



A Refugee Christmas in Germany — A Story

By Daniel W. Holst

Marya and her stuffed bear went to sleep that night with an unfulfilled wish. She knew the time was coming and she knew it would come soon. So, she concentrated on both Saint Nicholas Thaumaturgus and Krampus. She knew Nicholas from Syria. But her new friends had told her about Krampus and how he scared them into good little boys and girls. Marya thought that was funny. She wanted to meet him. Marya knew fear. She remembered living in filthy and combative conditions. Surrounded by Mom, Dad, and a brother, they slowly traveled together with an Aunt and Uncle, and two cousins. Marya remembered those times hiding in barns and ruined houses. She remembered the starry nights. She remembered huddling together with her family. Her parents, aunt, and uncle would surround the kids to shield them



Saint Nicholas of Myra

in case the walls collapsed from the war. Sometimes they did. She remembered crying and screaming at those times. She remembered real fear, and no Krampus, regardless of some horrific face, could ever scare her. She looked up at the white ceiling tiles whose textures reflected the little lights around her that never went out. She dreamed.

Aaron had recently arrived for his early shift and having completed his initial rounds, more still waited. But this was exciting and fulfilling, not that being a nurse wasn't. He loved his profession.

"You make a perfect Krampus."

Aaron looked down, no longer suffering but prideful. He found his passion at this same hospital a long time ago, he just hoped he could be a good messenger to others. "Well, if one has goat legs, use them."

"What about Marya?"

Aaron looked at his fellow nurse. "She's suffered a lot, but she's strong. She's Syrian, you know."

"Just like you."

Marya woke up to another world. A three-foot tall toy camel stood in her room. At its feet laid a pair of girl's shoes, a loose tuft of hay, and a bowl of water. Stars floated just below the ceiling. There were blue stars, green stars. And silver stars. Red stars too. They



Krampus

slowly spun around suspended as they were. Vines draped themselves over the sterile machines and covered their lights and quieted their hums. A tree had sprouted in the corner. Its wide base narrowed upwards to a sharp point where sat an angel. She glowed. Little lights lit the tree. They were white lights. And yellow lights. But mostly red and blue lights. Golden orbs floated between the branches. Next to the bathroom, sat a small crib with a tiny doll baby. Around the baby stood two lambs. Three cows bowed for the three men wearing long blue robes and golden crowns as they approached the Christ-child. Camels bearing gifts walked alongside. She looked back at the camel in her room and sure enough he, too, bore gifts. She laughed and giggled, but where was Krampus?

~ Continued on page 5

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The ASHHS Genealogical Research Policy: ASHHS provides research assistance for its members only. Members who desire this assistance should contact the genealogy director by regular mail or e-mail. The ASHHS genealogy director maintains and utilizes access to a variety of available genealogical resources to assist in all research activities. The genealogy staff will strive to locate information and assist members in their searches. However, if the desired information cannot be located, the genealogy director may provide the member with a list of alternative research sources. Members are expected to pay for any expenses (such as photocopies, printing and postage) associated with a search. The ASHHS genealogy staff will provide 3 hours free research to members, after which there is a minimal fee if further research is desired. The e-mail address of Karen Puck, the ASHHS genealogy director, is kpuck2015@gmail.com.

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Crosses of Distinction

Crosses of Distinction is an original and ongoing historical fiction story about the Franco-Prussian War and the families it affected and how their lives will ultimately all collide throughout history.

- Adamina and her friend Adelaide have decided to try to become nurses during the Franco-Prussian war.
- Kylie Schaffer is a Senior Airman in today's US Air Force currently serving with the 494th Fighter Squadron from RAF Lakenheath in England. Her third great-grandfather served in and won the Iron Cross during the Franco-Prussian War for reasons unknown. She and her team is headed to an old Cold War base in Ukraine to recover a broken F-15E Strike Eagle.
- Harimann has arrived in France and is helping to ferry a mysterious cargo of rubber rings eastward on his way back to Germany and war. He has no idea what has happened to his brother Hansi.
- Theodore, the son of Ailbe's neighbors Koenraad and Mili Schaffer, has discovered his leadership qualities after being conscripted in the Prussian Army.

Website Announcement

In the coming year, many changes will be made to the ASHHS website at ASHHS.ORG. Please stay tuned here or visit our website to see those changes. If you have any recommendations for the website, please email me at danielwholst@gmail.com

Please keep your membership current.

Don't miss out on the stories
and events coming in 2020 and beyond.

We also want to hear and print your stories of travel, heritage, and life history.

Send submissions to danielwholst@gmail.com

From the President

By Michael Kearney



Moin and Froehliche Wiehnacht!

We have arrived at the end of 2020. And while our hearts and hearths will warm us with friends, family, and always the delicious food, we hope we all celebrate the coming holidays safely.

Travel is generally not recommended, but technology has given us other means to stay in touch. We hope that if you can't meet your loved ones in person, you can meet them through the phone or some video conference system such as Zoom or FaceTime.

I know this can't replace the hugs and warmth of personal gatherings of years past, but we want everyone to be with us as we hope to have a better 2021.

Please keep in touch with us. ASHHS wants to meet all of you in 2021 through various gatherings and hopefully a 2021 conference in Germany. Stay well, warm, and welcomed. For you truly are.

Yours truly
President



Select Upcoming Holiday Activities

-) **Holiday Art-Mageddon at the Market**
November 7: Davenport Freight House
-) **Christmas Reveal Shopping Experience**
November 7: The Market – 1800 7th Avenue, Moline, Illinois
-) **Winter Wonderland – A Play**
November 13 – December 30: Circa 21 Dinner Theater
-) **Christmas in the Country**
November 20: Songbird Lane Antiques, Cambridge, Illinois
-) **Quad Cities Christkindlmarkt**
December 4 – December 6: Davenport Freight House
-) **Holiday Wreath Class**
December 5: Riverside Greenhouse – 3450 5th Ave, Moline
-) **Wonderland Week: Holiday Tree Globe**
December 4: Moline Garden Center
-) **A Handcrafted Christmas**
December 5: Muscatine Area Farmer's Market
-) **December 12: Geneseo Christmas Walk**
December 12: Geneseo, Illinois

All events found on Facebook Events. Please verify, before attending.

ASHHS Calendar

All events have been cancelled throughout the end of 2020.

Please stay tuned as we hope to reestablish our normal scheduled events and annual conference in 2021.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, & Happy New Year!

We want to see everyone safe and sound next year.

New Email Address

The ASHHS office now has a new email address. please make note of it.
It is: ashhswalcott@gmail.com

A Refugee Christmas in Germany — A Story

~ Continued from page 1

A high-pitched squeak began, and the door slowly opened. Very slowly it opened. Slowly, it turned. Slowly, it squeaked. Then a horn. A hoof. Slowly, it stepped into the room. Slowly, emerged a horrific face of an up-turned and twisted nose snorting above gnarled teeth scowling at Marya. The Krampus arrived. It walked to her and grabbed her wrist and placed its other hand on her head. The Krampus then felt the wires and tubes connected to Marya. The Krampus peered into the vines and touched the sensitive equipment behind them. He bent his head closely down to Marya, and asked in a hoarse and painful whisper, “Are you a good little girl?”

She smiled. “Yes, mister Krampus. I am a good girl.”

He snarled and shook. “Are you a happy little girl?”

She smiled. “Yes, mister Krampus. I am a happy girl.”

He growled harshly. “Do you want to see your family?”

Her eyes lit up above the widest of grins. “Yes, mister Krampus. I want to see my family.”

The Krampus just looked at her. “Krampus doesn’t hear. He only—”

A hairy old man entered the room. A long white sash draped around his neck fell loosely upon his long thick burgundy robe. It included a few tightly stitched square crosses. He moved aside Krampus and directed him out of the room. Krampus departed in low growl.

Marya giggled. She looked at the old man and recognized him. “Nicholas Thaw...thaw mahr...

tah, tar—”

“Myra, my child. Nicholas of Myra.” He spoke in a low feminine voice.

Marya looked closely at him and saw pearl skin peering out beneath his beard with clumps of glue between beard and skin.

“Nicholas of Myra, did you bring my family?”

“I need to ask a few questions first, if that is okay.”

“Of course, Saint Nicholas. But I want to see them soon.”

“How are you feeling?”

Marya looked up at Nicholas and stretched and wiggled her body. “My legs feel funny, like they want to move and run, but I’m tired.”

Nicholas felt around Marya’s hips. “Do you feel this?”

“Yes, but rub my legs, please”

“I’ll send in a therapist soon.

Now, your family is in my hands.”

“Your hands?”

He smiled but said nothing and placed a thin hard rectangle into her hands and tapped its surface. The screen lit up.

Marya sees her Mom and Dad on the shiny screen.

They speak. “Hi, honey. How are you?”

Marya starts to cry. “I miss you. When can you visit?”

“When we won’t make you sick, baby?”

“I will run to you.”

“Don’t worry, baby, we will be together again soon, and safe.”

The conversation continued

for a while. Nicholas of Myra watched over Marya, but inside, Nicholas cried.

Once Marya got sleepy, Nicholas of Myra ended the conversation with a promise that they will return.

Nicholas of Myra walked out and her nurse, Aaron, still wearing hooves waited for her in the hallway. He looked concerned.

“Doctor Sigfreida, she still thinks she has her legs.”

“Sigfreida removed the wig and rubbed out her long dark hair. She spoke now in her clear angelic voice. “I know.”

“Children with severe trauma will always tear me apart.”

Doctor Sigfreida looked back at the room and at every room along the colorful hallway decorated with lights and other Christmas decorations. “It should. But they need you as an example. Refugees. War. Covid. We do what we always do.” She paused to gather her strength. “We work to give them life.”

Aaron didn’t respond. He merely continued his firm and unwavering commitment to nursing. He was thrilled to work at the Keil hospital. He put the mask back on looked down at his own prosthetic blade feet. He had reversed them to make his hooves more realistic. He appreciated all that Germany did for him as a refugee. Sad, that other countries have stopped. But he would always do everything he could. He never really believed in Christmas, but he definitely believes in Christmas miracles.



The Final Voyage of the *Peking*

By Hans-Werner Hamann

Ferdinand Laeisz founded his self-named company in 1824 to manufacture hats. It was a successful business with his hats selling across Europe and the Americas. He then tried to enter the shipping business with the three-masted brig, *Carl* (named after his son). Unfortunately, he had to sell the ship *Carl* five years later.

His son, Carl, assumed the company in 1852, and he turned the F. Laeisz company into a shipping business. He ordered his first ship, a barque, five years later in 1857. Like most ship names that reflect the ladies they love, he named his ship after his wife's nickname, Pudel. The *Pudel* began what many families still do today: They begin the names of all their kids with the same letter. And so began the famous P-line ships. They were built for speed and specialized in the South American nitrate trade. The P ships flew rapidly and reliably upon the water and quickly garnered a solid reputation and a new name, the Flying P-Liners. A total of sixty-six ships from the F. Laeisz company began with the letter P.

The *Peking* was one of those ships and only one of four remaining today. Many had lived out their usefulness, others were torpedoed during the world wars, and some just failed during use. But don't let those failures be indicative of F. Laeisz shipping or the ships. The Flying P-Liners warranted their positive reputations. They were quick and could pace and even out run the newer steam ships. They had a reputation for speed and safety.



Final voyage home accompanied by fanfare

The *Peking* often shipped saltpeter from Chile to Europe. It safely navigated the dangerous Cape Horn around the southern tip of South America more than thirty-four times. Its older sister, *Potosi*, set a record in 1904 by making that trip in only 57 days.

The *Peking* was built in Hamburg in 1911 as the largest sailing vessel in the world. (Wasn't another famous ship launched in

1911?). It served the F. Laeisz shipping company until 1932. It was painted, like the other ships, in the company's colors of black, white, and red.

She was sold to England in 1932 where she served several roles as the renamed *Arethusa* during World War II and afterwards as a children's home.

~ Continued on page 9



The Peking in New York at the South Street Museum

Editorial: Vote for Who You Want—Just Vote!

With luck, this newsletter should arrive for our American readers a day or so before US elections on November 3, 2020. But even if it doesn't, I want to shout this message as loudly as possible. Vote!

Your vote matters, and to be absolutely clear. It doesn't matter who you vote for, only that we recognize the immense power contained in our vote. For our German readers, I hope you also understand the power of your voice. This is for you too.

Throughout American history, we barely cross the 50 percent threshold of eligible voters casting their vote during four-year presidential election cycles and less on our off-year, local, and special election cycles.

We believe strongly in our American freedoms, particularly those enshrined within our first and second constitutional amendments, and while we choose to defend those freedoms with livid vociferousness, to include sacrificing lives, we often dismiss and disenfranchise the greatest freedom of all. Yes, I shall emphasize it again: Vote!

Suffrage and civil right movements have expanded this purest hallmark of democracy and American citizenship to women, ethnicities, and any citizen of at least 18 and older. We must dearly use and hold that power. But why.

We often decry corruption within our government, and that corruption does exist. It exists independent of

and completely within our political, socio-economic, and religious beliefs. It permeates every one of those ideologies and at every level of government. We have tools against that corruption, but the greatest remains our power to vote. Just imagine the fear that would overwhelm corruption if they saw us stand up and run to the polls to vote or cast our eligible vote by other legal means. Right now, why listen to the people, if the people are so divided that they hate government, hate the contrary political to such an extent that they believe half of the people hate America and wish its destruction.

Such hatred, distrust, and self-righteousness opens the floodgates to corruption. We become controllable and malleable to their own corruption, while remaining blind to it.

Our precious American mores are at stake. Mores (more-ays) are the pillars of America, those customs and conventions whose indelible foundations lift up all Americans. Unfortunately they have begun to crumble under the divisive weight of corruption.

Vote and make your voice heard. Help and encourage all citizens to vote and have their vote counted. Be kind to everyone; listen and give legitimacy to all those who seek a better America, especially if their beliefs are not your necessarily yours. That is how we make America a truly special nation.

~ Help Wanted ~

Do you enjoy genealogy, ancestry and research?

ASHHS is looking for a volunteer to assist Karen Puck with genealogy.

The volunteer must be computer and internet savvy and have experience with genealogy and ancestry.

Volunteer must be local to Eastern Iowa.

If anyone is interested, please contact me at danielwholst@gmail.com.

An ASHHS Membership Makes a Great Gift!

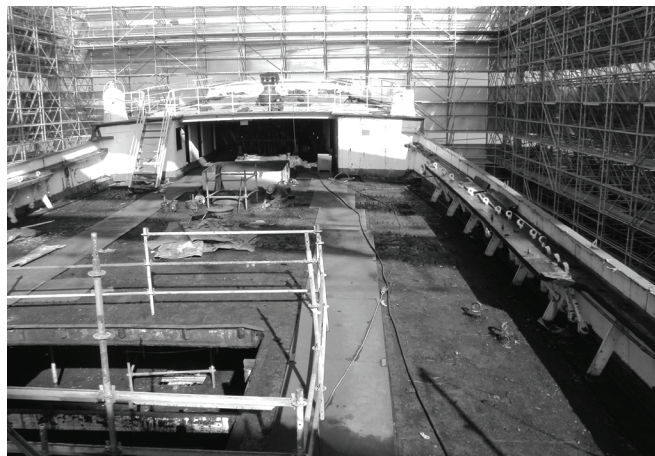
You will find the application on the back cover.

Peking before Restoration

~ All pictures on this page courtesy of Peters Werft



Visit the ASHHS website at <http://ashhs.org/newsletter-extras/> to view the post-restoration pictures.



The Final Voyage of the *Peking*

~ Continued from page six

The South Street Museum in New York bought her in 1974. If you have visited New York, you may have visited her in the museum between 1974 and 2012. Headed to the scrap yard, she was gifted back to Hamburg by New York.

After years of refurbishment and travel, the *Peking* was bought by a group from Hamburg, and because she was no longer seaworthy, the *Peking* returned to Germany aboard a transport vessel. She was restored at Peters Werft (shipyard) in Wewelsfleth, Schleswig-Holstein for 38 million Euros. Arriving in Hamburg in September 2020, she will become the central focus of the German Port Museum in Hamburg, which is planned for 2023.

Other than the *Peking*, three other P-Liners remain:

1) The *Padua* now named *Kruzenshtern* was surrendered to the USSR as a war reparation. She serves as a training ship under a Russian flag.

2) The *Pommern* serves as Finnish museum ship in Mariehamn

3) The *Passat* is the museum ship at the port of Travemünde near Lübeck

The F. Laeisz shipping company still operates.

For additional features, please view the following:

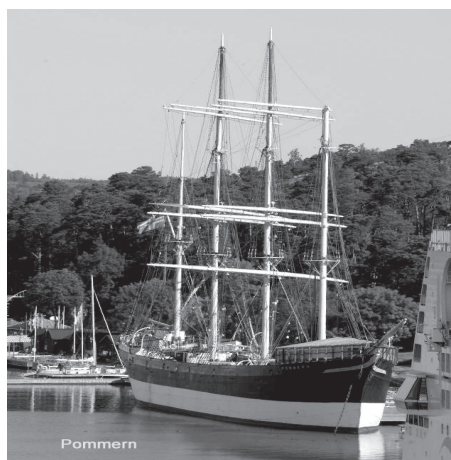
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6n6lC5RcBI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iyjTPWMIMU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZuJlhlAuZo>



The Padua aka Kruzenshtern



The Pommern in Finland



The Passat in Travemünde



The Peking on the transport ship from New York to Hamburg.

~ Picture courtesy of Peters Werft

Crosses of Distinction

~ By Daniel W. Holst

Chapter Ten

"No Worth in War"

~ 5 August 1870

Adim sat at the tail of the wagon with his gun laid across his lap looking back from where he came. While he didn't expect any problems on the slow trek back to camp, he should be ready. He looked at the receding battlefield. Night still ruled the west, but behind him, day was dawning, and it had been a ceaseless night of combat. The morning fog that guarded their arrival yesterday had returned, mixed now with smoke. The thick fog tried to snuff out the smoke, but it still rose from charred and smoldering ruins. But as the sun broke into the east, the wagon emerged from the Lauter River and returned to camp.

Drawing up the unsettled shore, the wagon jittered, and the corpses behind Adim slid and bounced in dull thuds. But even in daybreak, the boom of artillery, while growing infrequent, still shattered whatever attempt at calm that Adim had composed. Thoughts of his men occupied his time back to camp. He knew he must record their memories while he still held them. After arriving, he helped unload their bodies.

Looking remorseful at the empty wagon, he saw a folded note laying partially in a pool of blood. He picked it up and let a few droplets run down a seam and drip off before unfolding it. He gave it a little shake to help the blood fall off. By reading it, he hoped he could identify its owner. He believed it was probably a treasured note from some family or the beginning of a letter back home. As he held it in his hand, he knew he was about to intrude upon a dead man's thoughts, yet he felt no remorse. He knew this was necessary.

Heavy script inked the page. Adim read a few lines unblotted by blood, and the excitement and stress of battle that had kept him fighting for over twenty-four hours quickly departed. His strong body that held his position while his friends died around him lost all command. His eyes could no longer read the paper. After sighting his rifle countless times toward the French lines, his bloodshot eyes ached heavily. All he saw now was blood.

He remembered how yesterday had started, full of life, with blessings to God. They prayed before the battle, and his prayers and of those around him never ceased as they fought. He had offered many to his

friends. And received many himself. While looking back, he thought of every single unanswered prayer. Then he thought of the French. Did the French also pray? Surely, they must, for they also are, or must be, a religious people like themselves. He wondered if God was Prussian or French? Did God even care? Or does God simply weigh faith as currency and discard the lesser. Perhaps prayer is a curse. Perhaps our prayers were meant to curse the French and likewise theirs to curse us. The French didn't pray for our success, nor did we pray for theirs. While we did offer a plentitude of curses throughout the fight, is God the harbinger and bearer of both light and darkness? Or, as must be said, is there, in battle, along with no truth and no beauty, no God. Adim consigned those thoughts to the philosophers. His only desire now was to sleep.

Unfortunately, his thoughts returned to the letter. Why would a parent prefer their child's death? He fell to his knees upon the muddy ground and dropped the paper. He wouldn't believe that his own Mom and Dad thought the same. He saw a fellow soldier walk by and pick up the paper and then reach for him. He had no idea who this other soldier was, but he grabbed his hand and stood up. He was too tired to speak, and he really didn't care. He wondered if it was preferable to die. After all that was the letter writer's preference. Adim just couldn't think anymore.

The soldier helped him to the cots. Adim laid down and went to sleep. It was dreamless. He woke a few hours later when someone had brought by some food and drink. He smelled the coffee and walked over to the table and drew a large draught and drank it down quickly. He grabbed some paper and a pen and began a letter back home.

Dear Mom and Dad,

When I left for the war, you wished me well against the French. If the only way that Prussia could win is for me to die, would you prefer my death over Prussia's loss? Would I be unwelcomed to return alive if I failed to stop the French? I don't plan nor want to die, but I need to know.

It was my first battle today, and my entire squad perished. I fought hard and tried to save them. We were marching through the Niederwald Pines approaching the Wissembourg fortiments

Crosses of Distinction

~ Continued from previous page

still over 1500 meters away. We began to crawl through the vineyards and morning fog when my friend cried out, "Ich bin geschossen!" We turned and smiled expecting a joke, but his incredulous look of dismay at the steady discharge of blood broke our resolve. He died. Shortly, the French all started firing and the battle began. Their shots recharged our lost resolve. We fired back. The battle had begun. War is here.

How did the French rifle outshoot our Zündnadelgewehr? We were told our technology was better. Not only did the French have better range, but their fire rate outmatched ours. Our NCOs and officers quickly devised a new battle plan. We spread out and moved positions often in aggregate. We let the French exhaust their ammunition and wait for pauses in their attacks. Pauses came intermittently, but we used them for our advantage. If it wasn't for improvising our tactics, we would have been picked off like Russian boars from high seats.

A squad of dragoons flanked the French lines from the forest while they were turned toward us and decimated their shooters. As they rode through, one almost trampled me. He seemed so young, but as his horse jumped over me (I was still fighting and firing), he crashed into several French infantry trying to outflank our lines. He shot one, sliced open another, and trampled a third. The remaining French fighters looked at him in disarray while other dragoons finished them off. Then the dragoons started yelling something. At first it sounded like the British "Huzzah," but it sounded instead like a repeated "hanzee, hanzee." The dragoons are a little crazy, at least this kid was, he seemed invincible. I engaged with other squads and we continued our fight. Unfortunately, we had to leave the dead and dying for our own lives.

Adim folded the paper and put it in his pocket until later and walked over to his chief NCO who told him to join the squad currently getting briefed by a group of officers. He walked over and introduced himself to the squad leader whose name was Theodor but was quickly silenced when Theodor pointed to the officers and instructed, "They are briefing us on this new French rifle

they captured. It is called the Chassepot. Now, shush."

Unfortunately, Adim missed a lot of the briefing. But most importantly he learned that the Chassepot was better than our own *Zündnadelgewehr* in most ways. It had a greater range, a lower caliber that increased fire rate, and a faster muzzle velocity by over 100 meters per second. But most importantly, the secret to its improvements was also its greatest flaw. A rubber ring sealed the breech which gave it a superior obturation. But sealing explosions would eventually break down the rubber ring and it would have to be replaced. They don't know how often, but the officers were quite certain in an almost religious certainty. They promised: "Men, their secret is their flaw, and we will use it to not only achieve, but sustain our Prussian superiority."

Adim departed with his new squad. He was thinking about the dichotomy of prayers and curses and couldn't help but see those similarities with that little rubber ring. He laughed thinking how the entire outcome of the war could rest on such a little thing.

Earlier, 20-year old Lieutenant Karl Litzmann picked up the paper left behind by that other soldier. He walked over to his tent and unfolded it and was encouraged by its contents. He found a certain inspiration and a certain dedication to the nascent unified Germany that would soon be realized. Growing up just north of Berlin in Stechlin, his solidarity with Prussia, Bismarck, and a unified Germany ruled his own passions.

He knew he must live for this new Germany. His parents gave him the usual well-wishes. He would enjoy seeing them again. But unlike his youth fishing upon the shores of *Großer Stechlinsee*, he would no longer waste his time with incidentals. He would serve this nation with his life. He smiled, *I can't die in battle. Germany owns my life, not the French.*

He looked again at the letter and read it out loud. "I am pained by the realization that I may never again hold you in my arms, but far greater than my pain is my joy that you too can fight in this war. It is not necessary that you return from the war, only that you do your duty."

He didn't care about the soldier to whom this was written. That soldier would never return home. The letter was his now. It was his duty and his alone.

Cold wind brought rain, and Karl lifted his hood around his head like a mane and walked away.

German Christmas Poetry

~ Found on www.fluentu.com/blog/german/
(A German Language and Culture Blog)



Fröhliche Weihnachten

"Advent" ("Advent")

By Rainer Maria Rilke; Translation: mamalisa.com

Es treibt der Wind im Winterwalde
die Flockenherde wie ein Hirt
und manche Tanne ahnt, wie balde
sie fromm und lichterheilig wird,
und lauscht hinaus. Den weißen Wegen
streckt sie die Zweige hin, bereit
und wehrt dem Wind und wächst entgegen
der einen Nacht der Herrlichkeit.

There in the wintry forest the wind blows
a flock of snowflakes like a shepherd,
and many a fir-tree guesses how soon
it will be pious with holy lights,
and listens. Towards the white path
it stretches out its branches, ready,
and braving the wind and growing toward
that one Night of Glory.

"Weihnachten" ("Christmas")

By: Joseph Freiherr von Eichendorff. Translation: Barry Tobin.

Markt und Straßen stehn verlassen,
Still erleuchtet jedes Haus,
Sinnend geh' ich durch die Gassen,
Alles sieht so festlich aus.

The market and streets stand still and ghostly,
Each house in all the silence glows,
Along the lanes my thoughts come with me,
As the festive spirit ever grows.

An den Fenstern haben Frauen
Buntes Spielzeug fromm geschmückt,
Tausend Kindlein stehn und schauen,
Sind so wunderstill beglückt.

In every window a housewife places
A toy with colours of faith a-gleam
A thousand children's enchanted faces
Silently wonder their happy dream.

Und ich wandre aus den Mauern
Bis hinaus ins freie Feld,
Hehres Glänzen, heil'ges Schauern!
Wie so weit und still die Welt!

Now away I wander beyond the wall
Out to where the fields are free,
To towering beauty, to holy awe,
To the grand and silent world I see!

Sterne hoch die Kreise schlingen,
Aus des Schnees Einsamkeit
Steigt's wie wunderbares Singen –
O du gnadenreiche Zeit!

The stars weave round and all the spheres
And in that solitude of snow
Are songs such as an angel hears –
And oh, the time of grace I know.

"Der Stern" ("The Star")

By: Wilhelm Busch. Translation: ThoughtCo.com.

Es treibt der Wind im Winterwalde
die Flockenherde wie ein Hirt
und manche Tanne ahnt, wie balde
sie fromm und lichterheilig wird,
und lauscht hinaus. Den weißen Wegen
streckt sie die Zweige hin, bereit
und wehrt dem Wind und wächst entgegen
der einen Nacht der Herrlichkeit.

There in the wintry forest the wind blows
a flock of snowflakes like a shepherd,
and many a fir-tree guesses how soon
it will be pious with holy lights,
and listens. Towards the white path
it stretches out its branches, ready,
and braving the wind and growing toward
that one Night of Glory.

Tag der deutschen Einheit (Day of German Unity)

~ In honor of the 30th Anniversary of German Reunification celebrated on October 3, 2020



President Reagan stood at the Brandenburg Gate on June 12, 1987 and spoke the following.

We welcome change and openness; for we believe that freedom and security go together, that the advance of human liberty can only strengthen the cause of world peace. There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev...Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!

...

As I looked out a moment ago from the Reichstag, that embodiment of German unity, I noticed words crudely spray-painted upon the wall, perhaps by a young Berliner, 'This wall will fall. Beliefs become reality.' Yes, across Europe, this wall will fall. For it cannot withstand faith; it cannot withstand truth. The wall cannot withstand freedom.

Reagan's speech did not unify East and West Germany, nor did it end the Cold War. But like any artistic expression, it inflamed passions and motivated a movement that became arguably a highly visible cog in the complex machine that ultimately re-unified Germany and led to the downfall of the Soviet Union and the end the Cold War.

But most importantly, it should be noted how hard West Germany worked for re-unification.

As Germans and German Americans commemorate the reunification of Germany it seems appropriate to give credit to those who shouldered the burden of doing the ground breaking work necessary to pave the way.

First and foremost we remember the displaced German civilians who were forced to leave their German homes and homelands in East Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia, Sudetenland, and other areas settled by Germans in Eastern Europe.

They bore the cross of the effects of Nazi tyranny and unleashed Wehrmacht violence abroad, for the most part without asking for compensation, never mind retaliation. Other Germans who helped them resettle shared their burdens and acted with Christian kindness, not shared by all, toward these culturally diverse "immigrants" to the more western parts of Germany.

More than any other person, it was the principled Catholic mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer, the oldest ever chancellor of Germany, who repaired the broken ship of state, and set it on a new, healthier course of reconciliation and international cooperation under the protection and in alliance with America. He insisted that West Germany accept full responsibility for the crimes committed in the name of Germany during the Hitler years. Without those sacrifices, without the humble and sincere work done by West German political leaders, like Adenauer, reunification would have been unthinkable. (*unattributed statement*)

Down There at Home — A Poem

~ Submitted by Karen Puck

This poem originated in Pennsylvania and is written in Pennsylvania Dutch, depicting the daily life of a farmer.



Karl Heinz Danner

Dort drunne deheem'n aldes Haus,
Die Schbarre gucke owwe zum Dach enaus.
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo
Bie uns geht's immer jo so.

Dort drunne deheem hemmer'n alde Disch
Ufjedem Eck e gebroodener Fisch
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo
Bei uns geht's immer jo so.

Dort drunne dehem hemmer'n aldi Maad
Ich hätt'se gern g'heiert, awwer 'nee'Had se g'saat
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo
Bei uns geht's immer jo so

Dort drunne deheem hemmer'n aldo Fraa
Die hat so'n schlabbicha Unnerrock aa.
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo
Bei uns geht's immer jo so.

Dort drunne dehëem hemmer'n alde Gaul
Der hat en goldene Zahn im Maul
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo
Bei uns geht's immer jo so.

Dort drunne deheem hammer'n Stall vol Gäns,
Die sin geroppt bis an die Schwänz
Heili - heilo - heili - heilo,
Bei uns geth's immer jo so.

Down there at home we've an old house,
The rafters appear out of the roof.
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

Down there at home we've an old table
At each corner a fried fish
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

Down there at home we've seen an old main
I'd like to hire her, but no she said.
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

Down there at home we've an old woman
Who has a sloppy skirt of linen
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

Down there at home we've an old nag,
That has a golden tooth in his muzzle's back
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

Down there at home we've a stable full of geese
They are plucked to their tails to seize.
Hilee - hilo - hilee - hilo
At home it's always just so.

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(2nd floor of the Walcott American Legion Building)

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