

Wreath on a Guardrail

The automobile rushed along Interstate 24 West toward Nashville, Tenn., at 74 miles per hour Sunday afternoon. The stretch of highway is somewhat lonely, with occasional houses in sight and few exits.

Somewhere between Hale's Bar, the dam across the Tennessee River, and Monteagle Mountain, in an alleyway of silent sentinels – tall trees bereft of their fall garments, leaving them standing naked against a cold, strong wind – I saw it. On a long, grey guardrail, it stood out like a colorful neon sign. The fascinating object was a Christmas wreath – a circle of green garlands topped by a red bow.

What was it doing there? What was its message? Questions flooded my mind:

- Was it another roadside memorial, so common these days, paying tribute to the victim of an auto accident?
- Was it there as a prayer for peace on earth, as the heavenly host sang on that first Christmas, meant for modern-day wayfarers beset by worries about a challenged economy, wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and homeland security?
- Was it a plea for goodwill among men, which was another message of the angels long ago, in a time when that quality seems to be in short supply?
- Or could it have been a reminder to speeding motorists to slow down and to ponder on the reason for the season – the birth of Jesus Christ, God's great demonstration of love and grace?

I got the message. I eased my foot off the accelerator. And I thanked Him for His Gift.

--Beecher Hunter