

Christine Lavin & The Mistletones

"The Runaway Christmas Tree"

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I was putting my niece Holly to bed
(it was Christmas Eve)
we had a long talk about Santa Claus
in whom she truly believes
But one thing she's not sure of
she looks at me with big brown eyes
and says, "Every year we decorate a tree
Why, Aunt Teen, why?"

So I tell her it's a traditional part
of every Christmas season
but that doesn't satisfy her
she wants a specific reason

"Why a fir tree? Why the tinsel?
Why that string of blinky lights?
unless you tell me I won't sleep!"
I'll lie awake all night!

All right all right all right!

Long ago and far away
"Where?" Aunt Teen
I don't know!
a family moved into a house
surrounded by drifts of snow
It was December 23rd
their living room was bare
so the Daddy said
"I think by the fireplace, a tree
would look good standing there"

So they marched into the woods
(it was freeezing cold outside)
they cut a great big fir tree down
7 feet tall, 4 feet wide
They dragged the tree into their house
put it up in the living room
and smiled 'cause the tree in the firelight
chased away the gloom

That night when they went to bed
the Wind blew the front door open wide
it picked up the great big tree
and carried it outside
It flew it through the yard
and back into the woods
and placed that tree smack dab upon
the stump on which it stood

The morning of Christmas Eve
the family came downstairs
they could not find their fir tree
it just wasn't there!
So they searched outside and sure enough
they found their tree and then
they dragged it through the snowdrifts
into their house again

But that night the Wind came back
blew open the front door
it picked up that great big tree
and carried it out once more
On Christmas morning, in the living room
no fir tree could be found!
the worried family went outside
to take a look around

They recaptured that restless tree
(same woods, same stump, same place)
but they shook their heads in wonderment
this was a very strange case!
They dragged the tree back to their house
the Dad said, "we must invent a lock
to keep the tree from blowing off
or maybe glue it to a rock?"

But then his littlest daughter said
"Daddy, I've got an idea!
What if we weigh it down with things
so it will HAVE to stay right here? . . .
But first, let's unwrap our presents!"
they did, and before too long a time
the living room was filled with toys, games,
wrapping paper, and twine

"Let's hang our gifts on the tree!"
the littlest son then said
"That's my boy," his mother cried,
that's using your head!"

So they hung the toys and games and books

and ribbons on the tree
cut wrapping paper in the shape of angels
it was a sight to see!

That night when the family went to bed
the tree saw it's reflection
and knew it's destiny
was taking on a new direction
And when the Wind blew the door open
the tree said

"I'm not going anywhere
I'm warm, I'm cozy, I'm all dressed up
I don't want to go outside!
I don't want to be bare!"

But the Wind said
"You belong outside
with all the other trees!"

No I don't! I'm special!
Get lost you . . . big bad breeze!"
So the Wind left sadly, closed the door
and blew off into the sky. . .
(I wondered if my niece Holly was asleep
but her eyes were still open wide
so I kept going. . .)

The next day the family came downstairs
and smiled at the sight
of their beautifully decorated tree
in the glowing firelight

And the tree could not take its eyes
off the mirror on the wall
I told my niece "That's the reason why we decorate
trees"
and she said
"That's it? That's all?
That's the story? I'm not sleeping yet!
tell me more! tell me more!"

So then I think and I think and I think and I think
and say, OK, this is how it ends:

For a week the tree is all dressed up
but then the novelty wears thin
Christmastime is over
the New Year comes rolling in
And even though the tree gets
lots of drinks of cool, fresh water

the family starts ignoring it
even the littlest daughter

"I think it's time to take it down"
the Mom and Daddy said

"Soon the needles will fall out
and then it will be . . .DEAD!"

So they took off all the decorations
and now the tree is bare
it doesn't like what it sees in the mirror
it's not happy standing there

That night it calls out to the Wind
"O carry me back into the woods!
I long to see the other trees
and the ground on which I stood!"

The Wind hears its call, comes roaring in
picks it up, blows it out the door
the next day the family looks and looks
but the tree is gone. . . forevermore

Which was lucky, for after searching all day
the family was cold and tired
and the Dad had planned to chop the tree up
and burn it in the fire!

The Wind had known that would happen
so it blew into the room
to rescue the tree from what could only be
considered . . .
CERTAIN DOOM!!!!

And that is why the week after New Year's
to this very day
you see old Christmas trees on every street corner
what are they doing?

They're running away!

We put decorations on them
to make them too heavy to run!
'cause they know what's in store for them
when their job is done!

We chop them down! We drag them off!
We dress them up! We sing them songs!
O Christmas tree! O Christmas tree!
How did things go so wrong?

(I look and my niece is sleeping
that's good, she needs her rest
she didn't hear the ending of this story
that's probably for the best)

But no! her eyes pop open
Holly is awake
"I heard what you said, Aunt Teen,
you've made a big mistake!
Our tree won't be unhappy
like all those other ones
we'll take it to the Nature Center
when Christmastime is done

The Nature Center recycles
everything made of wood
They can turn our tree into mulch!
Mulch is very good!
It will help the little trees
to grow big and strong!"

Holly's right, so that is how
we will end this song

Don't make your tree have to run away
when Christmastime is through
if you help it return to its roots
it will in turn help you

And all the little growing trees
will dream about the way
they hope they will be decorated
come next Christmas Day

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