

Remembering Jimmy

A fortunate, old elf had the privilege of observing a true craftsman run one of the finest workshops during the peak, frenetic season culminating annually on Christmas Eve and Hanukkah. For well over a decade, this elf tried to assist this craftsman in his basement workshop of a house full of growing nieces and nephews and a daughter and son. Mainly, the elf did his best to stay out of Jimmy's way, lest forward progress be impeded. Jimmy could make sense of the most arcane Chinese language assembly instructions and could assemble the most complex toys with ease, always in time for the gift-wrapping Mamma to place them under the tree. These memories get better with each passing year and serve as a kaleidoscope of images of happy family times. Upon learning of Jimmy's passing, this old elf knew that an ode was owed. It is remitted below with great humility.

Ode to the Craftsman

James Patrick Higgins

January 8, 1949 - January 22, 2025

In a workshop scented with sawdust and time,
Where wisdom was measured in patience sublime,
He stood at the bench, steady and true,
With hands that shaped more than just wood - they shaped you.

A listener first, with a heart open wide,
No question too simple, no dream cast aside.
With calm disposition and laughter in tow,
He taught with a smile, letting the lesson flow.

His tools knew his touch, each chisel, each plane,
A dance of precision, a craft well-refrained.
And even beyond the shop's basement domain,
A hand tool was ready, his hallmark remained.

The pencil no mere tool, but a wonder of joy,
Each used with fine care, no gadget or toy.
An assembler supreme, an architect keen,
With blueprints of kindness, his plans were unseen.

After presents were opened on Christmas day,
His signature feat to astound, many would say.
For with rooms full of wrappers and boxes asea,
Cramming all in one recycling bin would his miracle be.

A philosopher's mind, a historian's lore,
A writer, a reader, a seeker of more.
Stories and lessons he wove with his hands,
Connecting the past to the tools he commands.

Yet never for glory, nor praises, nor fame,
For family came first, never spoke of his name.
A man with no judgment, no harshness nor pride,
Just humor and grace as his compass and guide.

And when not by the boathouse, with the wind in his hair,
A bicyclist's spirit rode free through the air.
Unflappable always, through storm or through shine,
Steady as oak, yet with warmth so divine.

In battling for your life, you charged up the hill,
In lock step with your soulmate, the Angel Jill.
And oh how you fought as your family would see,
With character and nobility, all would agree.

Here's to our Jimmy - father, uncle and friend,
Whose lessons endure, whose kindness won't end.
For what he assembled was greater than art;
He built up the family, the mind and the heart.