

Reba McEntire, The Christmas Guest

(Grandpa Jones/Bill Walker)

It happened one day near December's end
Two neighbors called on an old friend
And they found his shop so meager and lame
Made gay with a thousand bows of green
And Conrad was sittin' with face ashined
When he suddenly stopped as he stiched a twine
And he said "Oh friends at dawn today
When the cock was crowin' the night away
The Lord appeared in a dream to me
And said 'I'm comin' your guest to be.'
So I've been busy with feet astir
And strewin' my shop with branches of fir
The table is spread and the kettle is shined
And over the rafters the holly is twined
Now I'll wait for my Lord to appear
And listen closely so I will hear His step
As He nears my humble place
And I'll open the door and look on His face"
So his friends went home and left Conrad alone
For this was the happiest day he'd known
For long since his family had passed away
And Conrad had spent many a sad Christmas day
But he knew with the Lord as his Christmas guest
This Christmas would be the dearest and best
So he listened with only joy in his heart
And with every sound he would rise with a start
And look for the Lord to be at his door
Like the vision he'd had a few hours before
So he ran to the window after hearin' a sound
But all he could see on the snow-covered ground
Was a shabby begger who's shoes were torn
And all of his clothes were ragged and worn
But Conrad was touched and he went to the door
And he said "You know, your feet must be frozen and sore
I have some shoes in my shop for you
And a coat that'll keep you warmer too"
So with grateful heart, the man went away
But Conrad noticed the time of day
And wondered what made the Lord so late
And how much longer he'd have to wait
When he heard a knock he ran to the door
But it was only a stranger once more
A bent ol' lady with a shawl of black
With a bundle of kindlin' piled on her back
She asked for only a place to rest
But that was reserved for Conrad's great guest
But her voice seemed to plead "Don't send me away
Let me rest for awhile on Christmas day"
So Conrad brewed her a steamin' cup
And told her to sit at the table and sup
But after she left he was filled with dismay
For he saw that the hours were slippin' away
And the Lord hadn't come as He said He would
And Conrad felt sure he'd misunderstood
When out of the stillness he heard a cry
"Please help me, and tell me where am I!"
So again he opened his friendly door
And stood disappointed as twice before
It was only a child who'd wandered away
And was lost from her family on Christmas day
Again, Conrad's heart was heavy and sad
But he knew he should make the little girl glad

So he called her in and he wiped her tears
And quieted all her childish fears
Then he led her back to her home once more
But as he entered his own darkened door
He knew the Lord was not comin' today
For the hours of Christmas had passed away
So he went to his room and he knelt down to pray
And he said "Dear Lord, why did You delay?
What kept You from comin' to call on me?
For I wanted so much Your Face to see"
When soft in the silence, a voice he heard
"Lift up your head, for I kept my word
Three times my shadow crossed your floor
And three times I came to your lonely door
I was the begger with bruised, cold feet
And I was the woman you gave somethin' to eat
I was the child on the homeless street.
Three times I knocked and three times I came in
And each time I found the warmth of a friend
Of all the gifts love is the best
And I was honored to be your Christmas guest."