

CHRISTMAS EVE

Little boy threw
An old shoe
At a black boy.

Mama said
Papa said
Blackmen are bad.

Black boy
Picked up the shoe
Took it back home
Hung it high
On the Christmas tree
At the top
All alone.

Mama said
Papa said
Why you so sad?

Christmas is happy time
Jesus is born
That shoe is a gift
See
How it is filled
Gold
Frankincense
Myrrh . . .
The same as our Lord.

Not this shoe
No sir,
Said the little black child,
This shoe has a spur
And I'll use it to ride.
Inside is a whip
And a gun
And a knife.

Mama said
Papa said
Child — that is life.

No
Said the child,
Not this shoe
No sir
This shoe is death
And I'll wear it
Until
My very last breath.

"Black boy
Thy skin offends me.
Take it off."

"I can't Lord."

"Who gave it you?"

"You did Lord."

"Give it me back.
I'll make a flag
For all the world
And give you in its place
Another skin,
Another face."

"No Lord
Since you made the gift
My skin's my own.
I'll make of it
Another world
And live in it
Alone."