guys to just go away.”

"I know karate, I’ll lead us out."

“You’ll make it home,” she says with doubt

She tells us we’re loved, no need to cry

I turned seven last week; I’m too young to die.

A knock on the door, as a voice is made clear

It says the gunman is nowhere near

“I don’t believe you,” my teacher claims

“I want your badge, ID and name.”

We walk to the station, each hand on a shoulder

Despite the warm hugs, the world remains colder

“I’m okay,” I cry bravely with dread,

But I do have to tell you, “My friends are all dead.”

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