

[1] Once in royal David's city, arr. Andrew Senn (b. 1978)

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, the scorned, the lowly,
lived on earth our Saviour holy.

And, through all his wondrous childhood,
he would honour and obey,
love and watch the lowly maiden
in whose gentle arms he lay;
Christian children all should be
kind, 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.

Words, Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895).

[2] Jesus Christ the apple tree, Adrian Self (b. 1952)

The tree of life my soul hath seen,
Laden with fruit and always green;
The trees of nature fruitless be
Compared with Christ the apple tree.

His beauty doth all things excel;
By faith I know, but ne'er can tell
The glory which I now can see
In Jesus Christ the apple tree.

For happiness I long have sought,
And pleasure dearly I have bought;
I missed of all, but now I see
'Tis found in Christ the apple tree.

I'm weary with my former toil,
Here I will sit and rest awhile;
Under the shadow I shall be,
Of Jesus Christ the apple tree.

This fruit doth make my soul to thrive,
It keeps my dying faith alive,
Which makes my soul in haste to be
With Jesus Christ the apple tree.

Words, Anon. collection of Joshua Smith, New Hampshire, 1784.

[3] In darkness held, Richard Shepherd (b. 1949)

In darkness held the world awaits
salvation, healing, light;
The promised grace, at last to come,
brings freedom, wholeness, sight.

In darkness held our souls await
true freedom from our fear;
the longed for peace, our heart's desire,
contentment, solace, cheer.

In darkness held the child awaits
his world transforming birth;
held by Mary, fed by love,
our God will come to earth.

O stars sing out! O heavens rejoice!
The voice of God is heard:
In Bethlehem's stable,
God speaks the eternal word.

Words, The Revd Dr Jonathan Draper (b. 1952).

[4] We Three Kings, arr. Magnus Williamson (b. 1967)

We three kings of Orient are
Bearing gifts we traverse afar
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star.
*O Star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to rein.
O Star of wonder...

Frankincense to offer have I,
Incense owns a Deity nigh,
Prayer and praising, all men raising,
Worship him, God most high.
O Star of wonder...

Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume
Breathes of life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb
O Star of wonder...

Glorious now behold him arise,
King and God and sacrifice!
Heav'n sings Alleluia, Alleluia
Alleluia the earth replies.
O Star of wonder...

Words, The Revd John Henry Hopkins (1820-1891).

[5] The Shepherd's Carol, Richard Rodney Bennett (b. 1936)

We stood on the hills, Lady,
our day's work done,
Watching the frosted meadows
that winter had won.

The evening was calm, Lady,
the air so calm,
Silence more lovely than music
folded the hill.

There was a star, Lady,
shone in the night,
Larger than Venus it was
and bright, so bright.

O, a voice from the sky, Lady,
it seemed to us then
Of God being born
in the world of men.

And so we have come, Lady
our day's work done,
Our love, our hopes,
ourselves we give to your son.

Words, Anon. English carol.

[6] O little town of Bethlehem, arr. Philip Ledger (b. 1937) & Ron Gates (b. 1927)

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King,
and peace to men on earth;
For Christ is born of Mary;
and, gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,
the wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heaven.
No ear may hear his coming;
but in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him,
still the dear Christ enters in.

Where children pure and happy
Pray to the Blessed child.
Where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the Mother mild.
Where charity stands watching
And faith holds wide the door.
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.

O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell:
O come to us,
abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel.

Words, Phillips Brooks (1835-1893).

[7] The Robin stays, Lee Dunleavy (b. 1979)

Now is that sad time of year
When no flower or leaf is here;
When in misty Southern ways
Oriole and jay have flown,
And of all sweet birds, alone
The robin stays.

So give thanks at Christmas-tide:
Hopes of spring-time yet abide!
See, in spite of darksome days,
Wind and rain and bitter chill,
Snow, and sleet-hung branches, still
The robin stays!

Words, Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836 – 1907).

[8] In dulci jubilo, arr. Michael Bedford (b. 1952)

In dulci *jubilo*
Let us our homage shew;
our heart's joy reclineth
In præsepio
and like a bright star shineth,
Matris in gremio.
Alpha es et Ω !

[With sweet rejoicing

[Lies in a manger

[In his Mother's lap
[The Alpha and Omega

O Jesu parvule !
I yearn for thee alway!
Hear me, I beseech thee
O Puer optime !
My prayer let it reach thee,
O princeps gloriæ !
Trahe me post te !

[O little Jesus

[O best of sons

[O prince of glory
[Draw me after thee

O Patris caritas,
O Nati lenitas !
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina;
But thou for us hast gained
Cœlorum gaudia,
O that we were there!

[O love of the Father
[O gentleness of the Son

[Through our sins

[The joy of heaven

Ubi sunt gaudia ?
If that they be not there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica,
There the bells are ringing
In Regis curia:
O that we were there!

[Where are the joys?

[New songs

[In the King's court

Words, Anon. 14th century; translated by Robert Lucas de Pearsall, 1837.

[9] My dancing day, Carl Rütli (b. 1949)

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
to call my true love to my dance;

*Sing, O! my love, O! my love, my love, my love,
this have I done for my true love.*

Then was I born of a virgin pure,
of her I took fleshly substance
Thus was I knit to man's nature
to call my true love to my dance. *Sing ...*

In a manger laid, and wrapped I was
so very poor, this was my chance
Betwixt an ox and a silly poor ass
to call my true love to my dance. *Sing ...*

Tomorrow shall be my dancing day;
I would my true love did so chance
To see the legend of my play,
to call my true love to my dance. *Sing ...*

Words, Anon. English carol.

[10] The Lamb, Christopher le Fleming (1908-1995)

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed,
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Does thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and he is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are called by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee.

Words, William Blake (1757-1827).

[12] Carol of Joy, Dan Forrest (b. 1978)

Green leaves all fallen, withered and dry;
Brief sunset fading, dim winter sky.
Lengthening shadows, dark closing in ...
Then, through the stillness, carols begin!

O fallen world, to you is the song –
Death holds you fast and night tarries long.
Jesus is born, your curse to destroy!
Sweet to your ears, a Carol of Joy!

Pale moon ascending, solemn and slow;
Cold barren hillside, shrouded in snow;
Deep, empty valley veiled by the night;
Hear angel music – hopeful and bright!

O fearful world, to you is the song –
Peace with your God, and pardon for wrong!
Tidings for sinners, burdened and bound –
A Carol of Joy! A Saviour is found!

Earth wrapped in sorrow, lift up your eyes!
Thrill to the chorus filling the skies!
Look up sad hearted – witness God's love!
Join in the carol swelling above!

O friendless world, to you is the song!
All Heaven's joy to you may belong!
You who are lonely, laden, forlorn –
O fallen world! O friendless world!
To you, a Saviour is born!

Words, Eileen Berry.

[13] Man be merry, Barry Ferguson (b. 1942)

Man, be merry, I thee rede¹,
but beware what mirthes thou make;
Christ is clothed in thy weed²,
and he is made man for thy sake.

He came from His Father's seat,
into this world to be thy make³;
Man, beware how thou Him treat,
for he is made man for thy sake.

Look thou mercy ever cry,
now and alway, rathe⁴ and late;
He will set thee wonder high,
for he is made man for thy sake.

Man, be merry, I thee rede,
but beware what mirthes thou make;
Christ is clothed in thy weed,
and he is made man for thy sake.

¹ = Advise

² = Clothing

³ = Equal ⁴ = Early

Words, Anon. ca. 1490.

[14] The Holly and the Ivy, Richard Rodney Bennett

The holly and the ivy,
when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
the holly bears the crown.

*O, the rising of the sun, the running of the deer,
the playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in
the choir.*

The holly bears a blossom
as white as lily flower,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
to be our dear Saviour.
O, the rising...

The holly bears a berry
as red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
to do poor sinners good.
O, the rising...

The holly bears a prickle
as sharp as any thorn.
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
on Christmas Day in the morn.
O, the rising...

The holly bears a bark
as bitter as the gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
for to redeem us all.
O, the rising...

The holly and the ivy
when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood,
the holly bears the crown.
O, the rising...

Words, trad. English Carol, collected by Cecil Sharp (1859-1924).

[15] Joy to the world, arr. William Llewellyn (b. 1952)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n, and nature sing.

Joy to the world, the Saviour reigns!
Let all their songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of his righteousness,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders of his love,
And wonders, wonders, of his love.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

Words, Isaac Watts (1674-1748), based on Psalm 98.

[16] O come, all ye faithful,
arr. Guthrie Foote (1897 - 1972), Lee Dunleavy & Roger Palmer (b. 1946)

O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him,
born the King of Angels.

*O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

God of God, Light of Light,
Lo! he abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God,
begotten, not created.
*O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

See how the shepherds,
summoned to his cradle,
Leaving their flocks draw nigh with lowly fear;
We too will thither
bend our joyful footsteps.
*O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation,
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above;
'Glory to God in the highest;'
*O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born on Christmas morning,
Jesu, to thee be glory given;
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing.
*O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord.*

*Words, John F. Wade (ca. 1710-1786);
verses 1-2 translated from
15th century Latin.*

[17] The Word made Flesh, Philip Wilby (b. 1949)

I sing the birth was born tonight,
The Author both of life and light;
the angels so did sound it,
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light, and were afraid,
yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, the eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
and freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no "No,"
both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made Flesh indeed,
and took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him do we win?
Who made Himself the Prince of sin,
to make us heirs of glory?
To see this Babe, all innocence,
A Martyr born in our defence,
can man forget this story?

Words, Ben Jonson (1572-1637).

[18] Hark! the herald-angels sing, arr. David Willcocks (b. 1919)

Hark! the herald angels sing:
‘Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled!’
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!’

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.
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!’

Christ, by highest heaven adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord:
Late in time behold him come,
Offspring of a Virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail the incarnate Deity,
Pleased as man with man to dwell:
Hark! the herald angels sing:
‘Glory to the new-born King!’

Words, Charles Wesley (1707-1788) & George Whitefield (1714-1770).

[19] We wish you a merry Christmas, arr. Lee Dunleavy

We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas and a
happy New Year.

Good tidings we bring to you and your kin.
We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a happy New Year.

For we all like figgy pudding,
we all like figgy pudding,
we all like figgy pudding,
so bring some out here.

Words, Anon. English carol.