



*Christina  
Rassetti*

*Christmas  
Poems  
to  
Color*



### A Christmas Carol

Before the paling of the stars,  
Before the winter morn,  
Before the earliest cockcrow  
Jesus Christ was born:  
Born in a stable,  
Cradled in a manger,  
In the world His Hands had made  
Born a Stranger.

Priest and King lay fast asleep  
In Jerusalem,  
Young and old lay fast asleep  
In crowded Bethlehem:  
Saint and Angel, Ox and Ass,  
Kept a watch together,  
Before the Christmas daybreak  
In the winter weather.

Jesus on His Mother's breast  
In the stable cold,  
Spotless Lamb of God was He,  
Shepherd of the Fold:  
Let us kneel with Mary Maid,  
With Joseph bent and hoary,  
With Saint and Angel, Ox and Ass,  
To hail the King of Glory.



## A Christmas Carol

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.

Enough for Him whom cherubim  
Worship night and day,  
A breastful of milk  
And a mangerful of hay;  
Enough for Him whom angels  
Fall down before,  
The ox and ass and camel  
Which adore.

Angels and archangels  
May have gathered there,  
Cherubim and seraphim  
Throng'd the air,  
But only His mother  
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.



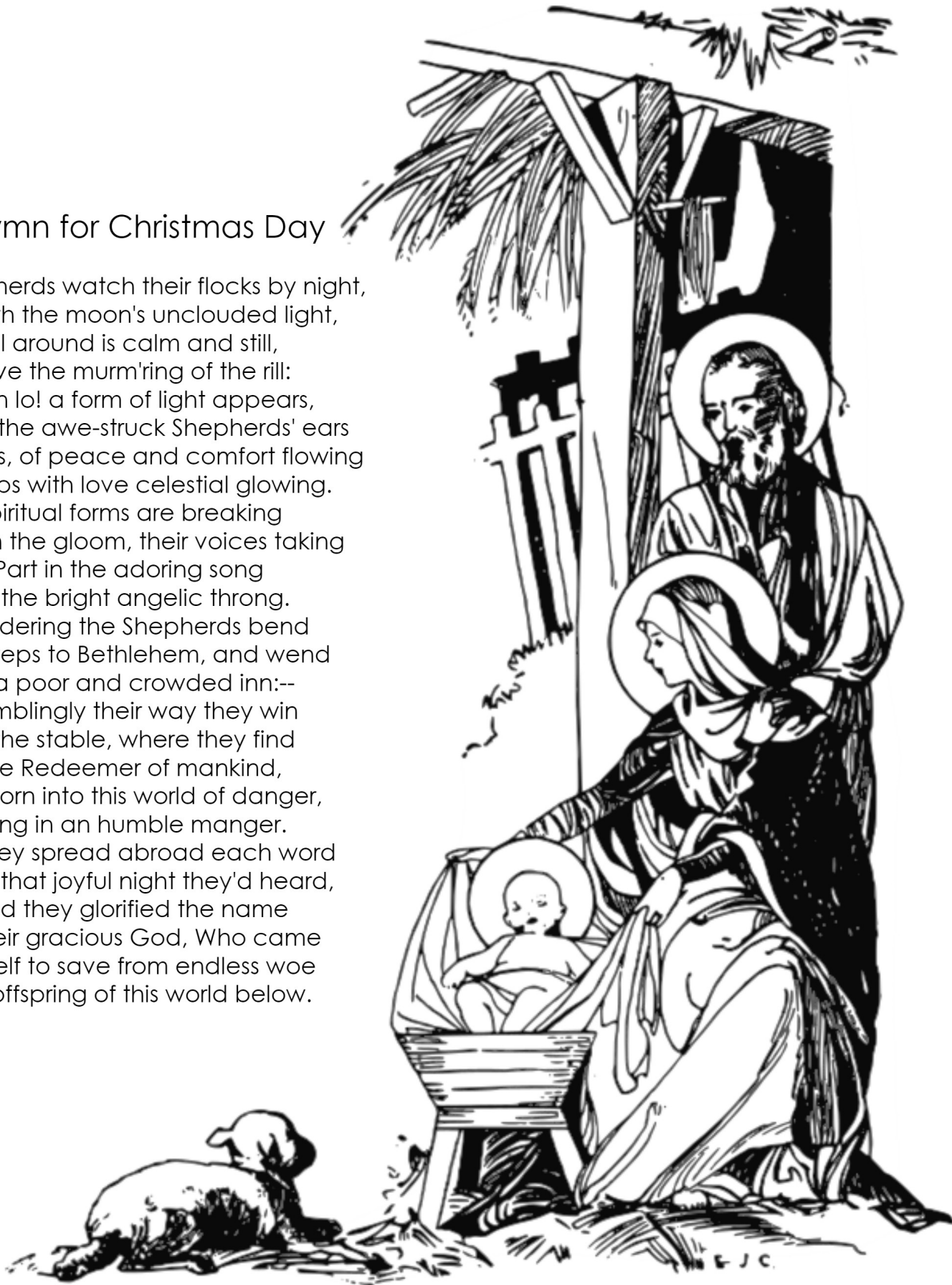
## Christmas Eve

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 Hymn for Christmas Day

The Shepherds watch their flocks by night,  
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,  
All around is calm and still,  
Save the murm'ring of the rill:  
When lo! a form of light appears,  
And on the awe-struck Shepherds' ears  
Are words, of peace and comfort flowing  
From lips with love celestial glowing.  
Spiritual forms are breaking  
Through the gloom, their voices taking  
Part in the adoring song  
Of the bright angelic throng.  
Wondering the Shepherds bend  
Their steps to Bethlehem, and wend  
To a poor and crowded inn:--  
Tremblingly their way they win  
To the stable, where they find  
The Redeemer of mankind,  
Just born into this world of danger,  
Lying in an humble manger.  
And they spread abroad each word  
Which that joyful night they'd heard,  
And they glorified the name  
Of their gracious God, Who came  
Himself to save from endless woe  
The offspring of this world below.

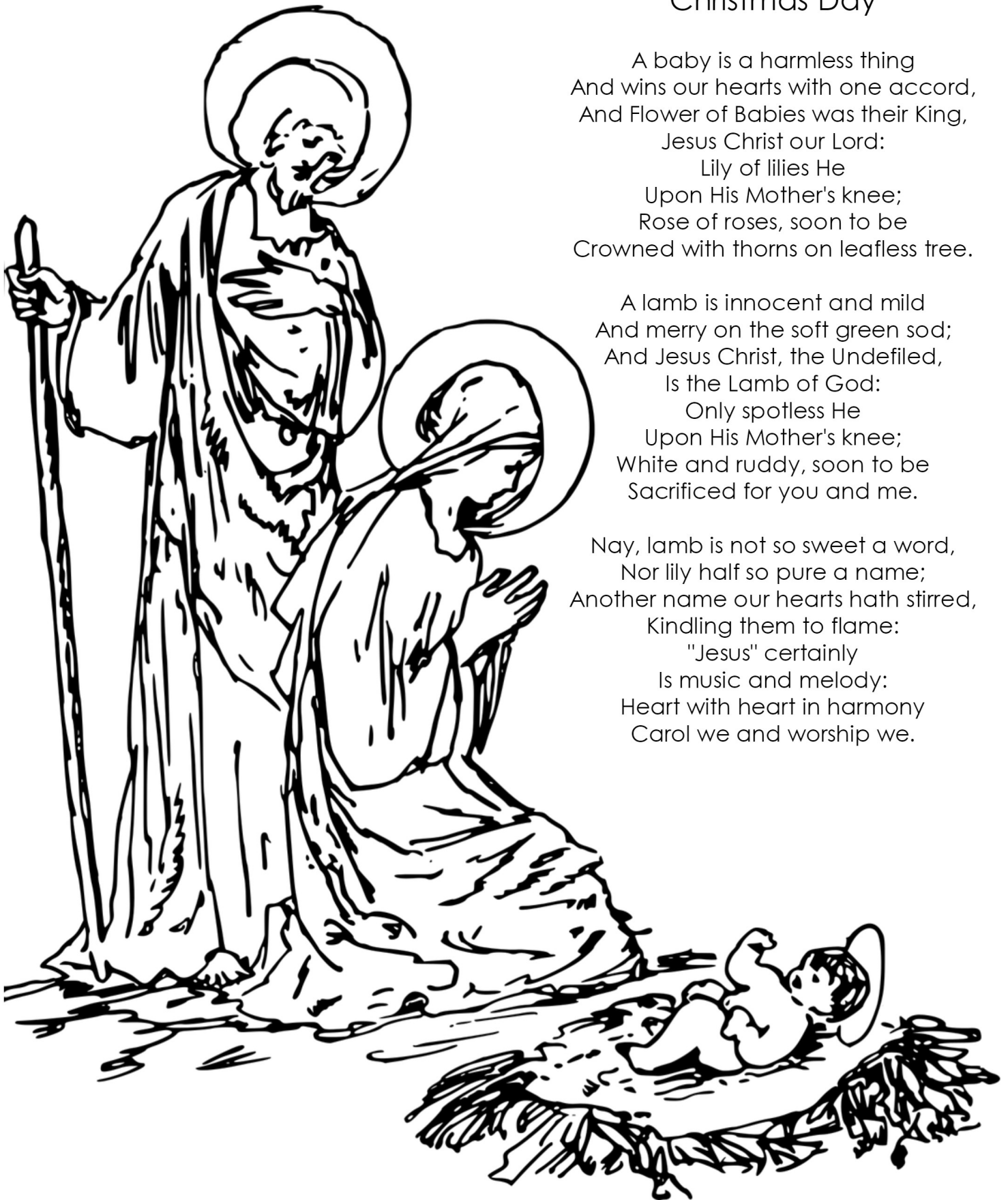


## Christmas Day

A baby is a harmless thing  
And wins our hearts with one accord,  
And Flower of Babies was their King,  
Jesus Christ our Lord:  
Lily of lilies He  
Upon His Mother's knee;  
Rose of roses, soon to be  
Crowned with thorns on leafless tree.

A lamb is innocent and mild  
And merry on the soft green sod;  
And Jesus Christ, the Undefined,  
Is the Lamb of God:  
Only spotless He  
Upon His Mother's knee;  
White and ruddy, soon to be  
Sacrificed for you and me.

Nay, lamb is not so sweet a word,  
Nor lily half so pure a name;  
Another name our hearts hath stirred,  
Kindling them to flame:  
"Jesus" certainly  
Is music and melody:  
Heart with heart in harmony  
Carol we and worship we.







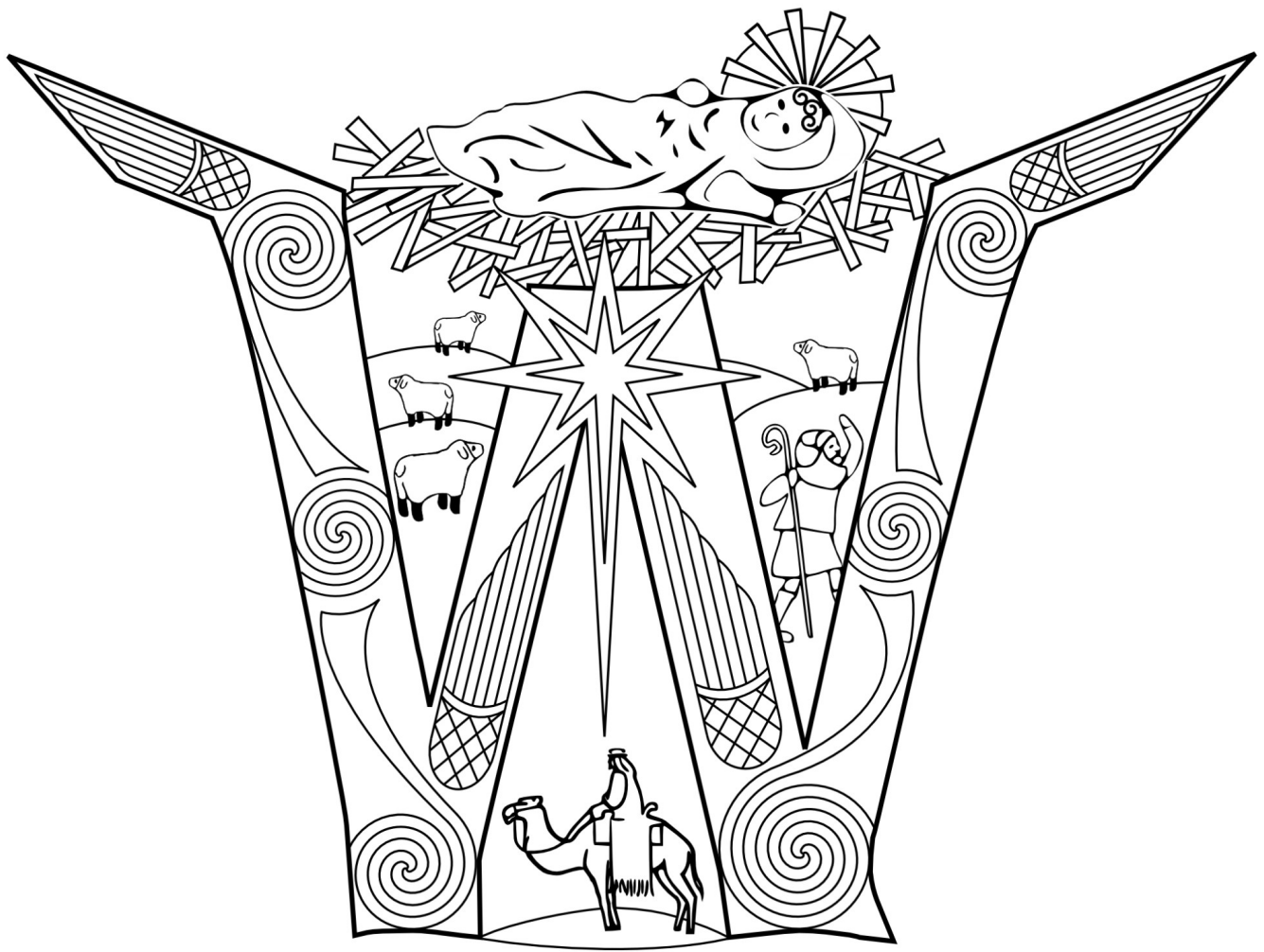
## Epiphany

"Lord Babe, if Thou art He  
 We sought for patiently,  
 Where is Thy court?  
 Hither may prophecy and star resort;  
 Men heed not their report."--  
 "Bow down and worship, righteous man:  
 This Infant of a span  
 Is He man sought for since the world began!"--  
 "Then, Lord, accept my gold, too base a thing  
 For Thee, of all kings King."--

"Lord Babe, despite Thy youth  
 I hold Thee of a truth  
 Both Good and Great:  
 But wherefore dost Thou keep so mean a state,  
 Low-lying desolate?"--  
 "Bow down and worship, righteous seer:  
 The Lord our God is here  
 Approachable, Who bids us all draw near."--  
 "Wherefore to Thee I offer frankincense,  
 Thou Sole Omnipotence."--

"But I have only brought  
 Myrrh; no wise afterthought  
 Instructed me  
 To gather pearls or gems, or choice to see  
 Coral or ivory."--  
 "Not least thine offering proves thee wise:  
 For myrrh means sacrifice,  
 And He that lives, this Same is He that dies."--  
 "Then here is myrrh: alas! yea, woe is me  
 That myrrh befitteth Thee."--

Myrrh, frankincense, and gold:  
 And lo! from wintry fold  
 Good-will doth bring  
 A Lamb, the innocent likeness of this King  
 Whom stars and seraphs sing:  
 And lo! the bird of love, a Dove  
 Flutters and coos above:  
 And Dove and Lamb and Babe agree in love:--  
 Come all mankind, come all creation hither,  
 Come, worship Christ together.



## Christmastide

Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, Love Divine;  
Love was born at Christmas,  
Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,  
Love Incarnate, Love Divine;  
Worship we our Jesus:  
But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,  
Love be yours and love be mine,  
Love to God and all men,  
Love for plea and gift and sign.