

Woman at the Window

By Grace Sudjono

The bright sky darkens. Sunflowers look for light. As night gathers, they slowly fade away, drooping their heads down low.

The morning light shines through a rose window. A widow looks toward it. She spots a woman with young children walking by. They remind her of her younger days. Memories flood the mind. She remembers walking to a small but cosy cottage with her husband. She knows he is now in paradise. Tears well up in the corners of her eyes. Some fall while others are too shy to come out.

As Christmas draws near, the streets are filled with bright lights! The smell of freshly baked gingerbread hovers in the air. Decorative wreaths are hung to numerous doors. Muffled sounds of carolers, who are practicing, can be heard. All are filled with Christmas joy!

The widow crowds her mantelpiece with pictures. Little ornaments are found at every corner of the home. She lights a blazing fire, it sings and dances! Stockings are hung, as well as brightly coloured presents. She prepares gingerbread, warm and toasty.

Christmas Day has come at last! All are filled with the Christmas spirit. Cars are parked at every grassy crescent. All greet another warmly but few greet the widow. She knows they have other things to do although she longs for more company.

The widow waits wistfully for family and friends to come. She thinks that they will come, they do so every year. All of a sudden the wind howls and the cottage shakes! Hail and rain crashes down, it makes a tremendous racket! The widow begins to doubt if they will come.

The widow rearranges the presents. She cooks up a simple but tasty feast. She dusts the furniture and polishes the silverware. She makes the cottage spick and span! All her energy is drained. So she plops onto a chair and falls into a doze.

Rat a tat tat! The widow woke up startled. She glanced at the clock, 9:00 p.m. Who could be knocking at this unearthly hour? The widow becomes excited and full of wonder. Slowly, she gripped her stick and stepped toward the hall.

The room was filled with laughter, her family has come at last! The cottage was noisier than usual, for so many people had come. The food was gone in a jiffy, the crackers all pulled, colourful wrappings lay on the floor and toys were scattered everywhere. The widow always wore a smile, it couldn't be taken off. She danced and sang merrily with them. The men set up beds, for they were staying for a while, and how happy the widow was! She was filled with joy at last.

~THE END ~