

An Excerpt from “Another Night Before Christmas”

By Carol Ann Duffy

Read by Nancy

On the night before Christmas, a child in a house,
as the whole family slept, behaved just like a mouse...
and crept on soft toes down red-carpeted stairs.
Her hand held the paw of her favourite bear.

The Christmas tree posed with its lights in its arms,
newly tinselled and baubled with glittering charms;
flirting in flickers of crimson and green
against the dull glass of the mute TV screen.

The hushed street was in darkness. Snow duveted the cars –
a stray cat had embroidered each roof with its paws.
An owl on an aerial had planets for eyes.
The child at the window stared up at the sky,

where two aeroplanes sped to the east and the west,
like a pulled Christmas cracker. The child held her breath
and looked for a sign up above, as the moon
ahone down like a gold chocolate coin on the town.

Carol Ann Duffy is a British poet and playwright. She is a professor of contemporary poetry at Manchester Metropolitan University, and was appointed Poet Laureate in May 2009. She is the first woman, the first Scottish-born poet and the first known LGBT poet to hold the position.