

'Twas the Night Before Christmas—A Sport-Fisherman's View

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Adapted by Claire Pavlik Purgus from the original *A Visit from St. Nicholas* by Clement C. Moore and a parody of the original by Captain George W. Bentz of Drizzle Bar Charters, Pasadena, Maryland (www.drizzlebarcharters.com).

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the Bay,
All the fish were rejoicing—the fishermen were away!

The fishing rods were all hung in the shed with great care,
In hopes the swordfish and tuna soon would be there.

The fishermen were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of “goin’ fishin’” danced through their heads.

The boats were all tied in their slips very tight,
All settled at dock for a long winter’s night,

When out on the water there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the matter!

Away to the pier I flew like a flash,
Just in time to be witness to another big splash!

The moon on the crest of the newly-made waves
Gave rise to the lust for night-fishing I craved!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But the Grandpa of swordfish—and he was right here!

With a shimmer of scales and a snout sharp and long,
I knew in a moment he must weigh a ton!

More rapid than eagles I ran to my shed,
And I whistled and hollered and turned red in the head:

Now, tackle and lures! Now, net and best pole!
On back to the pier I ran like a foal!

My legs were like jelly, my stomach in knots,
I just had to catch him—my God—would I not?

I tried all my lures—the Black Barts and Joe Yee,
The Sumas, Pakulas, not to mention Big-T!

But that Grand Dad of swordfish—he just wouldn't bite!
He danced and he pranced under yonder moonlight!

Just when I thought I'd ran out of luck,
I looked once again to my fishing lure stock.

As I lowered my head and was jiggling the box 'round,
Out of the corner frozen bait for game fish I had found!

It barely hit water and my line got real tight...
I set the hook and then on with the fight!

The rod it bent double and the drag steady bellowed!
I fought it three hours—my muscles were Jello'd!

Finally landed, I laughed and I pranced and I looked at my prize!
But I just couldn't keep it, you have to realize,

Sport-fishing's for fun out here on the Bay,
Catch and release is the game of the day.

So I released the great fish who'd sapped every shred of my might,
And I heard him exclaim ere he swam out of sight—

“Happy holidays to all and to all a good night!”