Twas the Night Before Gardner  
T. Arthur Terlep

Twas the night before Gardner, when all through the Ritz  
The exchange room was filled, from the door to the wall,  
The guests then nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of polyhedra danced in their heads.  
The name tags were hung o’er every neck with care,  
In hopes that the bar bets soon would be there.  

While Thane kept quite calm, despite din in the hall.  
A bundle of Toys I had flung on my back,  
And I refilled my suitcase, just so I could pack!  
Then stones-how they twinkled! My Goban so merry!  
His groups were like boas, his shapes didn’t tarry!  
I recall that my loss was drawn up on this Go,  
And Berlekamp’s count confirmed what I know.  

Later Dennis plied pipes and bent pans in his grip,  
And phonebooks likes leaves flew out from a rip.  
We thought he was fake, before bowling ball belly,  
And twisting horseshoes, like Dunkin’ Donuts filled with jelly!  

"Now Magic! now, Puzzles! now, Science and Math Games!  
On, Music! On, Knitting! On, on Sculptures by big Names!  
To the top of the stand! In front of us all!  
Present away! Dash away! Go eat lunch at the mall!"

"As I set down these words, my gift exchange work,  
My timeline’s askew; my meter’s a-jerk.  
But illusionists said that your memory’s a farce,  
So in judging this, well, I hope you’re as sparse!"

To Tom’s house we came, very grateful at this,  
Wishing him well, this great man we miss.  
But up near the house, my Go game near through,  
I watched from afar as the geometric structures grew.

"And now, time to go, I ran for my train,  
As days’ past events brewed coffee bubbled brain.  
But I heard Martin say, as I rode out of sight,  
"Happy Snark hunting to all, and to all a good flight!"