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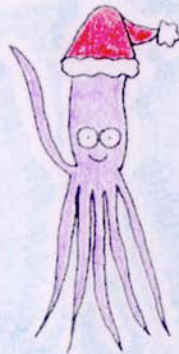
Hilari
Jones

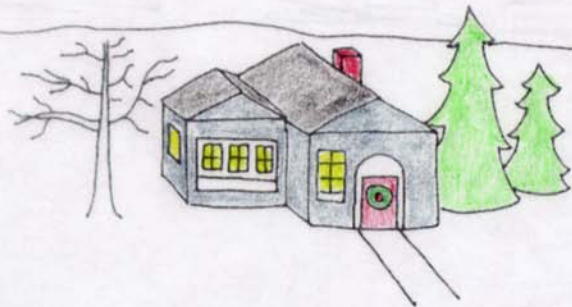
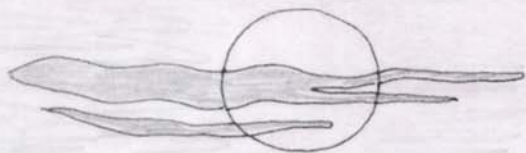
December in the Deep

by
Hilari Jones

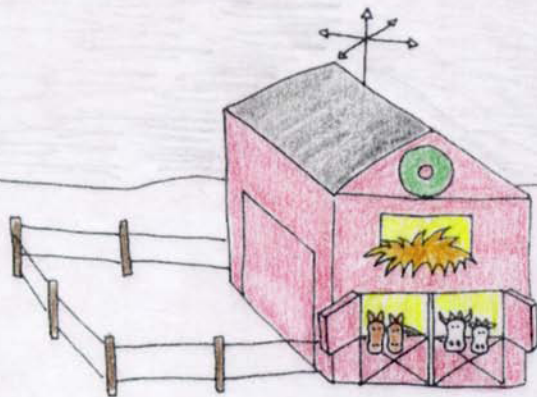
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For
Bryan

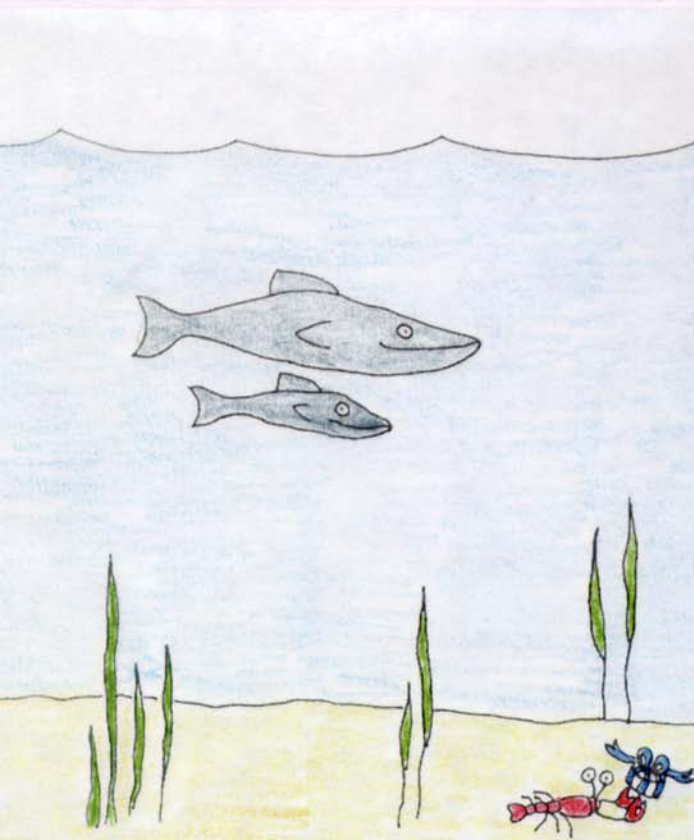




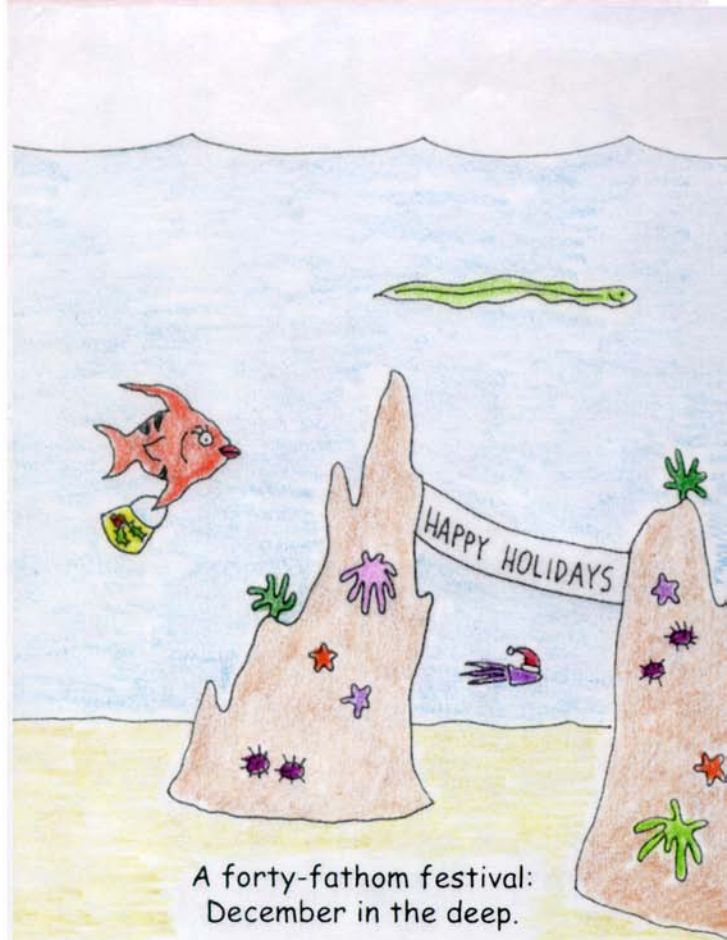
As Christmas nears, the sky is hushed;
the birds have all departed.



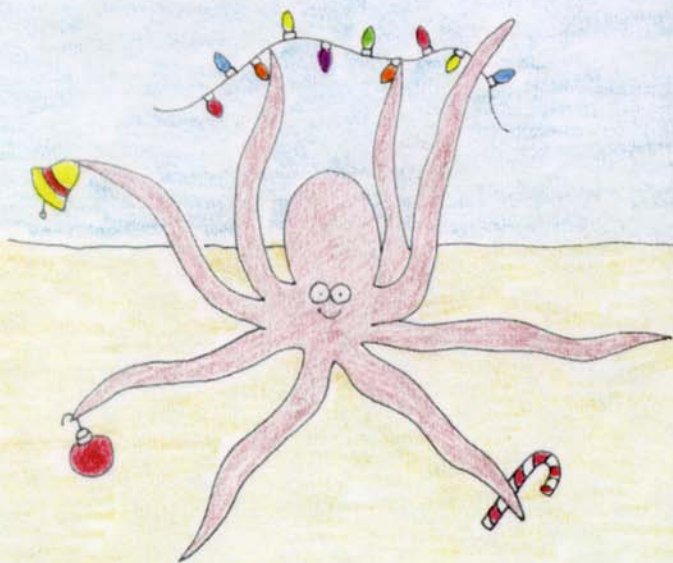
On terra firma, humble beasts
seek shelter: snow has started!



But underneath the ocean waves
diversion you may seek -



A forty-fathom festival:
December in the deep.



Octopi help deck the halls...



and the ceilings...and the walls.



Tiny drifters glimmer with glee;



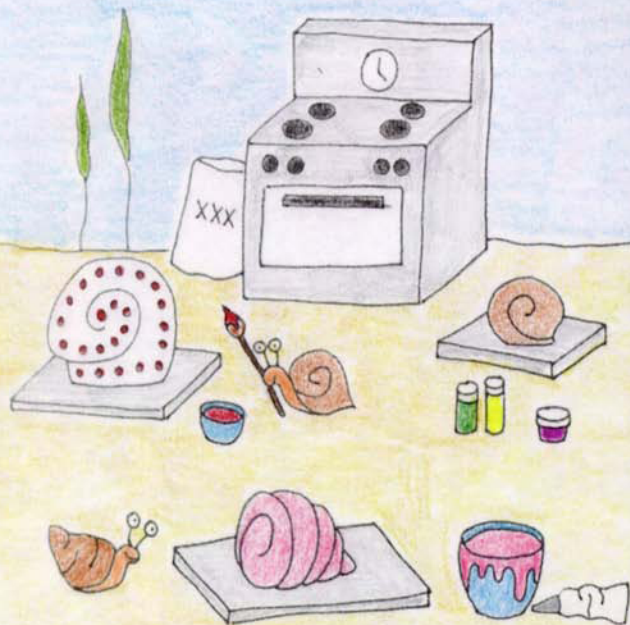
Starfish spangle the holiday tree.



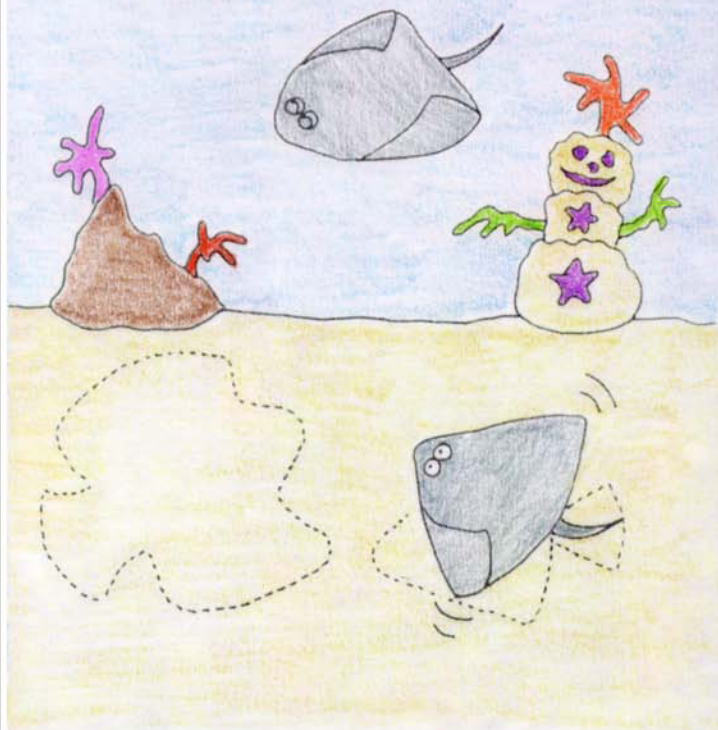
Santa beckons fry and roe;



Cuttlefish cuddle under mistletoe.



Snails sculpt ginger-houses grand;



Rays flap angels in the sand.



A feast is hosted by crustaceans;



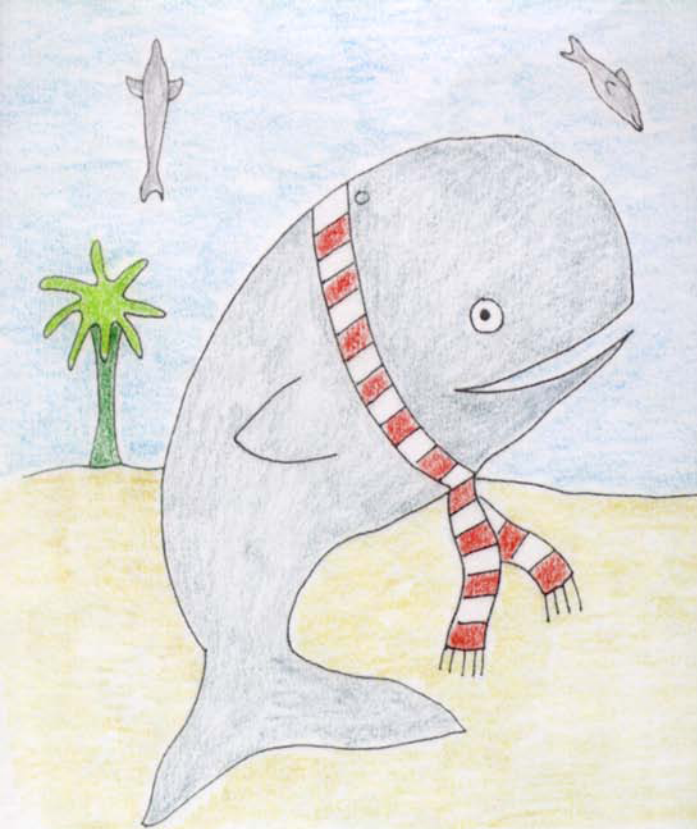
Barnacles brim with merry libations.



Mollusks make calciferous wrappings;



Squid adjust ribbons, gift cards, and fastenings.



Cetaceans gather: A sonar chorus -
Each dolphin and whale, and every porpoise -



Sings, "Peace undersea, and joyous wishes
To plankton, sponges, worms, and fishes!"

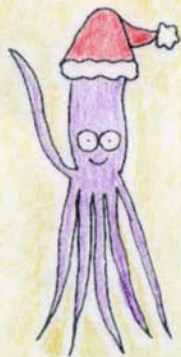


And on December twenty-fourth
The preparations serve their purpose:



Eyes and eye-spots all look up
As St. Nick floats down from the surface.

Merry
Christmas



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