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Opening extract from

Christmas Poems

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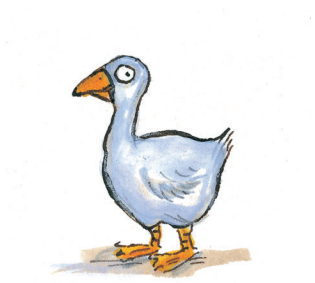
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Christmas Is Coming

Christmas is coming,
The geese are getting fat,
Please to put a penny
In the old man's hat.
If you haven't got a penny,
A ha'penny will do;
If you haven't got a ha'penny,
Then God bless you!

Anon.



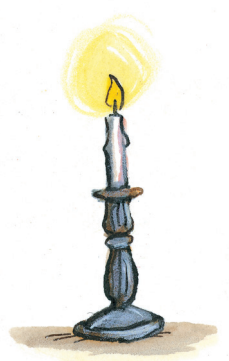
The Christmas Life

'If you don't have a real tree, you don't bring the Christmas life into the house.'

Josephine Mackinnon, aged 8

Bring in a tree, a young Norwegian spruce,
Bring hyacinths that rooted in the cold.
Bring winter jasmine as its buds unfold –
Bring the Christmas life into this house.

Bring red and green and gold, bring things that shine,
Bring candlesticks and music, food and wine.
Bring in your memories of Christmas past.
Bring in your tears for all that you have lost.



Bring in the shepherd boy, the ox and ass,
Bring in the stillness of an icy night,
Bring in a birth, of hope and love and light.
Bring the Christmas life into this house.

Wendy Cope



The Holly and the Ivy

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.

The rising of the sun
And 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 sweet Saviour.

The holly bears a berry
As red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
To do poor sinners good.



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

The holly bears a bark
As bitter as any gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ
For to redeem us all.

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.

Cecil Sharp



Welcome Yule

Now, thrice welcome Christmas,
Which brings us good cheer,
Minced pies and plum porridge,
Good ale and strong beer;
With pig, goose, and capon,
The best that can be,
So well doth the weather
And our stomachs agree.

Observe how the chimneys
Do smoke all about,
The cooks are providing
For dinner no doubt;
But those on whose tables
No victuals appear,
O may they keep Lent
All the rest of the year!



With holly and ivy
  So green and so gay,
We deck up our houses
  As fresh as the day.
With bays and rosemary,
  And laurel complete;
And everyone now
  Is a king in conceit.

George Wither

The Angel Gabriel

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
His wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame:
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary'
Most highly favoured lady! Gloria!



'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be;
All generations laud and honour thee:
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold'
Most highly favoured lady! Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
'To me be as it pleaseth God!' she said.
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy Name.'
Most highly favoured lady! Gloria!

Of her Emmanuel, the Christ, was born,
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn;
And Christian folk throughout the world will
ever say:
Most highly favoured lady! Gloria!

Anon.