

# Contemplative Carols

**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.

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

How silently, how silently,  
the wondrous gift is giv'n!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
the blessings of His heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
but in this world of sin,  
where meek souls will receive  
Him, still  
the dear Christ enters in.

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!

**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 that 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 low-  
ly,  
Lived on earth our Saviour Holy.

**Away in a manger**, no crib for a bed,  
the little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head;  
the stars in the heavens 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 side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
close by me forever, and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
and fit us for heaven, to live with Thee there.

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.

**Silent night, holy night!**  
All is calm, all is bright.  
Round yon Virgin, Mother and Child.  
Holy infant so tender and mild,  
Sleep in heavenly peace,  
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night!  
Shepherds quake at the sight.  
Glories stream from heaven afar  
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia,  
Christ the Saviour is born!  
Christ the Saviour is born

Silent night, holy night!  
Son of God love's pure light.  
Radiant beams from Thy holy face  
With the dawn of redeeming grace,  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth  
Jesus Lord, at Thy birth.

**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.

Angels and archangels  
may have gathered there,  
cherubim and seraphim  
thronged the air,  
but only his mother,  
in her maiden bliss,  
worshiped 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.

**It came upon the midnight clear,**  
that glorious song of old,  
from angels bending near the  
earth  
to touch their harps of gold:  
"Peace on the earth, good will to  
men,  
from heaven's all-gracious King."  
The world in solemn stillness lay,  
to hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they  
come  
with peaceful wings unfurled,  
and still their heavenly music  
floats  
o'er all the weary world;  
above its sad and lowly plains,  
they bend on hovering wing,  
and ever o'er its Babel sounds  
the blessed angels sing.

Yet with the woes of sin and strife  
The world as suffered long:  
Beneath the angel-strain have  
rolled  
Two thousand years of wrong:  
And man, at war with man, hears  
not  
The love song which they bring:  
O hush the noise, ye men of strife  
And hear the angels sing!

For lo! the days are hastening on,  
by prophet seen of old,  
when with the ever-circling years  
shall come the time foretold  
when peace shall over all the  
earth  
its ancient splendors fling,  
and the whole world send back  
the song  
which now the angels sing.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,**  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free  
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell Thy people  
save,  
And give them victory o'er the  
grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Dayspring, from on  
high,  
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of  
night,  
And death's dark shadows put to  
flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Thou Key of David, come  
And open wide our heav'nly  
home;  
Make safe the way that leads on  
high,  
And close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, Adonai, Lord of might,  
Who to Thy tribes, on Sinai's  
height,  
In ancient times didst give the law  
In cloud and majesty and awe.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel.

**Infant holy, Infant lowly,**  
For his bed a cattle stall;  
Oxen lowing, little knowing  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.  
Swift are winging, Angels singing,  
Nowells ringing, Tidings bringing  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all,  
Christ the Babe is Lord of all.

Flocks were sleeping, Shepherds keeping  
Vigil till the morning new;  
Saw the glory, heard the story,  
Tidings of a gospel true.  
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow,  
Praises voicing, greet the morrow  
Christ the Babe was born for you!  
Christ the Babe was born for you!

**God rest you merry, gentlemen,**  
let nothing you dismay,  
remember Christ our Savior  
was born on Christmas Day  
to save us all from Satan's pow'r  
when we were gone astray.

*Refrain:*  
*O tidings of comfort and joy,*  
*comfort and joy;*  
*O tidings of comfort and joy.*

From God our heav'nly Father  
a blessed angel came  
and unto certain shepherds  
brought tidings of the same;  
how that in Bethlehem was born  
the Son of God by name. [Refrain]

The shepherds at those tidings  
rejoiced much in mind,  
and left their flocks afeeding,  
in tempest, storm, and wind,  
and went to Bethlehem straight-  
way,  
this blessed Babe to find. [Refrain]

Now to the Lord sing praises  
all you within this place,  
and with true love and brother-  
hood  
each other new embrace;  
this holy tide of Christmas  
all others doth deface. [Refrain]

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night,**  
all seated on the ground,  
an 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  
a Savior, who is Christ the Lord;  
and this shall be the sign:

"The heavenly babe you there shall find  
to human view displayed,  
all simply wrapped in swaddling clothes  
and in a manger laid."

Thus spoke the angel. Suddenly  
appeared a shining throng  
of angels praising God, who thus  
addressed their joyful song:

"All glory be to God on high,  
and to the earth be peace;  
to those on whom his favour rests  
goodwill shall never cease."