

# Tomcat

by Maggie Sokolik

Lord Jesus, will you look at that picture. There's little bitty Johnny in his great big old cowboy boots, sitting on Santa's lap. That must have been at Penney's. I had a job there selling shoes for a short while. Anyway, Little Johnny loved clomping up and down the stairs in those boots, and kicked our tomcat a time or two with them, even though Big John hollered at him not to. Big John could holler, that's for sure.

Johnny's got on that blue denim vest I made him, back when I had a Singer of my own. And, if you look real close, you see there's a bullet hole next to his left ear. A stray one went past his head and straight through Santa's heart. I tried fixing it with scotch tape and red construction paper from an old shoebox of Johnny's school supplies, but you can still see the ragged edges where the .22 went through. I suppose it might look a lot better if I put in some new glass.

But of course they won't let me replace the glass. Who knows what I might do? I'm on suicide watch, you know, which is ridiculous with a capital R. I'd only be suicidal if I'd have missed a second time.

