

A Way with Words



*(A poetic path toward Christmas
and the days beyond)*

J. Barrie Shepherd

You are right! It is too soon to be thinking Christmas gifts, despite the alarming media chatter about supply chain problems. However, our “Holiday Bazaar” here was yesterday, November 5 (Guy Fawkes Day,) so my annual Advent/Christmas chapbook is already in print and available so I might as well get the word out early.

As in other years, it is a collection of recent verse, beginning with Advent – Epiphany themes, and continuing through the year. The book sells at \$10 per copy (plus \$2 for postage etc.) and all proceeds, beyond cost, will be donated to the Scarborough or Chebeague Island Maine food pantries. I have added a sample poem (below) in case anyone would like a preview of the contents.

To order contact me at barrieshep@aol.com, 207 510 1637, or 15 Piper Road – K 325, Scarborough, ME 04074.

Shopping Days 'til Christmas

Black Friday opened up
before Halloween this year,
and the customary counselors are predicting
drastic shortages, delays and empty shelves.
The supply chain appears to be untethered –
loaded ships lying off the coast at anchor,
idled drivers, vacant trucks holding in line –
impending crisis, once again, is all the news.

Yet my Christmas list stays calmly unimperiled.

One festive meal with folk whose company
I have come to cherish over years.

One dog-directed stroll along the shore,
or down a snow-edged forest trail.

One open fireside with warm slippers,
a chair that tilts me backward when desired,
and a book I know so well the plot flows,
slow and easy into slumber.

A generous mug, or glass, to sip on,
welcome voice and touch when I awake.

At the close, a holy space of choir and candles,
ancient words of grace and comfort,
merry greetings, mending peace.