



I Dread Christmas

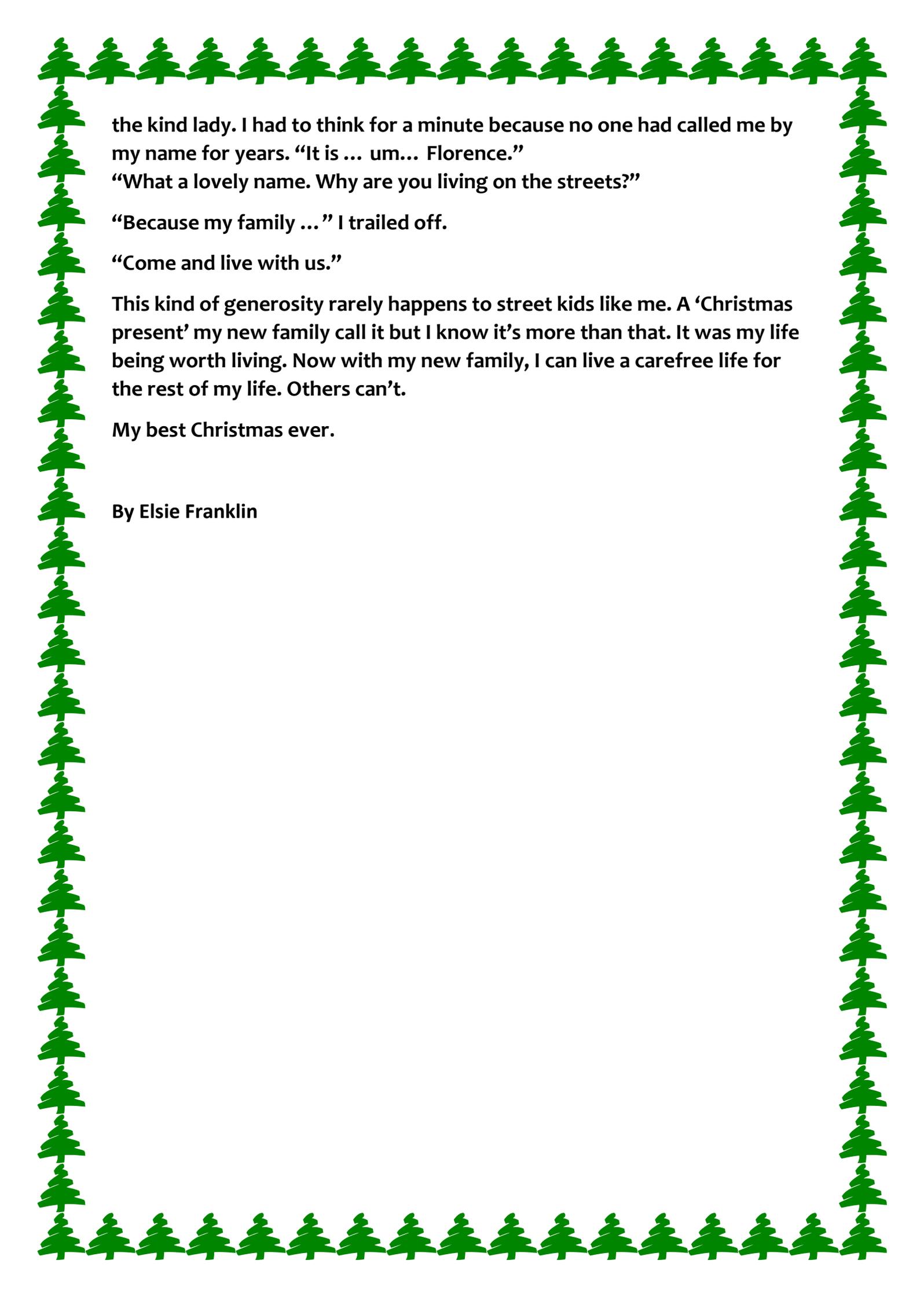
I sat on the hard pavement of London. Snow was pelting down from the sky so I hunched under my thin, worn blanket. My only belonging after my clothes and ... well I don't want to remember. The moon dipped beyond the horizon and I started hearing people in the distance. Then a big green tree came around the corner. It was that time of year. Christmas.

People were merry and laughing. I was like that once. I had a big house and I was always laughing. Now I don't even smile ... not since I lost my family. We lived in a small but cosy house- the four of us together. But one day she just... I wish I knew.

My mum (in particular) was amazing. She was always smiling and laughing but one day ... they all just ... went. My eyes started welling up with tears. The vision of the Christmas tree and my house vanished and I was back in the snow on the street... alone. I looked through the window that was opposite 'my' part of the street, and wished that it was my house. Nobody was on the street -apart from me. My dull life is not worth living. I feel so bad about myself. Nobody could help.

I woke up buried in snow and shivering after a harsh night. The street was flooded with people wearing Christmas jumpers and being merry. Of course... it was Christmas day. The thought of it made me shiver. The day I ... I ... it's too hard to say. So instead I went to my families resting place (I lost my family three years ago when I was nine and have been living off gifts that people that pass give me.)

After sitting at their last resting point for hours, the tears flooded out. What will I turn into? Why can't I join my family? There's so many questions that have no apparent answers. I hope my life will end the way I want it to -no life. But, then I looked up... an adult was looking at me and reaching out her hand. "What are you doing alone?" Then she looked at the grave stones "Come with me." I had nothing to say. No words, no gestures - nothing. The lady pulled me up and I was put in a car! What were they doing? Nobody since I lost my family had ever let me into their house. Through the door was a big smart mirror and around the edge were beautiful, handmade Christmas decorations. I had never seen anything so beautiful since I had a house. "So what is your name?" asked



the kind lady. I had to think for a minute because no one had called me by my name for years. “It is ... um... Florence.”

“What a lovely name. Why are you living on the streets?”

“Because my family ...” I trailed off.

“Come and live with us.”

This kind of generosity rarely happens to street kids like me. A ‘Christmas present’ my new family call it but I know it’s more than that. It was my life being worth living. Now with my new family, I can live a carefree life for the rest of my life. Others can’t.

My best Christmas ever.

By Elsie Franklin