

## Dear Santa Claus,

or, in the motherland of some in our story circle: **Father Christmas** (UK) ✨ St. Nicholas, **Sinterklaas** (Holland)



### My childhood thanks you for ...

pretty, ceramic-faced **dolls in long dresses** for my sister and I ✨ **apples, oranges, and a handkerchief** in my stocking each Christmas ✨ the **pram** to take my baby doll for walks ✨ a **toboggan** of dark and light wood, so we could all jump on and away we'd go from a hill we lived on in New Liskeard ✨ helping Father make a beautiful **wooden cradle** for my doll ✨ **bolts of material** for Mother to make us clothes ✨ chewy, Dutch **gingerbread nuts** (*pepernoot*) scattered in our room ✨ the **Eaton's Beauty** ceramic doll with elastic bands at her joints to bend her (carefully!) ✨ a **sled** we filled with hot stones then bundled ourselves into for Christmas concerts ✨ the lovely **doll**: years later, I saw one just like her in an Ottawa museum and had tears of joy again ✨ **your visits to my school** each year, in your Beaver coat, kissing all the teachers. ✨

### You're so jolly. I smile, too, recalling Christmas seasons and ...

brown sugar **fudge** ✨ **goody bags** of oranges and a Brazil nut that school and church gave us ✨ boxes of **chocolate bars** Mother saved coupons for ✨ crisp, **russet apples** ✨ Father keeping us guessing with **clues about our presents**: one year he said mine "*stretches from here to a neighbour's farm*": what could it be? I got an embroidery kit ✨ **chocolates Father gave me** when I was 11 or so, a duplicate of the box he'd given Mother: I hid them so well from my brothers that, when I moved out to get married, I emptied my closet and found that candy box, its chocolates turned a spotty grey. ✨

### Please ask the Elves something I've wondered ...

would Santa really give coal? ✨ what do you do Christmas Eve while he's out? ✨ is there anyone to give *you* gifts? ✨ how do reindeer fly? ✨ is Santa ever stuck in a chimney? ✨

## Season's Greetings, Happy New Year

To Your Health, **Na Zdrowie** (Poland) ✨ **Guid Christmas** (Scotland) ✨ Merry Christmas, **Fröhlich Weihnachten** (Germany) ✨ Joyful Christmas, **Prettig Kerstdagen** + Good Luck in the New Year, **Gelukkig Nieuwjaar** (Holland). ✨

