



Christmas Poems

FOR YOUR HOMESCHOOL



THE HOMESCHOOL
COMPASS

Christmas Carol

BY EDWIN WAUGH

(JANUARY 29, 1817 - APRIL 30, 1890)

Long time ago, in Palestine,
Upon a wintry morn.
All in a lowly cattle shed,
The Prince of Peace was born.

The clouds fled from the gloomy sky;
The winds in silence lay;
And the stars shone bright, with strange delight,
To welcome in that day.

His parents they were simple folk,
And simple lives they led;
And in the ways of righteousness
This little Child was bred.

In gentle thought, and gentle deed,
His early days went by;
And the light His youthful steps did lead
Came down from heaven on high.

He was the friend of all the poor
That wander here below;
It was His only joy on earth
To ease them of their woe.

In vain He trod His holy path,
By sorrow sorely tried;
It was for all mankind He lived,
And for mankind He died.

Like Him, let us be just and pure,
Like Him, be true always;
That we may find the peace of mind
That never fades away.



In the Bleak Midwinter

BY CHRISTINA ROSETTI

(DECEMBER 5, 1830 - DECEMBER 29, 1894))

In the bleak midwinter, 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 midwinter, 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 midwinter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,
Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;
But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the 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.



The Oxen

BY THOMAS HARDY

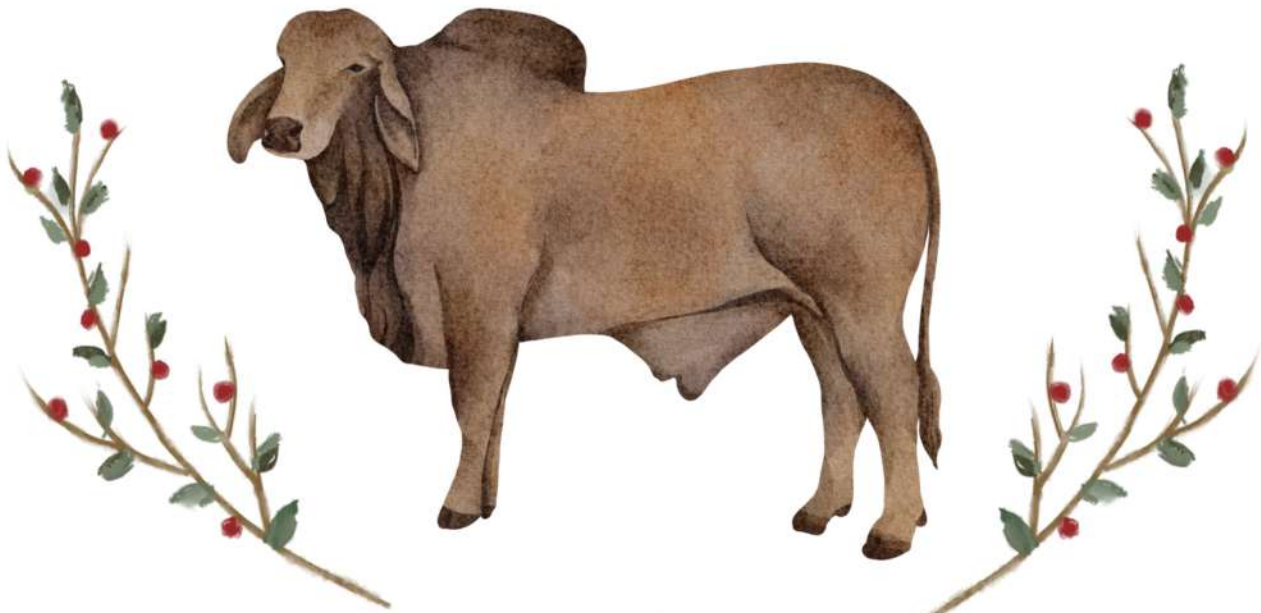
(JUNE 2, 1840 - JANUARY 11, 1928)

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock.
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen,
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.



Christmas Eve in France

BY JESSIE REDMON FAUSET

(APRIL 27, 1882 - APRIL 30, 1961)

Oh, little Christ, why do you sigh
As you look down tonight
On breathless France, on bleeding France,
And all her dreadful plight?
What bows your childish head so low?
What turns your cheek so white?

Oh, little Christ, why do you moan,
What is it that you see
In mourning France, in martyred France,
And her great agony?
Does she recall your own dark day,
Your own Gethsemane?

Oh, little Christ, why do you weep,
Why flow your tears so sore
For pleading France, for praying France,
A suppliant at God's door?
"God sweetened not my cup," you say,
"Shall He for France do more?"

Oh, little Christ, what can this mean,
Why must this horror be
For fainting France, for faithful France,
And her sweet chivalry?
"I bled to free all men," you say
"France bleeds to keep men free."

Oh, little, lovely Christ—you smile!
What guerdon is in store
For gallant France, for glorious France,
And all her valiant corps?
"Behold I live, and France, like me,
Shall live for evermore."

Christmas (I)

BY GEORGE HERBERT

(APRIL 3, 1593 - MARCH 1, 1633)

All after pleasures as I rode one day,
My horse and I both tired, body and mind,
With full cry of affections, quite astray,
I took up in the next inn I could find.

There, when I came, whom found I but my dear--
My dearest Lord; expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to Him, ready there
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?

O Thou, whose glorious yet contracted light
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger;
Since my dark soul and brutish is Thy right,
To man, of all beasts, be not Thou a stranger;

Furnish and deck my soul, that Thou mayst have
A better lodging than a rack or grave.



Christmas (II)

BY GEORGE HERBERT

(APRIL 3, 1593 - MARCH 1, 1633)

The shepherds sing; and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for Thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is Thy word, the streams Thy grace,
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Outsing the daylight hours.
Then we will chide the sun for letting night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord; wherefore He should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching till I find a sun
Shall stay, till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly
As frost-nipt suns look sadly.
Then we will sing and shine all our own day,
And one another pay.
His beams shall cheer my heart, and both so twine,
Till e'en his beams sing and my music shine.






The Three Kings

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(FEBRUARY 27, 1807 - MARCH 24, 1882)

Three Kings came riding from far away,
Melchior and Gaspar and Baltasar;
Three Wise Men out of the East were they,
And they travelled by night and they slept by day,
For their guide was a beautiful, wonderful star.


The star was so beautiful, large and clear,
That all the other stars of the sky
Became a white mist in the atmosphere,
And by this they knew that the coming was near
Of the Prince foretold in the prophecy.



Three caskets they bore on their saddle-bows,
Three caskets of gold with golden keys;
Their robes were of crimson silk with rows
Of bells and pomegranates and furbelows,
Their turbans like blossoming almond-trees.

And so the Three Kings rode into the West,
Through the dusk of the night, over hill and dell,
And sometimes they nodded with beard on breast,
And sometimes talked, as they paused to rest,
With the people they met at some wayside well.

“Of the child that is born,” said Baltasar,
“Good people, I pray you, tell us the news;
For we in the East have seen his star,
And have ridden fast, and have ridden far,
To find and worship the King of the Jews.”






The Three Kings

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(FEBRUARY 27, 1807 - MARCH 24, 1882)

And the people answered, "You ask in vain;
We know of no King but Herod the Great!"
They thought the Wise Men were men insane,
As they spurred their horses across the plain,
Like riders in haste, who cannot wait.



And when they came to Jerusalem,
Herod the Great, who had heard this thing,
Sent for the Wise Men and questioned them;
And said, "Go down unto Bethlehem,
And bring me tidings of this new king."



So they rode away; and the star stood still,
The only one in the grey of morn;
Yes, it stopped—it stood still of its own free will,
Right over Bethlehem on the hill,
The city of David, where Christ was born.

And the Three Kings rode through the gate and the guard,
Through the silent street, till their horses turned
And neighed as they entered the great inn-yard;
But the windows were closed, and the doors were barred,
And only a light in the stable burned.

And cradled there in the scented hay,
In the air made sweet by the breath of kine,
The little child in the manger lay,
The child, that would be king one day
Of a kingdom not human, but divine.





The Three Kings

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(FEBRUARY 27, 1807 - MARCH 24, 1882)

His mother Mary of Nazareth
Sat watching beside his place of rest,
Watching the even flow of his breath,
For the joy of life and the terror of death
Were mingled together in her breast.

They laid their offerings at his feet:
The gold was their tribute to a King,
The frankincense, with its odor sweet,
Was for the Priest, the Paraclete,
The myrrh for the body's burying.

And the mother wondered and bowed her head,
And sat as still as a statue of stone,
Her heart was troubled yet comforted,
Remembering what the Angel had said
Of an endless reign and of David's throne.

Then the Kings rode out of the city gate,
With a clatter of hoofs in proud array;
But they went not back to Herod the Great,
For they knew his malice and feared his hate,
And returned to their homes by another way.



An Olde Time Christmas

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

(AUGUST 15, 1771 - SEPTEMBER 21, 1832)

Heap on more wood!--the wind is chill;
But, let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.
Each age has deemed the new-born year
The fittest time for festal cheer:

And well our Christian sires of old
Loved when the year its course had rolled
And brought blithe Christmas back again
With all his hospitable train.
Domestic and religious rite
Gave honor to the holy night:
On Christmas eve the bells were rung;
On Christmas eve the mass was sung;
That only night, in all the year,
Saw the stoled priest the chalice rear.
The damsel donned her kirtle sheen;
The hall was dressed with holly green;
Forth to the wood did merry-men go,
To gather in the mistletoe.

All hailed, with uncontrolled delight,
And general voice, the happy night
That to the cottage, as the crown,
Brought tidings of salvation down.

The fire, with well-dried logs supplied,
Went roaring up the chimney wide;
The huge hall-table's oaken face,
Scrubbed till it shone, the day to grace,
Bore then upon its massive board
No mark to part the squire and lord.

An Olde Time Christmas

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT

(AUGUST 15, 1771 - SEPTEMBER 21, 1832)

The wassail round, in good brown bowls,
Garnished with ribbons, blithely trowls,
There the huge sirloin reeked; hard by
Plum-porridge stood, and Christmas pie;
Nor failed old Scotland to produce,
At such high tide, her savory goose.
Then came the merry maskers in,
And carols roared with blithesome din;
If unmelodious was the song,
It was a hearty note, and strong.

England was merry England, when
Old Christmas brought his sports again.
'Twas Christmas broached the mightiest ale;
'Twas Christmas told the merriest tale;
A Christmas gambol oft could cheer
The poor man's heart through half the year.



A Visit from Saint Nicholas

BY CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

(JULY 15, 1779 - JULY 10, 1863)

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap,

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer,



A Visit from Saint Nicholas

BY CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

(JULY 15, 1779 - JULY 10, 1863)

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name;

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Dunder and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky;
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St. Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.



A Visit from Saint Nicholas

BY CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

(JULY 15, 1779 - JULY 10, 1863)

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot;
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow
And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow;

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly,
That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;



A Visit from Saint Nicholas

BY CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE

(JULY 15, 1779 - JULY 10, 1863)

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a thistle,
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of sight,
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night."



Christmas Morn

BY ANNA DE BRÉMONT

(C. 1849 - OCTOBER 1922)

There's a holy light like a beacon bright,
Afar over land and sea.
Soft its lambent ray o'er the broad earth plays
With a rosy dancing glee,
And the topmost peak of the mountains bleak
Blush fair in the glowing morn.
Over wood and tarn sweeps the glorious dawn
To herald the Child-Christ born.

White the sea-waves fling like an angel's wing
The foam as their blue crests rise,
While each gallant ship, with a skim and a dip,
In the wind's lap speeding flies;
And the sailor's song is borne along
The breeze of the golden morn,
For joyous he sings as the mast he swings
To herald the Child-Christ born.

In the land of snow where the keen winds blow
And the ice-king holds his sway,
A glittering sheen on the plains is seen,
As tribute to him they pay.
While merrily sing with a peal and a ring
The bells on the crystal morn,
As gayly they chime with silvery rhyme
To herald the Child-Christ born.

Christmas Morn

BY ANNA DE BRÉMONT

(C. 1849 - OCTOBER 1922)

To his sea-girt home, where'er he may roam,
Speed the thoughts of Briton's son.
In city or plain, on the crested main,
The heart of the absent one
Again in his dreams with ecstasy seems
To swell in the happy morn,
As he hears the voice of his loved rejoice,
To herald the Child-Christ born.

In dreams borne along, he joins the glad throng,
The riot and wassail gay;
And the boar's head bold as in Nowel old
Brave crowns the feast of the day;
The holly's red blush 'mid the ivy's crush;
The mistletoe greets the morn
With kisses to claim in love's holy name,
To herald the Child-Christ born.

Then Charity sweet with most gracious feet
Walks forth o'er the smiling land,
To widow's relief, to fatherless grief,
She bringeth a helping hand.
For peace and good-will the whole world doth fill
With the dawn of the Nowel morn.
Let every heart sing a glad welcoming,
To herald the Child-Christ born.



The Savior Must Have Been a Docile Gentleman

BY EMILY DICKINSON

(DECEMBER 10, 1830 - MAY 15, 1886)

The Savior must have been
A docile Gentleman—
To come so far so cold a Day
For little Fellowmen—

The Road to Bethlehem
Since He and I were Boys
Was leveled, but for that 'twould be
A rugged Billion Miles—



Nativity

BY JOHN DONNE

(1572 - MARCH 31, 1631)

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,
There He hath made Himself to His intent
Weak enough, now into the world to come;
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.





Christmas Carol

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

(JUNE 27, 1872 - FEBRUARY 9, 1906)

Ring out, ye bells!
All Nature swells
With gladness at the wondrous story,—
The world was lorn,
But Christ is born
To change our sadness into glory.

Sing, earthlings, sing!
To-night a King
Hath come from heaven's high throne to bless us.
The outstretched hand
O'er all the land
Is raised in pity to caress us.

Come at his call;
Be joyful all;
Away with mourning and with sadness!
The heavenly choir
With holy fire
Their voices raise in songs of gladness.

The darkness breaks
And Dawn awakes,
Her cheeks suffused with youthful blushes.
The rocks and stones
In holy tones
Are singing sweeter than the thrushes.





Christmas Carol

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

(JUNE 27, 1872 - FEBRUARY 9, 1906)

Then why should we
In silence be,
When Nature lends her voice to praises;
When heaven and earth
Proclaim the truth
Of Him for whom that lone star blazes?

No, be not still,
But with a will
Strike all your harps and set them ringing;
On hill and heath
Let every breath
Throw all its power into singing!





A Christmas Carol

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(OCTOBER 21, 1772 - JULY 25, 1834)

I.

The Shepherds went their hasty way,
And found the lowly stable-shed
Where the Virgin-Mother lay:
And now they checked their eager tread,
For to the Babe, that at her bosom clung,
A Mother's song the Virgin-Mother sung.

II.

They told her how a glorious light,
Streaming from a heavenly throng,
Around them shone, suspending night!
While sweeter than a Mother's song,
Blest Angels heralded the Saviour's birth,
Glory to God on high! and Peace on Earth.

III.

She listened to the tale divine,
And closer still the Babe she pressed;
And while she cried, the Babe is mine!
The milk rushed faster to her breast:
Joy rose within her, like a summer's morn;
Peace, Peace on Earth! the Prince of Peace is born.



A Christmas Carol

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(OCTOBER 21, 1772 - JULY 25, 1834)

IV.

Thou Mother of the Prince of Peace,
Poor, simple, and of low estate!
That Strife should vanish, Battle cease,
O why should this thy soul elate?
Sweet Music's loudest note, the Poet's story,—
Did'st thou ne'er love to hear of Fame and Glory?

V.

And is not War a youthful King,
A stately Hero clad in Mail?
Beneath his footsteps laurels spring;
Him Earth's majestic monarchs hail
Their Friend, their Playmate! and his bold bright eye
Compels the maiden's love-confessing sigh.

VI.

"Tell this in some more courtly scene,
"To maids and youths in robes of state!
"I am a woman poor and mean,
"And therefore is my Soul elate.
"War is a ruffian, all with guilt defiled,
"That from the aged Father tears his Child!

A Christmas Carol

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

(OCTOBER 21, 1772 - JULY 25, 1834)

VII.

“A murderous fiend, by fiends adored,
“He kills the Sire and starves the Son;
“The Husband kills, and from her board
“Steals all his Widow’s toil had won;
“Plunders God’s world of beauty; rends away
“All safety from the Night, all comfort from the Day.

VIII.

“Then wisely is my soul elate,
“That Strife should vanish, Battle cease:
“I’m poor and of a low estate,
“The Mother of the Prince of Peace.
“Joy rises in me, like a summer’s morn:
“Peace, Peace on Earth, the Prince of Peace is born.”





A Christmas Carol

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

(FEBRUARY 22, 1819 - AUGUST 12, 1891)

"What means this glory round our feet,"
The Magi mused, "more bright than morn?"
And voices chanted clear and sweet,
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

"What means that star," the Shepherds said,
"That brightens through the rocky glen?"
And angels, answering overhead,
Sang, "Peace on earth, good-will to men!"

'Tis eighteen hundred years and more
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;
We wait for Him, like them of yore;
Alas, He seems so slow to come!

But it was said, in words of gold,
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,
That little children might be bold
In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine
A light like that the wise men saw,
If we our loving wills incline
To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand
The simple faith of shepherds then,
And, clasping kindly hand in hand,
Sing, "Peace on earth, good-will to men!"

But they who do their souls no wrong,
But keep at eve the faith of morn,
Shall daily hear the angel-song,
"To-day the Prince of Peace is born!"

Good News from Heaven the Angels Sing

BY MARTIN LUTHER

(NOVEMBER 10, 1483 - FEBRUARY 18, 1546)

Good news from heaven the angels bring,
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:
To us this day a child is given,
To crown us with the joy of heaven.

This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford:
He will Himself our Saviour be,
From sin and sorrow set us free.

To us that blessedness He brings,
Which from the Father's bounty springs:
That in the heavenly realm we may
With Him enjoy eternal day.

All hail, Thou noble Guest, this morn,
Whose love did not the sinner scorn!
In my distress Thou cam'st to me:
What thanks shall I return to Thee?

Were earth a thousand times as fair,
Beset with gold and jewels rare,
She yet were far too poor to be
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

Good News from Heaven the Angels Sing

BY MARTIN LUTHER

(NOVEMBER 10, 1483 - FEBRUARY 18, 1546)

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child!
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

Praise God upon His heavenly throne,
Who gave to us His only Son:
For this His hosts, on joyful wing,
A blest New Year of mercy sing.



Wartime Christmas

BY JOYCE KILMER

(DECEMBER 6, 1886 - JULY 30, 1918)

Led by a star, a golden star,
The youngest star, an olden star,
Here the kings and the shepherds are,
Akneeling on the ground.
What did they come to the inn to see?
God in the Highest, and this is He,
A baby asleep on His mother's knee
And with her kisses crowned.

Now is the earth a dreary place,
A troubled place, a weary place.
Peace has hidden her lovely face
And turned in tears away.
Yet the sun, through the war-cloud, sees
Babies asleep on their mother's knees.
While there are love and home—and these—
There shall be Christmas Day.



For Christmas Day: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

BY CHARLES WESLEY

(DECEMBER 18, 1707 - MARCH 29, 1788)

Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King,
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinner reconcil'd.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies,
With the angelic host proclaim,
Christ is born in Bethlehem.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Christ by highest Heaven ador'd,
Christ the everlasting Lord!
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail, the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel!
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

For Christmas Day: Hark the Herald Angels Sing

BY CHARLES WESLEY

(DECEMBER 18, 1707 - MARCH 29, 1788)

Hail the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all he brings,
Risen with healing in his wings.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.

Mild he lays his glory by,
Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth.
Hark! the herald Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King.



The Joy of Living

BY JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

(DECEMBER 17, 1807 - SEPTEMBER 7, 1892)

Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others
Is the joy that comes back to you.

And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to make you glad.



A Christmas Hymn

BY RICHARD WATSON GILDER

(FEBRUARY 8, 1844 - NOVEMBER 19, 1909)

Tell me what is this innumerable throng
Singing in the heavens a loud angelic song?
These are they who come with swift and shining feet
From round about the throne of God the Lord of Light to
greet.

Oh, who are these that hasten beneath the starry sky,
As if with joyful tidings that through the world shall fly?
The faithful shepherds these, who greatly were afear'd
When, as they watched their flocks by night, the heavenly
host appeared.

Who are these that follow across the hills of night
A star that westward hurries along the fields of light?
Three wise men from the east who myrrh and treasure bring
To lay them at the feet of him their Lord and Christ and
King.

What babe new-born is this that in a manger cries?
Near on her lowly bed his happy mother lies.
Oh, see the air is shaken with white and heavenly wings--
This is the Lord of all the earth, this is the King of kings.



The Magi

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

(JUNE 13, 1865 - JANUARY 28, 1939)

Now as at all times I can see in the mind's eye,
In their stiff, painted clothes, the pale unsatisfied ones
Appear and disappear in the blue depths of the sky
With all their ancient faces like rain-beaten stones,
And all their helms of silver hovering side by side,
And all their eyes still fixed, hoping to find once more,
Being by Calvary's turbulence unsatisfied,
The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor.





Christmas Bells

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(FEBRUARY 27, 1807 - MARCH 24, 1882)

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The Carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
'There is no peace on earth,' I said;
'For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!'



Christmas Carol

BY SARA TEASDALE

(AUGUST 8, 1884 - JANUARY 29, 1933)

The kings they came from out the south,
All dressed in ermine fine,
They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,
And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,
Their coats were brown and old,
They brought Him little new-born lambs--
They had not any gold.

The wise-men came from out the east,
And they were wrapped in white;
The star that led them all the way
Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,
And they were clad with wings;
And lo, they brought a joyful song
The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,
The wise-men entered in,
The shepherds followed after them
To hear the song begin.

And Mary held the little child
And sat upon the ground;
She looked up, she looked down,
She looked all around.

The angels sang thro' all the night
Until the rising sun,
But little Jesus fell asleep
Before the song was done.



This is Christmas Morning

BY EDWIN WAUGH

(JANUARY 29, 1817 - APRIL 30, 1890)

Come all you weary wanderers,
Beneath the wintry sky;
This day forget your worldly cares,
And lay your sorrows by;
Awake, and sing;
The church bells ring;
For this is Christmas morning!

With grateful hearts salute the morn,
And swell the streams of song,
That laden with great joy are borne,
The willing air along;
The tidings thrill
With right good will;
For this is Christmas morning!

We'll twine the fresh green holly wreath,
And make the yule-log glow;
And gather gaily underneath
The winking mistletoe;
All blithe and bright
By the glad fire-light:
For this is Christmas morning!

Come, sing the carols old and true,
That mind us of good cheer,
And, like a heavenly fall of dew,
Revive the drooping year;
And fill us up
A wassail-cup;
For this is Christmas morning!

This is Christmas Morning

BY EDWIN WAUGH

(JANUARY 29, 1817 - APRIL 30, 1890)

To all poor souls we'll strew the feast,
With kindly heart and free;
One Father owns us, and, at least,
To-day we'll brothers be;
Away with pride,
This holy tide;
For it is Christmas morning!

So now, God bless us, one and all
With hearts and hearthstones warm;
And may He prosper great and small,
And keep us out of harm;
And teach us still,
His sweet good-will,
This merry Christmas morning!



His Mother's Joy

BY JOHN WHITE CHADWICK

(OCTOBER 19, 1840 - DECEMBER 11, 1904)

Little, I ween, did Mary guess,
As on her arm her baby lay,
What tides of joy would swell and beat,
Through ages long, on Christmas day.

And what if she had known it all,--
The awful splendor of his fame?
The inmost heart of all her joy
Would still, methinks, have been the same:

The joy that every mother knows
Who feels her babe against her breast:
The voyage long is overpast,
And now is calm and peace and rest.

"Art thou the Christ?" The wonder came
As easy as her infant's breath:
But answer none. Enough for her,
That love had triumphed over death.



Christmas in the Heart

BY PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

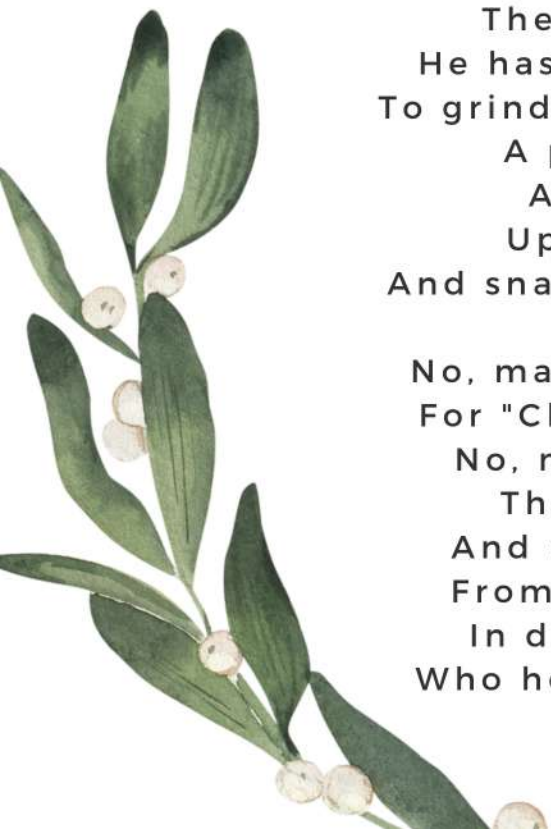
(JUNE 27, 1872 - FEBRUARY 9, 1906)

The snow lies deep upon the ground,
And winter's brightness all around
Decks bravely out the forest sere,
With jewels of the brave old year.
The coasting crowd upon the hill
With some new spirit seems to thrill;
And all the temple bells a-chime.
Ring out the glee of Christmas time.

In happy homes the brown oak-bough
Vies with the red-gemmed holly now;
And here and there, like pearls, there show
The berries of the mistletoe.
A sprig upon the chandelier
Says to the maidens, "Come not here!"
Even the pauper of the earth
Some kindly gift has cheered to mirth!

Within his chamber, dim and cold,
There sits a grasping miser old.
He has no thought save one of gain,--
To grind and gather and grasp and drain.
A peal of bells, a merry shout
Assail his ear: he gazes out
Upon a world to him all gray,
And snarls, "Why, this is Christmas Day!"

No, man of ice,--for shame, for shame!
For "Christmas Day" is no mere name.
No, not for you this ringing cheer,
This festal season of the year.
And not for you the chime of bells
From holy temple rolls and swells.
In day and deed he has no part--
Who holds not Christmas in his heart!



Christmas at Sea

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(NOVEMBER 13, 1850 - DECEMBER 3, 1894)

The sheets were frozen hard, and they cut the naked hand;
The decks were like a slide, where a seaman scarce could stand;
The wind was a nor'wester, blowing squally off the sea;
And cliffs and spouting breakers were the only things a-lee.

They heard the surf a-roaring before the break of day;
But 'twas only with the peep of light we saw how ill we lay.
We tumbled every hand on deck instanter, with a shout,
And we gave her the maintops'l, and stood by to go about.

All day we tacked and tacked between the South Head and the North;
All day we hauled the frozen sheets, and got no further forth;
All day as cold as charity, in bitter pain and dread,
For very life and nature we tacked from head to head.

We gave the South a wider berth, for there the tide-race roared;
But every tack we made we brought the North Head close aboard:
So's we saw the cliffs and houses, and the breakers running high,
And the coastguard in his garden, with his glass against his eye.

The frost was on the village roofs as white as ocean foam;
The good red fires were burning bright in every 'long-shore home;
The windows sparkled clear, and the chimneys volleyed out;
And I vow we sniffed the victuals as the vessel went about.

The bells upon the church were rung with a mighty jovial cheer;
For it's just that I should tell you how (of all days in the year)
This day of our adversity was blessed Christmas morn,
And the house above the coastguard's was the house where I was
born.



Christmas at Sea

BY ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

(NOVEMBER 13, 1850 - DECEMBER 3, 1894)

O well I saw the pleasant room, the pleasant faces there,
My mother's silver spectacles, my father's silver hair;
And well I saw the firelight, like a flight of homely elves,
Go dancing round the china-plates that stand upon the shelves.

And well I knew the talk they had, the talk that was of me,
Of the shadow on the household and the son that went to sea;
And O the wicked fool I seemed, in every kind of way,
To be here and hauling frozen ropes on blessed Christmas Day.

They lit the high sea-light, and the dark began to fall.
"All hands to loose topgallant sails," I heard the captain call.
"By the Lord, she'll never stand it," our first mate Jackson, cried.
..."It's the one way or the other, Mr. Jackson," he replied.

She staggered to her bearings, but the sails were new and good,
And the ship smelt up to windward just as though she understood.
As the winter's day was ending, in the entry of the night,
We cleared the weary headland, and passed below the light.

And they heaved a mighty breath, every soul on board but me,
As they saw her nose again pointing handsome out to sea;
But all that I could think of, in the darkness and the cold,
Was just that I was leaving home and my folks were growing old.





Good King Wenceslas

BY JOHN MASON NEALE

(JANUARY 24, 1818 - AUGUST 6, 1866)

Good King Wenceslas look'd 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 will 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.

Good King Wenceslas

BY JOHN MASON NEALE

(JANUARY 24, 1818 - AUGUST 6, 1866)

“Sire, the night is darker now,
And the wind blows stronger;
Fails my heart, I know now how,
I can go no longer.”

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

In his master’s steps he trod,
Where the snow lay dinted;
Heat was in the very sod
Which the Saint had printed.
Therefore, Christian men, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor,
Shall yourselves find blessing.





At Christmas

BY EDGAR ALBERT GUEST

(AUGUST 20, 1881 - AUGUST 5, 1959)

A man is at his finest towards the finish of the year;
He is almost what he should be when the Christmas season is here;
Then he's thinking more of others than he's thought the months before,
And the laughter of his children is a joy worth toiling for.
He is less a selfish creature than at any other time;
When the Christmas spirit rules him he comes close to the sublime.

When it's Christmas, man is bigger and is better in his part;
He is keener for the service that is prompted by the heart.
All the petty thoughts and narrow seem to vanish for awhile
And the true reward he's seeking is the glory of a smile.
Then for others he is toiling, and somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas he is almost what God wanted him to be.

If I had to paint a picture of a man, I think I'd wait
Till he'd fought his selfish battles and had put aside his hate.
I'd not catch him at his labors when his thoughts are all of self,
On the long days and the dreary when he's striving for himself.
I'd not take him when he's sneering, when he's scornful or depressed,
But I'd look for him at Christmas when he's shining at his best.

Man is ever in a struggle and he's oft misunderstood;
There are days the worst that's in him is the master of the good,
But at Christmas, kindness rules him and he puts himself aside,
And his petty hates are vanquished and his heart is opened wide.
Oh, I don't know how to say it, but somehow it seems to me
That at Christmas man is almost what God sent him here to be.



Christmas Eve

BY CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

(DECEMBER 5, 1830 - DECEMBER 29, 1894)

Christmas hath a darkness
Brighter than the blazing noon,
Christmas hath a chillness
Warmer than the heat of June,
Christmas hath a beauty
Lovelier than the world can show:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.

Earth, strike up your music,
Birds that sing and bells that ring;
Heaven hath answering music
For all Angels soon to sing:
Earth, put on your whitest
Bridal robe of spotless snow:
For Christmas bringeth Jesus,
Brought for us so low.



A Christmas Carol

BY G.K. CHESTERTON

(MAY 29, 1874 - JUNE 14, 1936)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a star.
(O stern and cunning are the kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart,
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown.
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down.

