

## Christmas - Knecht Ruprecht

Translation of poem from German to English by Alex Herzog, Boulder, Colorado

Knecht Ruprecht

(Note 1 - see below)

Way out from the forest is where I am from  
I must tell you, it's rally "Christmasing" (Note 2)

On every pine tree top  
I saw golden lights gleaming;

And up in the sky, from heaven's gate  
I saw the wide-eyed Christchild.

And as a strolled through the dark pines,  
A bright voice called out to me:

"Knecht Ruprecht," it called out, "old fellow, (3)  
Lift up those legs and hide yourself!

The candles are starting to burn,  
Heaven's gate has swung wide open,

Old and young now must  
Rest from the chase of your lives;

And tomorrow morn' I'll fly down to earth,  
And then it is to be Christmas!"

I spoke: "Oh, dearest Lord, Christ,  
My journey is nearly over;

Must I yet go to this town  
Where those pure and good children are." -

"Are you carrying the bag?"  
I said: "The bag, it is here.;

For apples, nuts and almonds  
Are loved by pious children." -

"Are you carrying the switch as well?"  
I said, "The switch, it is here.;

But only for those children who are bad,  
It will meet them on the right part of their body.”

The Christchild then said, “So it is, right and proper,  
Now go with God, my loyal servant!”

Way out from the forest is where I am from,  
I must tell you, it’s rally “Christmasing”

Now tell me how I’ll find things here!  
Will there be good children, or bad?

Note 1: This translation makes no attempt at maintaining the rhyming scheme of the original German, but neither does it adhere strictly to word-for-word rendering.

Note 2: An extremely awkward phrase to translate. An even freer translation would be “it is beginning to look an awful lot like Christmas,”

Note 3: The “Knecht” [Servant, Assistant] Ruprecht traditionally accompanied the Christchild on Christmas Eve. His role was to test the children as to their knowledge of the proper Christmas and Bible verses, and to mete out punishment if deserved, while the Christchild was there to praise the good children.