

Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the skys
Air defenses were up, with electronic eyes.
Combat pilots were nestled in ready-room beds
As enemy silhouettes danced in their heads.

Every jet on the apron, each SAM in its tube
Was triply-redundant linked to the Blue Cube,
And EInt and AWACS gave coverage so dense
That nothing that flew could slip through our defense.

When out of the klaxon arose such a clatter
I turned to the screen to see what was the matter;
I dialed up the gain and then quick as a flash
Fine-adjusted the filters to damp out the hash.

And there found the source of the warning we'd heeded:
An incoming blip, by eight escorts preceded.
"Alert status red!" went the word down the wire,
As we gave every system the codes that meant "FIRE"!

On Aegis! Up Patriot, Phalanx and Hawk!
And scramble our fighters -- let's send the whole flock!
Launch decoys and missiles! Use chaff by the yard!
Get the kitchen sink up! Call the National Guard!

They turned toward the target, moved toward it, converged.
Then the tracks on the radar all finally merged,
And the sky was lit up with a demonic light
As the foe met his fate in the high arctic night.

So we sent out some recon to look for debris,
Yet all that they found, both on land and on sea
Were some toys, a red hat, a charred left leather boot,
Broken sleighbells, white hair, and a deer's parachute.

Now it isn't quite Christmas, with Saint Nick shot down.
There are unhappy kids in each village and town.
For the Spirit of Christmas can't hope to evade
All the web of defenses we've carefully made.

For look how the gadgets we use to protect us
In other ways alter, transform and affect us.
They keep us from things that make life more worth living
Like love for each other, and thoughts of just giving.

But a crash program's on: Working hard, night and day,

All the elves are constructing a radar-proof sleigh.
So let's wait for next Christmas, in cheer and in health,
For the future has hope: Santa's coming by stealth!

-- Jay Freeman