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# Christmas in Poetry

## CHRISTMAS IN POETRY

### CAROLS AND POEMS

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FIRST SERIES

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## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

[Pg 1]

God bless the master of this house,  
The mistress also,  
And all the little children,  
That round the table go.

And all your kin and folk,  
That dwell both far and near;  
I wish you a merry Christmas,  
And a happy New Year.

*Old English Carol*

---

## FROM FAR AWAY

[Pg 2]

From far away we come to you.  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
To tell of great tidings, strange and true.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.  
From far away we come to you,  
To tell of great tidings, strange and true.

For as we wandered far and wide,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
What hap do you deem there should us betide?  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

Under a bent when the night was deep,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
There lay three shepherds, tending their sheep.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

“O ye shepherds, what have ye seen,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
To stay your sorrow and heal your teen?”  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

“In an ox stall this night we saw,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
A Babe and a maid without a flaw.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

“There was an old man there beside;  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
His hair was white, and his hood was wide.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

“And as we gazed this thing upon,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
Those twain knelt down to the little one.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

“And a marvellous song we straight did hear,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door.  
That slew our sorrow and healed our care.”  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.

News of a fair and marvellous thing,  
The snow in the street, and the wind on the door,  
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, we sing.  
Minstrels and maids, stand forth on the floor.  
From far away we come to you,  
To tell of great tidings, strange and true.

*William Morris*

---

## **LORDINGS, LISTEN TO OUR LAY**

[Pg 4]

Lordings, listen to our lay—  
We have come from far away  
To seek Christmas;  
In this mansion we are told  
He His yearly feast doth hold:  
’Tis to-day!  
May joy come from God above,  
To all those who Christmas love.

*Old Carol*

---

## **’T WAS JOLLY, JOLLY WAT**

[Pg 5]

'Twas jolly, jolly Wat, my foy,  
He was a goodman's shepherd boy,  
And he sat by his sheep  
On the hill-side so steep,  
And piped this song,  
Ut hoy! Ut hoy!  
O merry, merry sing for joy,  
Ut hoy!

A'down from Heav'n that is so high  
There came an angel companye,  
And on Bethlehem hill  
Thro' the night-tide so still  
Their song out-rang:  
On high, On high,  
O glory be to God on high,  
On high!

Now must Wat go where Christ is born,  
Yea, go and come again to-morn.  
And my pipe it shall play,  
All my heart it doth say  
To Shepherd King:  
Ut hoy! Ut hoy!  
O merry, merry sing for joy,  
Ut hoy!

O peace on earth, good will to men,  
The angels sang again, again,  
For to you was He born  
On this Christmas morn,  
So sing we all:  
On high, On high,  
O glory be to God on high,  
On high!

Jesu my King, it's naught for Thee,  
A bob of cherries, one, two, three,  
But my tar-box and ball,  
And my pipe, I give all  
To Thee, my King.  
Ut hoy! Ut hoy!  
O merry, merry sing for joy,  
Ut hoy!

Farewell, herd-boy, saith Mary mild.  
Thanks, jolly Wat, smiled Mary's child,  
For fit gift for a king  
Is your heart in the thing.  
So pipe you well,  
For joy, for joy!  
O merry, merry sing for joy,  
Ut hoy!

*C. W. Stubbs*

[Pg 6]

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## **BOOTS AND SADDLES**

[Pg 7]

Our shepherds all  
As pilgrims have departed,  
Our shepherds all  
Have gone to Bethlehem.  
They gladly go  
For they are all stout-hearted,  
They gladly go—  
Ah, could I go with them!

I am too lame to walk,  
Boots and saddles, boots and saddles,  
I am too lame to walk,  
Boots and saddles, mount and ride.

A shepherd stout  
Who sang a catamiauxo,  
A shepherd stout  
Was walking lazily.  
He heard me speak  
And saw me hobbling after,  
He turned and said  
He would give help to me.

“Here is my horse  
That flies along the high-road,  
Here is my horse,  
The best in all the towns.  
I bought him from  
A soldier in the army,  
I got my horse  
By payment of five crowns.”

[Pg 8]

When I have seen  
The Child, the King of Heaven,  
When I have seen  
The Child who is God’s son,  
When to the mother,  
I my praise have given,  
When I have finished,  
All I should have done:

No more shall I be lame,  
Boots and saddles, boots and saddles,  
No more shall I be lame,  
Boots and saddles, mount and ride.

*Provençal Noël of Nicholas Saboly*

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## CAROL

[Pg 9]

Villagers all, this frosty tide,  
Let your doors swing open wide,  
Though wind may follow, and snow beside,  
Yet draw us in by your fire to bide;  
Joy shall be yours in the morning!

Here we stand in the cold and the sleet,  
Blowing fingers and stamping feet,  
Come from far away you to greet—  
You by the fire and we in the street—  
Bidding you joy in the morning!

For ere one half of the night was gone,  
Sudden a star has led us on,  
Raining bliss and benison—  
Bliss to-morrow and more anon,  
Joy for every morning!

Goodman Joseph toiled through the snow—  
Saw the star o'er a stable low;  
Mary she might not further go—  
Welcome thatch, and litter below!  
Joy was hers in the morning!

And then they heard the angels tell  
"Who were the first to cry NOWELL?  
Animals all, as it befell,  
In the stable where they did dwell!  
Joy shall be theirs in the morning!"

*Kenneth Grahame*

*From "The Wind in the Willows";  
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## THE NEIGHBORS OF BETHLEHEM

[Pg 10]

Good neighbor, tell me why that sound,  
That noisy tumult rising round,  
Awaking all in slumber lying?  
Truly disturbing are these cries,  
All through the quiet village flying,  
O come ye shepherds, wake, arise!

What, neighbor, then do ye not know  
God hath appeared on earth below  
And now is born in manger lowly!  
In humble guise he came this night,  
Simple and meek, this infant holy,  
Yet how divine in beauty bright.

Good neighbor, I must make amend,  
Forthwith to bring Him will I send,  
And Joseph with the gentle Mother.  
When to my home these three I bring,  
Then will it far outshine all other,  
A palace fair for greatest king!

*Thirteenth Century French Carol*

*Included by permission of The H. W. Gray Company.*

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## CAROL OF THE RUSSIAN CHILDREN

[Pg 11]

Snow-bound mountains, snow-bound valleys,  
Snow-bound plateaus, clad in white,  
Fur-robed moujiks, fur-robed nobles,  
Fur-robed children, see the light.  
Shaggy pony, shaggy oxen,  
Gentle shepherds wait the light;  
Little Jesus, little Mother,  
Good St. Joseph, come this night.

*Russian Folk Song*

*Included by permission of The H. W. Gray Company.*

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## **SIGNS OF CHRISTMAS**

[Pg 12]

When on the barn's thatch'd roof is seen  
The moss in tufts of liveliest green;  
When Roger to the wood pile goes,  
And, as he turns, his fingers blows;  
When all around is cold and drear,  
Be sure that Christmas-tide is near.

When up the garden walk in vain  
We seek for Flora's lovely train;  
When the sweet hawthorn bower is bare,  
And bleak and cheerless is the air;  
When all seems desolate around,  
Christmas advances o'er the ground.

When Tom at eve comes home from plough,  
And brings the mistletoe's green bough,  
With milk-white berries spotted o'er,  
And shakes it the sly maids before,  
Then hangs the trophy up on high,  
Be sure that Christmas-tide is nigh.

When Hal, the woodman, in his clogs,  
Bears home the huge unwieldy logs,  
That, hissing on the smouldering fire,  
Flame out at last a quiv'ring spire;  
When in his hat the holly stands,  
Old Christmas musters up his bands.

When cluster'd round the fire at night,  
Old William talks of ghost and sprite,  
And, as a distant out-house gate  
Slams by the wind, they fearful wait,  
While some each shadowy nook explore,  
Then Christmas pauses at the door.

[Pg 13]

When Dick comes shiv'ring from the yard,  
And says the pond is frozen hard,  
While from his hat, all white with snow,  
The moisture, trickling, drops below,  
While carols sound, the night to cheer,  
Then Christmas and his train are here.

*Edwin Lees*

---

## **A CHRISTMAS HYMN**

[Pg 14]



Once in royal David's city  
Stood a lowly cattle-shed  
Where a mother laid her Baby,  
In a manger for His bed.  
Mary was that mother mild,  
Jesus Christ her little Child.

He came down to earth from heaven,  
Who is God and Lord of all,  
And His shelter was a stable,  
And His cradle was a stall.  
With the poor, and mean, and lowly  
Lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And through all His wondrous childhood,  
He would honour and obey.  
Love and watch the lowly mother  
In whose gentle arms He lay.  
Christian children, all must be  
Mild, obedient, good as He.

For He is our childhood's Pattern,  
Day by day like us He grew;  
He was little, weak, and helpless,  
Tears and smiles like us He knew:  
And He feeleth for our sadness,  
And He shareth in our gladness.

And our eyes at last shall see Him,  
Through His own redeeming love,  
For that Child so dear and gentle  
Is our Lord in Heaven above;  
And He leads His children on  
To the place where He is gone.

Not in that poor lowly stable,  
With the oxen standing by,  
We shall see Him; but in Heaven,  
Set at God's right hand on high;  
When like stars His children crowned,  
All in white shall wait around.

*C. Frances Alexander*

[Pg 15]

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## CHRISTMAS

[Pg 16]

While shepherds watch'd their flocks by night,  
All seated on the ground,  
The angel of the Lord came down,  
And glory shone around.

"Fear not," said he (for mighty dread  
Had seized their troubled mind);  
"Glad tidings of great joy I bring  
To you and all mankind.

"To you, in David's town, this day  
Is born of David's line  
The Saviour who is Christ the Lord;  
And this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly Babe you there shall find  
To human view display'd,  
All meanly wrapt in swathing bands,  
And in a manger laid."

Thus spake the Seraph; and forthwith  
Appear'd a shining throng  
Of angels, praising God, and thus  
Address'd their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,  
And to the earth be peace;  
Good-will henceforth from heaven to men  
Begin, and never cease!"

*Nahum Tate*

---

## THE STORY OF THE SHEPHERD

[Pg 17]

It was the very noon of night: the stars above the fold,  
More sure than clock or chiming bell, the hour of midnight told:  
When from the heav'ns there came a voice, and forms were seen to shine  
Still bright'ning as the music rose with light and love divine.  
With love divine, the song began; there shone a light serene:  
O, who hath heard what I have heard, or seen what I have seen?

O ne'er could nightingale at dawn salute the rising day  
With sweetness like that bird of song in his immortal lay:  
O ne'er were woodnotes heard at eve by banks with poplar shade  
So thrilling as the concert sweet by heav'nly harpings made;  
For love divine was in each chord, and filled each pause between:  
O, who hath heard what I have heard, or seen what I have seen?

I roused me at the piercing strain, but shrunk as from the ray  
Of summer lightning: all around so bright the splendour lay.  
For oh, it mastered sight and sense, to see that glory shine,  
To hear that minstrel in the clouds, who sang of Love Divine,  
To see that form with bird-like wings, of more than mortal mien:  
O, who hath heard what I have heard, or seen what I have seen?

When once the rapturous trance was past, that so my sense could bind,  
I left my sheep to Him whose care breathed in the western wind:  
I left them, for instead of snow, I trod on blade and flower,  
And ice dissolved in starry rays at morning's gracious hour,  
Revealing where on earth the steps of Love Divine had been:  
O, who hath heard what I have heard, or seen what I have seen?

[Pg 18]

I hasted to a low-roofed shed, for so the Angel bade;  
And bowed before the lowly rack where Love Divine was laid:  
A new-born Babe, like tender Lamb, with Lion's strength there smiled;  
For Lion's strength immortal might, was in that new-born Child;  
That Love Divine in child-like form had God for ever been:  
O, who hath heard what I have heard, or seen what I have seen?

*Translated from the Spanish*

---

When Christ was born in Bethlehem,  
'Twas night but seemed the noon of day:  
The star whose light  
Was pure and bright,  
Shone with unwav'ring ray;  
But one bright star,  
One glorious star  
Guided the Eastern Magi from afar.

Then peace was spread throughout the land;  
The lion fed beside the lamb;  
And with the kid,  
To pastures led,  
The spotted leopard fed  
In peace, in peace  
The calf and bear,  
The wolf and lamb reposed together there.

As shepherds watched their flocks by night,  
An angel brighter than the sun  
Appeared in air,  
And gently said,  
"Fear not, be not afraid,  
Behold, behold,  
Beneath your eyes,  
Earth has become a smiling Paradise."

*Translated from the Neapolitan*

---

## **THE GOLDEN CAROL** ***(Of Melchior, Balthazar, and Caspar, the Three Kings)***

We saw the light shine out a-far,  
On Christmas in the morning.  
And straight we knew Christ's Star it was,  
Bright beaming in the morning.  
Then did we fall on bended knee,  
On Christmas in the morning,  
And prais'd the Lord, who'd let us see  
His glory at its dawning.

Oh! every thought be of His Name,  
On Christmas in the morning,  
Who bore for us both grief and shame,  
Afflictions sharpest scorning.  
And may we die (when death shall come),  
On Christmas in the morning,  
And see in heav'n, our glorious home,  
The Star of Christmas morning.

*Old Carol*

---

## **CHRISTMAS EVE**

In holly hedges starving birds  
Silently mourn the setting year;  
Upright like silver-plated swords  
The flags stand in the frozen mere.

The mistletoe we still adore  
Upon the twisted hawthorn grows:  
In antique gardens hellebore  
Puts forth its blushing Christmas rose.

Shrivell'd and purple, cheek by jowl,  
The hips and haws hang drearily;  
Roll'd in a ball the sulky owl  
Creeps far into his hollow tree.

In abbeys and cathedrals dim  
The birth of Christ is acted o'er;  
The kings of Cologne worship him,  
Balthazar, Jasper, Melchior.

The shepherds in the field at night  
Beheld an angel glory-clad.  
And shrank away with sore afright.  
"Be not afraid," the angel bade.

"I bring good news to king and clown,  
To you here crouching on the sward;  
For there is born in David's town  
A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

"Behold the babe is swathed, and laid  
Within a manger." Straight there stood  
Beside the angel all arrayed  
A heavenly multitude.

"Glory to God," they sang; "and peace,  
Good pleasure among men."  
The wondrous message of release!  
Glory to God again!

Hush! Hark! the waits, far up the street!  
A distant, ghostly charm unfolds,  
Of magic music wild and sweet,  
Anemones and clarigolds.

*John Davidson*

*From "Fleet Street Eclogues." Included by permission of Dodd, Mead and Company.*

[Pg 22]

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## **CAROL OF THE BIRDS**

[Pg 23]

Whence comes this rush of wings afar.  
Following straight the Noël star?  
Birds from the woods in wondrous flight,  
Bethlehem seek this Holy Night.

"Tell us, ye birds, why come ye here.  
Into this stable, poor and drear?"  
"Hast'ning we seek the new-born King,  
And all our sweetest music bring."

Hark how the green-finch bears his part,  
Philomel, too, with tender heart,  
Chants from her leafy dark retreat  
Re, mi, fa, sol, in accents sweet.

Angels and shepherds, birds of the sky,  
Come where the Son of God doth lie;  
Christ on the earth with man doth dwell.  
Join in the shout, Noël, Noël.

## **THE SHEPHERDS HAD AN ANGEL**

[Pg 24]

The shepherds had an angel,  
The wise men had a star;  
But what have I, a little child,  
To guide me home from far,  
Where glad stars sing together,  
And singing angels are?

Lord Jesus is my Guardian,  
So I can nothing lack;  
The lambs lie in His bosom  
Along life's dangerous track:  
The wilful lambs that go astray  
He, bleeding, brings them back.

Those shepherds thro' the lonely night  
Sat watching by their sheep,  
Until they saw the heav'nly host  
Who neither tire nor sleep,  
All singing Glory, glory,  
In festival they keep.

Christ watches me, His little lamb,  
Cares for me day and night,  
That I may be His own in heav'n;  
So angels clad in white  
Shall sing their Glory, glory,  
For my sake in the height.

Lord, bring me nearer day by day,  
Till I my voice unite,  
And sing my Glory, glory,  
With angels clad in white.  
All Glory, glory, giv'n to Thee,  
Thro' all the heav'nly height.

*Christina G. Rossetti*

---

## **SONG OF A SHEPHERD BOY AT BETHLEHEM**

[Pg 25]

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary,  
Rest Thee now.  
Though these hands be rough from shearing  
And the plow,  
Yet they shall not ever fail Thee,  
When the waiting nations hail Thee,  
Bringing palms unto their King.  
Now—I sing.

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary,  
Hope divine.  
If Thou wilt but smile upon me,  
I will twine  
Blossoms for Thy garlanding.  
Thou’rt so little to be King,  
God’s Desire!  
Not a brier  
Shall be left to grieve Thy brow;  
Rest Thee now.

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary,  
Some fair day  
Wilt Thou, as Thou wert a brother,  
Come away  
Over hills and over hollow?  
All the lambs will up and follow.  
Follow but for love of Thee.  
Lov’st Thou me?

Sleep, Thou little Child of Mary,  
Rest Thee now.  
I that watch am come from sheep-stead  
And from plough.  
Thou wilt have disdain of me  
When Thou’rt lifted, royally,  
Very high for all to see:  
Smilest Thou?

*Josephine Preston Peabody*

*Included by permission of the author.*



Hushed are the pigeons cooing low,  
On dusty rafters of the loft;  
And mild-eyed oxen, breathing soft,  
Sleep on the fragrant hay below.

Dim shadows in the corner hide;  
The glimmering lantern's rays are shed  
Where one young lamb just lifts his head,  
Then huddles 'gainst his mother's side.

Strange silence tingles in the air;  
Through the half-open door a bar  
Of light from one low hanging star  
Touches a baby's radiant hair—

No sound—the mother, kneeling, lays  
Her cheek against the little face.  
Oh human love! Oh heavenly grace!  
'Tis yet in silence that she prays!

Ages of silence end to-night;  
Then to the long-expectant earth  
Glad angels come to greet His birth  
In burst of music, love, and light!

*Margaret Deland*

*Included by permission of the author.*

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## **BRING A TORCH, JEANETTE, ISABELLA!**

[Pg 29]

Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella!  
Bring a torch, to the cradle run!  
It is Jesus, good folk of the village;  
Christ is born, and Mary's calling;  
Ah! Ah! beautiful is the mother;  
Ah! Ah! beautiful is her son.

It is wrong when the Child is sleeping,  
It is wrong to talk so loud;  
Silence, all, as you gather around,  
Lest your noise should waken Jesus:  
Hush! Hush! see how fast He slumbers;  
Hush! Hush! see how fast He sleeps.

Who goes there a-knocking so loudly?  
Who goes there a-knocking like that?  
Ope your doors, I have here on a plate  
Some very good cakes which I am bringing:  
Toc! Toc! quickly your doors now open;  
Toc! Toc! come let us make good cheer.

Softly to the little stable,  
Softly for a moment come;  
Look and see how charming is Jesus,  
How He is white, His cheeks are rosy.  
Hush! Hush! see how the Child is sleeping;  
Hush! Hush! see how He smiles in dreams.

*Provençal Noël of Nicholas Saboly*

---

## **CHRISTMAS FOLKSONG**

[Pg 30]



The little Jesus came to town;  
The wind blew up, the wind blew down;  
Out in the street the wind was bold.  
Now who would house Him from the cold?

Then opened wide a stable door  
Fain were the rushes on the floor;  
The Ox put forth a horned head:  
"Come, little Lord, here make Thy bed."

Uprose the Sheep were folded near:  
"Thou Lamb of God, come, enter here."  
He entered there to rush and reed,  
Who was the Lamb of God indeed.

The little Jesus came to town;  
With ox and sheep He laid Him down.  
Peace to the byre, peace to the fold,  
For that they housed Him from the cold.

*Lisette Woodworth Reese*

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---

## AS JOSEPH WAS A-WALKING

[Pg 31]

As Joseph was a-walking  
He heard an angel sing:—  
"This night there shall be born  
Our heavenly King.

"He neither shall be born  
In housen, nor in hall,  
Nor in the place of Paradise,  
But in an ox's stall.

"He neither shall be clothéd  
In purple nor in pall;  
But in the fair, white linen,  
That usen babies all.

"He neither shall be rockéd  
In silver nor in gold,  
But in a wooden cradle  
That rocks on the mould.

"He neither shall be christened  
In white wine nor in red,  
But with fair spring water  
With which we were christenéd."

Mary took her baby,  
She dressed Him so sweet,  
She laid Him in a manger,  
All there for to sleep.

As she stood over Him  
She heard angels sing,  
"O bless our dear Saviour,  
Our heavenly King."

*From the Cherry Tree Carol*

---

## CRADLE HYMN

[Pg 32]

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay—  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.  
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

*Martin Luther*

---

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL

[Pg 33]

In the bleak mid-winter  
Frosty wind made moan,  
Earth stood hard as iron,  
Water like a stone;  
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,  
Snow on snow,  
In the bleak mid-winter  
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold Him  
Nor earth sustain;  
Heaven and earth shall flee away  
When He comes to reign.  
In the bleak mid-winter  
A stable-place sufficed  
The Lord God Almighty  
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Thronged the air;  
But only His Mother  
In her maiden bliss  
Worshipped her Beloved  
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a Wise Man,  
I would do my part,—  
Yet what I can I give Him,  
Give my heart.

*Christina G. Rossetti*

---

## CAROL

[Pg 34]

When the herds were watching  
In the midnight chill,  
Came a spotless lambkin  
From the heavenly hill.

Snow was on the mountains,  
And the wind was cold,  
When from God's own garden  
Dropped a rose of gold.

When 'twas bitter winter,  
Houseless and forlorn  
In a star-lit stable  
Christ the Babe was born.

Welcome, heavenly lambkin;  
Welcome, golden rose;  
Alleluia, Baby,  
In the swaddling clothes!

*William Canton*

---

## **A CHILD'S PRESENT TO HIS CHILD-SAVIOUR**

[Pg 35]

Go, pretty child, and bear this flower  
Unto thy little Saviour;  
And tell Him, by that bud now blown,  
He is the Rose of Sharon known.  
When thou hast said so, stick it there  
Upon His bib, or stomacher;  
And tell Him, for good handsel<sup>[A]</sup> too,  
That thou hast brought a whistle new,  
Made of a clean straight oaten reed,  
To charm his cries at time of need.  
Tell Him, for coral thou hast none,  
But if thou hadst, He should have one;  
But poor thou art, and known to be  
Even as moneyless as He.  
Lastly, if thou canst win a kiss  
From those mellifluous lips of His,  
Then never take a second on,  
To spoil the first impression.

*Robert Herrick*

[A] handsel: a gift for good luck.

---

## **A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

[Pg 36]

There's a song in the air!  
There's a star in the sky!  
There's a mother's deep prayer  
And a baby's low cry!  
    And the star rains its fire while the Beautiful sing,  
    For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.

There's a tumult of joy  
O'er the wonderful birth,  
For the virgin's sweet boy  
Is the Lord of the earth,  
    Ay! the star rains its fire and the Beautiful sing,  
    For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king.

In the light of that star  
Lie the ages impearled;  
And that song from afar  
Has swept over the world.  
    Every hearth is aflame, and the Beautiful sing  
    In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King.

We rejoice in the light,  
And we echo the song  
That comes down through the night  
From the heavenly throng.  
    Ay! we shout to the lovely evangel they bring,  
    And we greet in His cradle our Saviour and King.

*Josiah Gilbert Holland*

---

## THE SHEPHERD WHO STAYED

[Pg 37]

*There are in Paradise  
Souls neither great nor wise,  
Yet souls who wear no less  
The crown of faithfulness.*

My master bade me watch the flock by night;  
My duty was to stay. I do not know  
What thing my comrades saw in that great light,  
I did not heed the words that bade them go,  
I know not were they maddened or afraid;  
    I only know I stayed.

The hillside seemed on fire; I felt the sweep  
Of wings above my head; I ran to see  
If any danger threatened these my sheep.  
What though I found them folded quietly,  
What though my brother wept and plucked my sleeve,  
    They were not mine to leave.

Thieves in the wood and wolves upon the hill,  
My duty was to stay. Strange though it be,  
I had no thought to hold my mates, no will  
To bid them wait and keep the watch with me.  
I had not heard that summons they obeyed;  
    I only know I stayed.

Perchance they will return upon the dawn  
With word of Bethlehem and why they went.  
I only know that watching here alone,  
I know a strange content.  
I have not failed that trust upon me laid;  
    I ask no more—I stayed.

*Theodosia Garrison*

Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the Feast of Stephen,  
When the snow lay round about,  
Deep, and crisp, and even.

Brightly shone the moon that night  
Though the frost was cruel,  
When a poor man came in sight,  
Gath'ring winter fuel.

"Hither, page, and stand by me,  
If thou know'st it, telling.  
Yonder peasant, who is he?  
Where and what his dwelling?"

"Sire, he lives a good league hence,  
Underneath the mountain;  
Right against the forest fence,  
By Saint Agnes' fountain."

"Bring me flesh, and bring me wine,  
Bring me pine-logs hither;  
Thou and I shall see him dine,  
When we bear them thither."

Page and monarch, forth they went,  
Forth they went together;  
Through the rude wind's wild lament  
And the bitter weather.

"Sire, the night is darker now,  
And the wind blows stronger;  
Fails my heart, I know not how,  
I can go no longer."

[Pg 39]

"Mark my footsteps, good my page;  
Tread thou in them boldly:  
Thou shalt find the winter rage  
Freeze thy blood less coldly."

In his master's steps he trod,  
Where the snow lay dinted;  
Heat was in the very sod  
Where the saint has printed.

Therefore, Christian men, be sure,  
Wealth or rank possessing,  
Ye who now will bless the poor,  
Shall yourselves find blessing.

*Translated from the Latin by J. M. Neale*

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**WE THREE KINGS**

[Pg 40]

We Three Kings of Orient are,  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain,  
Moor and mountain,  
Following yonder star.

*Chorus*

O Star of wonder, Star of night,  
Star with Royal Beauty bright,  
Westward leading,  
Still proceeding,  
Guide us to Thy perfect Light.

Gaspard: Born a king on Bethlehem plain,  
Gold I bring to crown Him again;  
King forever,  
Ceasing never  
Over us all to reign.

Chorus: O Star of wonder....

Melchior: Frankincense to offer have I,  
Incense owns a deity nigh;  
Prayer and praising  
All men raising,  
Worship Him God on high.

Chorus: O Star of wonder....

Balthazar: Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume  
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;  
Sorrowing, sighing,  
Bleeding, dying,  
Sealed in a stone-cold tomb.

Chorus: O Star of wonder....

Glorious now behold Him arise,  
King and God, and Sacrifice;  
Heav'n sings Allelujah:  
Allelujah,  
The earth replies.

[Pg 41]

*J. H. Hopkins, Jr.*

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## **GOD REST YE, MERRY GENTLEMEN**

[Pg 42]

God rest ye, merry gentlemen; let nothing you dismay,  
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.  
The dawn rose red o'er Bethlehem, the stars shone through the gray,  
When Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.

God rest ye, little children; let nothing you affright,  
For Jesus Christ, your Saviour, was born this happy night;  
Along the hills of Galilee the white flocks sleeping lay,  
When Christ, the child of Nazareth, was born on Christmas-day.

God rest ye, all good Christians; upon this blessed morn  
The Lord of all good Christians was of a woman born:  
Now all your sorrows He doth heal, your sins He takes away;  
For Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was born on Christmas-day.

*Dinah Maria Mulock*

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## **THE WASSAIL SONG**

[Pg 43]

Here we come a-wassailing  
Among the leaves so green,  
Here we come a-wandering  
So fair to be seen.

Love and joy come to you  
And to your wassail too,  
And God bless you, and send you  
A happy New Year.

We are not daily beggars  
That beg from door to door,  
But we are neighbours' children  
That you have seen before.

Good Master and good Mistress,  
As you sit by the fire,  
Pray think of us poor children  
Who are wandering in the mire.

Bring us out a table  
And spread it with a cloth;  
Bring us out a mouldy cheese  
And some of your Christmas loaf.

God bless the master of this house,  
Likewise the mistress too;  
And all the little children  
That round the table go.

*Old Devonshire Carol*

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## WASSAILER'S SONG

[Pg 44]

Wassail! Wassail! all over the town,  
Our bread it is white, our ale it is brown;  
Our bowl is made of a maplin tree;  
We be good fellows all;—I drink to thee.

Here's to our horse, and to his right ear,  
God send master a happy new year;  
A happy new year as ever he did see,—  
With my wassail bowl I drink to thee.

Here's to our mare, and to her right eye,  
God send our mistress a good Christmas pie;  
A good Christmas pie as e'er I did see,—  
With my wassailing bowl I drink to thee.

Here's to our cow, and to her long tail,  
God send our master us never may fail  
Of a cup of good beer: I pray you draw near,  
And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.

Be here any maids? I suppose here be some;  
Sure they will not let young men stand on the cold stone!  
Sing hey, O, maids! come trole back the pin,  
And the fairest maid in the house let us all in.

Come, butler, come, bring us a bowl of the best;  
I hope your souls in heaven will rest;  
But if you do bring us a bowl of the small,  
Then, down fall butler, and bowl and all.

*Robert Southwell*

---

[Pg 45]

# CAROL IN PRAISE OF THE HOLLY AND IVY (*Holly and Ivy Made a Great Party*)

Holly and Ivy made a great party,  
Who should have the mastery  
In lands where they go.

Then spake Holly, "I am fierce and jolly,  
I will have the mastery  
In lands where we go."

Then spake Ivy, "I am loud and proud,  
And I will have the mastery  
In lands where we go."

Then spake Holly, and bent him down on his knee,  
"I pray thee, gentle Ivy,  
Essay me no villany  
In the lands where we go."

*Fifteenth Century Carol*

---

## CEREMONIES FOR CHRISTMAS

[Pg 46]

Come, bring with a noise,  
My merry, merry boys,  
The Christmas log to the firing,  
While my good dame, she  
Bids ye all be free,  
And drink to your heart's desiring.

With the last year's brand  
Light the new block, and  
For good success in his spending,  
On your psalteries play,  
That sweet luck may  
Come while the log is a-tending.

Drink now the strong beer,  
Cut the white loaf here,  
The while the meat is a-shredding;  
For the rare mince-pie  
And the plums stand by  
To fill the paste that's a-kneading.

*Robert Herrick*

---

## CHRISTMAS EVE—ANOTHER CEREMONY

[Pg 47]

Come, guard this night the Christmas-pie,  
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,  
With his flesh-hooks, don't come nigh  
To catch it.

From him, who alone sits there,  
Having his eyes still in his ear,  
And a deal of nightly fear  
To watch it.

---

## ANOTHER TO THE MAIDS



Wash your hands, or else the fire  
Will not tend to your desire;  
Unwashed hands, ye maidens, know,  
Dead the fire, though ye blow.

*Robert Herrick*

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## OUR JOYFUL FEAST

[Pg 48]

So, now is come our joyful feast,  
Let every soul be jolly!  
Each room with ivy leaves is drest,  
And every post with holly.  
Though some churls at our mirth repine,  
Round your brows let garlands twine,  
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,  
And let us all be merry!

Now all our neighbours' chimneys smoke,  
And Christmas logs are burning;  
Their ovens with baked meats do choke,  
And all their spits are turning.  
Without the door let sorrow lie,  
And if for cold it hap to die,  
We'll bury it in Christmas pie,  
And evermore be merry!

*George Wither*

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