

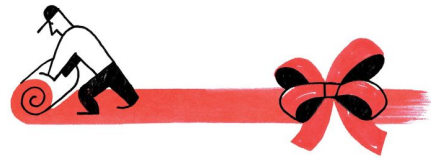
POEMS | DECEMBER 21, 2015 ISSUE

GREETINGS, FRIENDS!

BY IAN FRAZIER

ILLUSTRATION BY MIGUEL PORLAN

This Christmas we are staying in,
Skyping en masse with all our kin
And friends linked up in cyberspace,
Slipping the surly bonds of place,
And traffic on the Tappan Zee,
Cross Bronx, and Hutch, and B.Q.E.
To keep us alert and itchin',
The brake lights we put in the kitchen
Are set on Hazard. They look gay,
Flashing throughout the holiday.
So—greetings, all! Pull up a screen!
You're coming through quite well, we mean.
And we are, too? That rocks! That's great!
Hi there, Paul Rudd! No, you're not late.
Pope Francis, too! Pope, Paul; Paul, Pope.
You will become great friends, we hope.
And now, with Skype cascades of chimes,
More folks stop in to join our rhymes:
The Zuckerbergs, with daughter Max;
Rihanna, from a lounge at LAX;
Masaharu Morimoto
(The Iron Chef); Sonia Soto-
mayor, our own Bronx-born jurist;
Rolf, a New York City tourist
(Good thing we've got eight screens, or ten,
The extra-wide kind, in our den);
Anthony Sadler, Spencer Stone,
And Alek Skarlatos, now well-known
Winners of the Légion d'Honneur,
Heroes of tremendous *coeur*:
What you did, guys, outdoes terrific;



Bravery is always civic.
Applause and praises also for
French Pres. Hollande; we wish him more
Of all that's good, and all best luck.
Now warm air hugs to Wolfgang Puck,
Carter Burwell, ace composer,
Selfless Dr. Ian Crozier,
Rita Ora, Buck Showalter,
Charlotte Brown, the blind pole vaulter,
Top model Arizona Muse,
San Juan's Mayor Carmen Cruz,
The D.C. zoo's new baby panda,
And Lin-Manuel Miranda.
If our eyes do not mislead us,
"The Walking Dead"'s Norman Reedus
With "Nurse Jackie"'s Edie Falco
Stand there waving from the balcony
of Slash, their bud and neighbor,
With Tom Perez, the Sec. of Labor.
Hey, look! The Mets are here—all of 'em.
So they lost, so what, we love 'em!
Let pop-ups from the T-shirt gun
Lead cheers for Curtis Granderson,
Harvey, deGrom, and the whole bunch;
Next year they'll eat the Royals' lunch.
Leaning back in our recliner,
We hear voices, each one finer
Than the preceding. When Adele
Sings just a single Jingle Bell—
Such bliss! When, soon, the snowflakes fall,
She takes the plunge and sings them all.
Then the skies start getting darker;
With wine docent Robert Parker
We raise a toast, and send fond thoughts
To all the staff at Toys for Tots,
And each Scout and each Obama;
Joy to Wilmer Valderrama,
Misty Copeland, ballet diva,
Carlos Slim, who plans to leave a
Fortune in somebody's stocking
(Now, that really will be shocking),
Madea's main man Tyler Perry,

Dr. Summers (known as Larry),
Benji Madden, Gretchen Mol,
Josh Earnest and Carlotta Gall.
Strong wishes of good hope and cheer
Pulse electronically from here
To Janet Yellen, of the Fed,
Possessor of outstanding cred,
Loretta Lynn and Babs Mandrell
(Those ladies who know Nashville well),
Joaquin Phoenix, Susan Braudy,
And that daft congressman Trey Gowdy,
While our benign designs descend
On each Dem and Republican;
May hearts unclench and eyes see light,
Just briefly, on this starry night.
Dear friends, the year had ups and downs.
A dearth of comfort to be found
In how the world is unreeling
Can't deflate a hopeful feeling.
Next year may bring a whole new phase,
A plentitude of better days,
Grace completely unexpected,
Previously undetected,
Perfect breaks we don't deserve
And don't need to; so let's swerve
Upward, onward in the crush
Of this season's crazy rush,
Jumping with both feet, not looking,
On amazing grace depending.



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