

# THE CHRISTMAS HAM

by Harry Dunn  
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I was sent to do some shopping -  
Christmas and all that,  
For a detailed list of goodies  
To grace our habitat,  
Along with clear instructions  
Not to deviate, to add or to reduce,  
'And don't come home with anything  
Of doubtful or no use.'

Now, I love to do the shopping,  
When I'm free of supervision,  
And I drive that shopping trolley  
Like a Grand Prix open-wheeler  
I'm a driver on a mission;  
I race down Fruit and Veggie Straight,  
Side-swipe some poor old sheila  
Approaching Dairy Produce,  
Never slowing, never stopping,  
I toss stuff in the trolley,  
Oh boy - I love this Christmas shopping.

I'm half-way through the shopping list,  
I'm in the Meat and Deli  
And I see this red-hot Christmas special,  
The kind I can't resist,  
BONE-IN HAM, FULL LEG, HALF-PRICE!!  
Half Price, I cry, No need to bend my arm,  
No need to twist my wrist,  
I'll have one, please - the *biggest* one you've got,  
At that price it's such a bargain,  
Although it isn't on my list,  
And, of course, when I go home,  
I'll have to face  
The cries of disbelief,  
The clenched and shaken fist.

I depart that super-mart  
With most things on my list,  
Plus that massive bone-in ham,  
Which takes up half the cart,  
And wondering what I've missed,  
Now, reviewed outside in daylight,  
When the fever has subsided,  
I know I'll be in strife  
When I unwrap that massive rear-end leg  
Old Razor-back provided,  
And when I show it to the wife -  
Opinions *will* be divided.

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Christmas is behind us, another week has passed  
And things at home have settled down,  
But that massive ham looms over all,  
Like the Ghost of Christmas past;  
The remaining turkey's mostly skin,  
The prawns are on the nose  
And headed for the bin,  
Left-overs all re-cycled, more or less,  
Except that bloody ham,  
More daunting now than ever,  
Wrapped in pillow cases,  
They say it keeps forever,  
If you store it in the fridge,  
It won't go bad - not never!

Just keep it in the fridge, they say,  
And eat it when desired,  
But Godzilla' takes up lots of space,  
There's room for little else,  
Where refrigeration is required  
And I am under pressure  
As events have now transpired.

The mail-order bride eschews it,  
She says she can't eat ham,  
Because her teeth ache when she chews it,  
And she'd rather stay with Spam,  
But not a morsel can be wasted,  
Not a slice of it thrown out,  
After all, it was I who brought it home  
Against all warnings and advice,  
And we mere mortals must pay for our mistakes,  
So I've agreed to eat that monster  
However long it takes.

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Four weeks in, and I'm sick and tired of ham,  
Oh yes, my diet's had variety;  
Three veg or salad every night;  
But I'm an unrepentant *carnivore*  
And a slice of meat upon my plate  
Is my married human right,  
And of course, old Madam Lash maintains,  
This requirement has been met,  
And woe betide the man who complains  
Of excess-ham ennui:  
She serves up that noisome leg  
In a dozen different ways,  
So none will go to waste,  
And this poor spouse cannot protest  
That he's suffered lack of choice  
Although his daily serves of meat  
Are all without exception -  
Half-Priced, Bone-in, Ham-based.

I've eaten ham-based meals,  
In quantities excessive,  
My forbearance in this matter  
Has been, I think, impressive,  
Fried ham and eggs,  
Sliced ham on toast,

Home-made ham and bacon bangers  
Ham-bone Ginger Meggs  
As much as you can eat,  
Ham and chutney sangers -  
A little midday treat.

I've had ham and lentil soup,  
*More* than I can eat:  
Two ham-steak Hawaiians  
Something rather special, we were told ,  
In Nineteen-sixties counter-lunching vi-ands,  
Ham and chicken slices, served both hot and cold.  
I've had it boiled, I've had it oiled,  
I've had it cut and dried.  
I've had it minced, I've had it quined  
Sectioned, shaved and sliced  
I've had ham-bone steaks, butterflied and spiced,  
I've had it pickled, I've had it grilled ...

I should at this stage point out  
That the Memsah'b is - in matters of high principle -  
Remarkably strong-willed,  
Not to mention .... surprisingly inventive,  
She's produced some novelties,  
Like ham and garlic omelette  
And ham and duck-egg pie,  
A mystery dish called Ham Helene,  
Unmistakably pig-meat, but a long way from the sty ;  
Curried ham and ham on Spam,  
Ham consomee, served with Ham-on-rye -  
The consomme served chilled,  
Chilled but also chillied  
Hot enough to make you cry,  
And, to make things worse,  
This ham was not like other hams,  
It would make a martyr curse  
It was awful tough and stringy  
With skin like saddle-leather,  
And as old as grand'ma's purse

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Oft-times, I've heard it said  
We *are* the things we eat,  
And I think there's something in it,  
As I eat my daily bread,  
Now, look at those old Were-wolves,  
And Mary Shelley's Dracula;  
Not for them the Macca's burger;  
They enjoy their daily dram of *blood*  
It's essential to their diet,  
And who's to say that isn't nice,  
Although, myself, *I* don't intend to try it.

After weeks and weeks of ham,  
And its many variations,  
I'm developing strange habits,  
And eating - abberations,  
I'm squealing quite a lot,  
Where before I used to groan,  
And my voice is sometimes grunty  
I crave a feed of acorns,  
Which I never did before,  
And I love my daily mud-bath,  
Never mind the bath-room floor.

Could it be I'm in transition,  
Like Draculas and Were-wolves,  
And those folks of troubled gender,  
So, I summoned Madam Lash, and cried  
'Enough, enough, I've had enough,  
By now you must be satisfied!'

The Madam, much averse to barnyard swine,  
Especially if domiciled in matrimonial house,  
Alarmed at what she heard and saw,  
The way I squealed and hissed,  
She saw that it was time to draw the line,

So, I made a good confession  
And I'm now off the cursed ham ;  
I'll not repeat my sad transgression,  
And we both of us agree  
All impulse buying to resist,  
No more half-price sales for me  
And I promised that in future  
I'd come home with only  
The things shown on my list

We proceeded to the Westinghouse,  
Walking hand in hand,  
Or was it hand in trotter,  
And removed what still remained  
Of Godzilla's hinder leg,  
And the feeling, it was grand  
As we dropped it in the bin,  
That evil, hateful thing'  
But as it disappeared,  
I thought I heard a voice  
Saying 'one day you'll regret,  
You stupid Ding-a-ling,  
The day you tossed away  
This planet's last Jurassic thing,  
The remaining scraps of meat  
From a pre-historic Dino-king -  
The *Swinosaurus Inverlocchus Rex*,  
On it's final Dino-fling.'