

Excerpts from Santa Speaks Out

'I have been granted magical powers for only one day in the year – Christmas Eve. God has given me three gifts; the gift to fly, and to squeeze down chimneys and disappear through windows, and to remember every single letter that children have ever written to me'.

The Start of Santa's monologue

I think I get my gifts, modest and faintly surreal that they seem to me to be, from the freedom of Lapland and my childhood.

And there was a real freedom, that I worry many people in the modern world can't achieve. The freedom of the endless landscape, and the fact most of the villagers went to the same Reform Church, and shared the same community ethos and values of hard work, modesty, discipline and thrift – I learned all this later of course. That was the basis of our freedom – that and the four seasons, summer and winter best of all in their clarity and length.

It will not surprise you – how could it – that my father was a butcher. We ate well as a family. I still do! I am big boned and red cheeked and there is no getting away from it!! I didn't quite take to being a butcher, but using our hands, making things, being used to cutting things, well that is in my genes, so I became a carpenter instead. We certainly have lots of forests in Finland. I was happiest as Santa when I was making wooden toys for Christmas, for the innocent children of the world. Perhaps Geppeto was modelled on me?

Santa's Wisdom

What do I wish for children? Good health, happiness and the gifts that come from concentration

Closing Poem from Santa Speaks Out

Christmas Night in Lapland

The sun plays peek-a-boo with Lapland, during the long dark winter.
Distant, behind the curve of our impatient planet, detectable only through the moon's mirror,

the golden globe twists and spins away from

the frozen north pole.

It pirouettes south instead, where it plants its breathless kisses.

They warm the hands and feet of the shoeless,

Cast long shadows on the African plains

make farmers rich but anxious too for rain.

They shimmer on the sands of Arabian beaches

And heat, in the city's elegant piazzas,

the tango dancers of Buenos Aires.

In the kitchen, the fierce fire of the hearth.

The coals hiss and spit, turn on themselves in anger,

Burn with indignation, at the absence of the sun.

Mrs Claus and I are warm here, the year's work is done.

The draft excluder at the door is snug.

The room is still and cosy.

My stockings are drying and we are past the non-existent dusk.

Christmas is drawing to a close.