

## Jewel Christmas

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A tale of old and brave new Christmas  
A message of hope in simple verse  
Of two dates separated by just a year  
A family facing an unexpected fear

In life there is little of certainty  
Tax and death, being two out of three  
A lifetime spent in avoidance  
We seek joy as correspondence

Planning begin several months ahead  
To set a theme of joy and be well fed  
Much thought is given to this preparation  
To contemplate food wine and decoration

But alas the months are stalked by fear  
A deadly cancer found in one so near  
Focus shifted to medical care  
Chemotherapy the cross to bear

With theme selected and menu clear  
The Christmas book begun for the year  
In page after page of thoughtful text  
Festivities planned to be relaxed

And in the ward many a fragile soul  
First cycle begins remission its goal  
Hopes are high and target set  
Alive at Christmas and no regret

Tinsel sought and tree resurrected  
Decorations bought and lights are tested  
Dress the tree a sight to inspire  
The final flourish the fairy on the spire

The days pass slowly the chemo acts  
Within the ward we face hard facts  
Health's return needs a prayer at mass  
Morale raised by the promise of Christmas

In parallel Catherine builds a grotto  
Never give up her heartfelt motto



Retains a brave face her head held high  
So strong in love he shall not die

Though rain and pain creates a manger  
A place of love for a familiar stranger  
A shadow of the Man before  
Stumbling balding nursed to the door

Christmas passion builds anew  
Friends and family all pass through  
Immune system at an impasse  
Weight and strength cut like grass

Keep the faith and optimism  
Anticipate release from the clinical prison  
Daily trek to the welcoming ward  
Ensure any doubts are never heard

And as the patient fights his war  
Those who love and visit suffer more  
For them no succour or medication  
Instead the lonely pain of dedication

Memories of Christmas past support us all  
As tinsel streams across each wall  
The grotto grows in gentle nature  
A labour of love and rare nurture

So in this tale of parallel paths  
A celebration in words for the love of Cath'  
A recognition of a troubled time  
A jewel of Christmas recorded in rhyme