

Christmas Poems

a collection of gems

O Emmanuel

by Malcolm Guite

O come, O come, and be our God-with-us
O long-sought With-ness for a world without,
O secret seed, O hidden spring of light.
Come to us Wisdom, come unspoken Name,
Come Root, and Key, and King, and holy Flame.
O quickened little wick so tightly curled,
Be folded with us into time and place,
Unfold for us the mystery of grace
And make a womb of all this wounded world.
O heart of heaven beating in the earth,
O tiny hope within our hopelessness
Come to be born, to bear us to our birth,
To touch a dying world with new-made hands
And make these rags of time our swaddling bands.

Nativity

by JOY COWLEY

Look now! It is happening again!
Love like a high spring tide
is swelling to fullness
and overflowing the banks of our small concerns.

And here again is the star,
that white flame of truth blazing the way for us
through a desert of tired ways.

Once more comes the music,
angel song that lifts our hearts
and tunes our ears to the harmony of the universe,
making us wonder how we ever could have forgotten.

And now the magi within us gathers up gifts of gold and myrrh,
while that other part of ourselves, the impulsive,reckless shepherd,
runs helter skelter with arms outstretched to embrace the wonder of it all.

We have no words to contain our praise.
We ache with awe, we tremble with miracle,
as once again, in the small rough stable of our lives,
Christ is born.

Into the Darkest Hour
by Madeleine L'Engle

It was a time like this,
War & tumult of war,
a horror in the air.
Hungry yawned the abyss –
and yet there came the star
and the child most wonderfully there.

It was a time like this
of fear & lust for power,
license & greed and blight –
and yet the Prince of bliss
came into the darkest hour
in quiet & silent light.

And in a time like this
how celebrate his birth
when all things fall apart?
Ah! wonderful it is
with no room on the earth
the stable is our heart.

First Coming
by Madeleine L'Engle

He did not wait till the world was ready
till men and nations were at peace.
He came when the the Heavens were unsteady,
and prisoners cried out for release.

He did not wait for the perfect time.
He came when the need was deep and great.
He dined with sinners in all their grime,
turned water into wine. He did not wait

till hearts were pure. In joy he came
to a tarnished world of sin and doubt.
To a world like ours, of anguished shame
he came, and his Light would not go out.

He came to a world which did not mesh,
to heal its tangles, shield its scorn.
In the mystery of the Word made Flesh
the Maker of the stars was born.

We cannot wait till the world is sane
to raise our songs with joyful voice,
for to share our grief, to touch our pain,
He came with Love: Rejoice! Rejoice!

All over creation
by Shirley Murray

All over creation, joy spills into light,
stars, candles ablaze this Christmas night;
where Jesus is sleeping, peace kisses the earth,
O that we could know who Mary has brought to birth!

This child will bring freedom, this child will release
wellsprings of compassion, ways to peace,
this child will bring healing, this child will inspire
love answering love, and spirit to Spirit's fire.

This child will befriend us, this child will invite
all children to share his world's delight:
this Christ will confront us when, children no more,
we plunder our planet, crying from want and war.

Let there be a moment held, as in one breath
when all the earth turns away from death,
peace nursing creation, peace spreading her wing,
O that we could know what Christmas is meant to bring!

Virgin Birth
by Joy Cowley

We have within us a virgin place,
a holy space which belongs to God alone.
We know it by its hunger,
we name it by its need,
the space which will not be touched
by the people we love
or the things we gather
or the positions we hold.

We have within us a growing place,
an eternal space that exists for Truth,
where the love of God overcomes us,
where the life of God fills us,
the Emmanuel space where we conceive
and become pregnant of the Holy One

and day by day, give birth
to Christ in the world.

All who would see God's greatness
by Marnie Barrell

All who would see God's greatness,
draw near, bend down, look low:
see how love appears among us
as small as a child. Then go,
tell of the greatness made so small,
tiny and hidden, God of all.

If you would share God's riches,
draw near, reach out and touch:
God has only love to offer,
enough for us, and too much.
Take up God's treasure, made so poor,
naked the God that we adore.

Would you receive God's power?
Draw near, find strength in this:
laid open to all our violence
is love that will not resist.
This is our God, who chose to be
tied with our bonds to set us free.

Stand in the holy silence
while earth with heaven sings
that here in our hands for holding
is love that sustains all things.
Strange is this love that draws us near:
Glory of God, among us here.

A Christmas Carol Poem
by G. K. Chesterton

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 on Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down