

First Christmas

Stan Rogers

This day a year ago
he was rolling in the snow
With a younger brother in his father's yard
Christmas break
a time for touching home
the heart of all he'd known
And leaving was so hard

Three thousand miles away
now he's working Christmas Day
Making double time for the minding of the store
Well he always said
he'd make it on his own
He's spending Christmas Eve alone
First Christmas away from home

She's standing by the train station
pan-handling for change
Four more dollars buys a decent
meal and a room
Looks like the Sally Ann place after all
in a crowded sleeping hall
That echoes like a tomb

But it's warm and clean and free
and there are worse places to be
At least it means no beating from her Dad
And if she cries because it's Christmas Day
She hopes that it won't show
First Christmas away from home

In the apartment stands a tree
and it looks so small and bare
Not like it was meant to be
Golden angel on the top
It's not that same old silver star
you wanted for your own
First Christmas away from home

In the morning
they get prayers
then it's crafts and tea downstairs
Then another meal back in his little room
Hoping maybe that "the boys"
will think to phone before the day is gone
Well it's best they do it soon.

When the "old girl" passed away
he fell apart more every day
Each had always kept the other pretty well
But the kids all said the nursing home was best
Cause he couldn't live alone
First Christmas away from home

In the common room they've got the biggest tree
And it's huge and cold and lifeless Not like it ought
to be

and the lit-up flashing Santa Claus on top
It's not that same old silver star you once made for
your own
First Christmas away from home