

'Twas the Night Before...

'Twas the night before IE* and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring except for my mouse.
Word Perfect was hung on a small floppy disk
In hopes that my typos would be smallish tsk, tsks.
The Mario Bros were all snug in their beds
While visions of Pac Man danced in our heads;
Apple II with its icons, Atari with Zap
had just settled in without bloatware or crap.

When out in URI-land there arose so much chatter,
I sprang to my desktop to see what was the matter.
Away on IE I flew like a flash
Without sign-ins for chat-rooms, or wanting my cash;
The chat was abuzz, and the footer did show
Character strings, shiny objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
Popups promising "better experience here."
They insisted I take them, these cookies, be quick!
For discounts and premiums marketed slick.

They swooped in like eagles, my mouse was their game,
And warned they'd gray websites and I'd be to blame.
"Accept them, or get out!" their markets proclaim,
We've got buyers for info, including your name.
Setup an account, log in, it's all free,
So we can get through your privacy tree.
Just a peek, just a hint, click 'YES', we won't shout,
If you don't, then we're sorry, we'll just gray you out.

On downloads, in updates, by chimneys they fly,
Bringing all kinds of toys, just as long as I buy.
Then into my home the marketers flew
With upgrades, subscriptions, and new features, too!
And when, in a twinkling, I ordered his treats,
I quickly found out they've been made obsolete.
He was dressed all in lies, from his head to his foot,
His promises ashes, his emojis just soot;
And that bundle of freebees flung on his back,
Why nothing but crippleware to make me come back.
His eyes are ambition, his greed makes him merry,
His cheeks stuffed with chestnuts from buyers unwary.

His mouth full of lies that are drawn in a grin,
While the beard on his website hides prices within;
A pipe that was meant to be held in his teeth,
Pumps oil to smokestacks, around which they wreath,
While I sit in my chair getting fat in the belly,
The 'mojis are laughing like bowls full of jelly.
Now chubby and plump, I'm a jolly old elf,
It's no laughing matter, I'm no longer myself.

With a GUI mask that now covers my head,
I pretty well knew there was something to dread,
For the world was a cookie that is doing his work,
while refusal would flag me for being a jerk.
And now that you know where this true story goes,
with your credit card numbers, up the chimney he rose.
The toys were for Santa, whose teams gave a whistle
and away they all flew with the sound of a missile,
"To the bank," he exclaimed as he drove out of sight,
"No-reply" for an answer, "and to all a good night!"

*For those too young to remember, IE was MS's original Internet Explorer. Before beta 2, there were no cookies. Some of us fought like hell to keep them off our systems, knowing that our homes were about to be invaded with a lot of unwanted crap. We lost, they are.