

S
e
e
t
e
ie

Poet, 92, celebrates the season

By Billy Cox
FLORIDA TODAY

IS
S
a
ir
y
7.
?

Harriet McLuckie of Melbourne doesn't write as much as she used to, because degeneration of the retina makes it a struggle at the typewriter. But on the eve of her 92nd Christmas, Trinity Tower's most famous poet still churns them out, to the tune of five pieces a month.

r
s
e
y
y
n
f

"Though I've gone through some pretty horrible things, I've always loved life. As you can see," she says, pulling out an anthology of her poems called "Candle In the Wind" and turning to a photo of herself taken in 1918, "I was a very vivacious girl.

S
1
e
S
1

"I get so bored with people who talk all the time about their problems. That's not for me. My poetry keeps me alive."

S
r
r
l

McLuckie's poems have reached readers from "Stars and Stripes" to "The Saturday Evening Post." The wall in her bedroom/office is punctuated with poetry awards, local and international. The creative juices just don't stop flowing.

"And, you know, every time I'm coming out of anesthesia — even when I was having my babies — in my head I was rattling off one poem after another," McLuckie recalls. "I feel them inside me."

She felt compelled by the



HARRIET MCLUCKIE: Melbourne poet has been honored three times by the Accademia Internazionale Leonardo Da Vinci in Rome — in 1973, 1976 and 1981 — for her contributions to art and culture. The Accademia, an international cultural organization, publishes books in the arts and sciences. One of her poems was read in a televised ceremony last January marking the nationwide celebration of Martin Luther King's birthday.

holiday season to share what she feels is her best Christmas poem, "Advent," with the paper:

"In Bethlehem, two thousand years ago/There was no shopping mall, no quaint boutique /Where fragil, miniature lovely things were sold/To genteel elite who could afford such beauty/As thistle-down shoes, fine crocheted shawl, mayhaps/Lace christening robe, or pasteled baby cap.

"Mary had access to none of these, but Oh!/She had so much more: the babe neath her young

heart,/Illumined sky, and star, and angel song,/Those wise men from afar, with precious gifts./God's Son, wrapped in those poor swaddling cloths, /Heard celestial voices caroling "Peace on Earth."/And you and I, dear Christian friend, must share/The cherubim of Christmas in our prayer."

Says McLuckie, "I'm optimistic about our chances in the future to this extent: I am convinced God rules the world, and I believe in God. And," she adds, wagging her finger, "I am very much opposed to worldly humanism."

DID YOU KNOW?