

“Songs of Celebration” Texts and Translations

The First Noel

Traditional English Carol with Cornish origins

The first Noel the angels did say
was to certain poor shepherds in fields where they lay;
in fields where they lay keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter’s night that was so deep.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
shining in the East beyond them far,
And to the earth it gave great light,
And so it continued both day and night.

Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel!
Born is the King of Israel!

Excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah*

Text compiled by Charles Jennens from the *King James Bible* and from the *Psalms* included with the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Behold! A virgin shall conceive . . . O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

Behold! A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and
shall call his name Emmanuel: God with us. (Isaiah VII, 14)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,
get thee up into the high mountain!
O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem,
lift up thy voice with strength, lift it up, be not afraid!
Say unto the cities of Judah: behold your God! (Isaiah XL, 9)

Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the
Lord is risen upon thee. (Isaiah LX, 1)

He shall feed His flock

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and
He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and
carry them in His bosom, and gently lead
those that are with young. (Isaiah XL, 11)

Selections from *Weihnachtslieder*

Poetry by Peter Cornelius

Christbaum

Wie schön geschmückt der festliche Raum!
Die Lichter funkeln am Weihnachtsbaum!
O fröhliche Zeit! o seliger Traum!

Die Mutter sitzt in der Kinder Kreis;
Nun schweiget alles auf ihr Geheiß:
Sie singet des Christkinds Lob und Preis.
Und rings, vom Weihnachtsbaum erhellt,
Ist schön in Bildern aufgestellt
Des heiligen Buches Palmenwelt.

How beautifully adorned is the festive room!
The lights twinkle on the Christmas tree!
Oh joyful time! Oh blessed dream!

The mother sits with the children circled around her;
now all are silent at her bidding:
she sings the Christ-child’s glory and praise.
And all around, illuminated by the Christmas tree,
beautifully shown in pictures,
is the palm-filled world of the holy book.

Die Kinder schauen der Bilder Pracht,
Und haben wohl des Singens Acht,
Das tönt so süß in der Weihenacht!

O glücklicher Kreis im festlichen Raum!
O goldne Lichter am Weihnachtsbaum!
O fröhliche Zeit! o seliger Traum!

Die Hirten

Hirten wachen im Feld;
Nacht ist rings auf der Welt;
Wach sind die Hirten alleine
Im Haine.

Und ein Engel so licht
Grüßet die Hirten und spricht:
"Christ, das Heil aller Frommen,
Ist kommen!"

Engel singen umher:
"Gott im Himmel sei Ehr!
Und den Menschen hienieden
Sei Frieden!"

Eilen die Hirten fort,
Eilen zum heiligen Ort,
Beten an in den Windlein
Das Kindlein.

Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella

Traditional French Provençal Carol

Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella,
Bring a torch, to the stable run.
He is born, good folk of the village,
He is born, and Mary's calling.
Ah! ah! beautiful is the mother.
Ah! ah! beautiful is her son!

Softly now, the baby is sleeping,
We will sing him a lullaby.
Softly now we sing near the manger
While he sleeps, and Mary whispers,
"Hush! hush! see how he gently slumbers,
Hush, hush, see how he smiles in dreams."

Celebrate, celebrate.
Let us go to sing through the village,
Celebrate this joyous day.
Sing with joy, sing with joy today.
Bring a song, Jeanette, Isabella,
Bring a song and celebrate.
He is born, good folk of the village,
He is born, and we are singing,
"Joy, joy!" Celebrate with singing,
"Joy, joy!" Celebrate today!

The children gaze at the pictures' splendor,
and listen well to the singing
that sounds so sweet on Christmas eve!

Oh happy circle in the festive room!
Oh golden lights on the Christmas tree!
Oh joyful time! Oh blissful dream!

Shepherds keep watch in the field;
night surrounds the world;
only the shepherds are awake
in the grove.

And an angel so bright
greet the shepherds and says:
"Christ, the salvation of all pious souls,
is come!"

All around, angels sing:
"Glory to God in Heaven!
And to men down below,
peace!"

The shepherds hurry forth,
hurry to the holy place,
and worship the infant
in swaddling clothes.

Wiegenlied

Poetry by Friedrich Wilhelm Gotter

Schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf ein,
Es ruhn nun Schäfchen und Vögelein,
Garten und Wiese verstummt,
auch nicht ein Bienchen mehr summt,
Luna mit silbernem Schein
gucket zum Fenster herein,
schlafe bei silbernem Schein,
schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf ein,
schlaf ein, schlaf ein!

Wer ist beglückter als du?
Nichts als Vergnügen und Ruh!
Spielwerk und Zucker vollauf
und noch Karossen im Lauf,
Alles besorgt und bereit,
dass nur mein Prinzchen nicht schreit.
Was wird da künftig erst sein?
Schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf ein,
schlaf ein, schlaf ein!

O, my deir hert

Text by Brothers Wedderburn

O, my deir hert, young Jesus sweit,
Prepare thy creddil in my spreit,
And I sall rock thee in my hert,
And never, never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermair
With sangis sweit unto thy gloir;
The knees of my hert sall I bow,
And sing that richt *Balubalow!*

A Slumber Song of the Madonna

Poetry by Alfred Noyes

Sleep, little baby, I love thee;
Sleep, little king, I am bending above thee!
How should I know what to sing
Here in my arms as I sing thee to sleep?
Hushaby low, rockaby so.

Kings may have wonderful jewels to bring,
Mother has only a kiss for her king!
Why should my singing so make me to weep?
Only to know that I love thee, I love thee,
Love thee, my little one, sleep.

Il neige

Poetry by Herman Bemberg

Il neige, il neige,
De gros flocons
Comme du coton,
Qui tombent sur les toits tout blancs,
Et les petits oiseaux peureux

Sleep, my little prince, sleep.
The sheep and the birdies rest,
The garden and the meadow are quiet,
Not even a little bee buzzes anymore.
Luna, with a silvery glow
looks in through the window,
sleep by the silvery glow,
Sleep, my little prince, sleep,
Sleep, sleep!

Who is happier than you?
Nothing but pleasure and peace!
All trinkets and sugar,
and a trotting stagecoach,
everyone is anxious and ready,
so that my little prince will not cry.
But what will the future bring?
Sleep, my little prince, sleep,
Sleep, sleep!

It's snowing, it's snowing,
big flakes
just like cotton
that fall upon the roofs, already white.
And the little frightened birds

Se peletonnent entr'eux
Avec des airs frileux,
En fermant les yeux.
Il neige, il neige,
Tout est couvert d'un blanc manteau de neige!

Il neige, il neige,
Comme il fait froid
Par les durs frimas,
Qui glacent nos âmes d'effroi!
Et se sentant très malheureux
Les jeunes coeurs amoureux,
Deux à deux
Se réchauffent entr'eux.
Il neige, il neige,
Tout passe, tout s'efface sous la neige!

Le marchand de marrons

Poetry by Paul Collin

Il est revenu, le marchand
Avec sa modeste boutique
Dont le chaud parfum alléchant
Invite de loin la pratique.

Quand ce marchand-là reparait
A Paris, au coin de nos rues,
On nous dit bien que la forêt
Pleure ses feuilles disparues;

J'en sais qui poussent les hauts cris
En pensant que les hirondelles,
Trouvant déjà notre ciel gris,
Fuiant loin de nous à tire d'ailes.

Plus d'un a déjà le frisson
En songeant que l'hiver morose
Se rapproche, et que la maison
Contre ses rigueurs est mal close!

Blow, blow thou winter wind

Text by William Shakespeare, from *As You Like It*, Act II Scene 7

Blow, blow thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen
Although thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
Most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze thou bitter sky,
Thou dost not bite so nigh

cuddle up together
shuddering from the cold,
closing their eyes.
It's snowing, it's snowing,
everything is covered in a white blanket of snow!

It's snowing, it's snowing,
how cold it is
from the harsh wintry weather,
that freezes our souls in fear!
And feeling very unhappy
the young loving hearts,
two by two,
warm themselves together.
It's snowing, it's snowing,
everything passes, all disappears beneath the snow!

He is back, the merchant
with his modest shop
whose warm, tempting smell
invites from afar the custom of winter.

When this merchant reappears
in Paris, at the corner of our streets,
we are told that the forest
weeps for its vanished leaves;

I know who lets out loud cries
in thinking that the swallows,
finding our sky already grey,
flee far from us swiftly.

More than one already has the shivers
in thinking that the morose winter
approaches, and that the house
is poorly shut up against its rigors!

As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember'd not.

Heigh ho! sing heigh ho!
unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning,
most loving mere folly
Then, heigh ho! the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Snow

Poetry by Hyo Geun Kim

When a narrow mountain path is covered with snow,
I wish my small footsteps will remain for good.
Until my little heart becomes white,
I wish to wander around the snow-covered mountain path.

When I hear a lonely winter bird sing far away,
I lose my way as my daydreams fly away.
I'll put the chaste voice of my Love into my heart.
Conveyed in the wind, it has become snow.

When my mind runs away through remote forests,
Ah, the winter bird disappears with white remains left behind.
I close my eyes and listen to the endless song of my Love.
Before I notice it, I become snow walking through the path.

Snowflakes

Poetry by John Vance Cheney

Falling all the nighttime,
Falling all the day,
Silent into silence,
From the far away;

Stilly host unnumbered,
All the night and day,
Falling, falling, falling,
From the far away, —

Never came such glory
To the fields and trees,
Never summer blossoms
Thick and white as these.

Folding, falling,
Folding, folding, folding,
Fold the world away,
Souls of flowers drifting
Down the winter day;

Falling all the nighttime,
Falling all the day,
Follow, follow, follow,
Fold it soft away.

Simple Gifts

Traditional/Shaker

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free
'tis the gift to come down where you ought to be
And when we find ourselves in the place just right
'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained
To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed
To turn, turn will be our delight
'Till by turning, turning we come round right.

Cuando el rey Nimrod

Sephardic folksong, translations by Yossi Zucker

Cuando el rey Nimrod al campo salía,
Mirava en el cielo y en la estretería,
Vido luz santa en la giudería,
Que había de nacer Avraham *avinu*

Avraham *avinu*, padre querido
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel.

Saludemos agora al señor parido,
Que le sea *besiman-tov* est nacido
Que Eliahu *Hanavi* mos sea aparecido
Lo aremos al Verdadero de Israel

Avraham *avinu*, padre querido
Padre bendicho, luz de Israel

Saludemos al compadre y también al *moel*
Que por su *zechut* nos venga el *goel*
Y rima a todo Israel.
Cierto lo aremos al Verdadero de Israel.

When the King Nimrod went into the fields,
He looked at the heavens and all of the stars above
He saw a holy light over the Jewish quarter;
A sign that Abraham our father was to be born.

Abraham, our patriarch, beloved father,
Blessed father, light of Israel.

We greet now the father of the newborn,
we wish this child has been born under a good sign,
because Elijah the Prophet has appeared to us
and we praise the True One of Israel.

Abraham, our patriarch, beloved father,
Blessed father, light of Israel.

We greet the godfather and also the mohel,
because of his merit the Redeemer and Merciful One
will come to all of Israel.
Certainly we praise the True One of Israel.

Ocho Kandelikas

Traditional Ladino folksong

Hanukah linda sta aki, ocho kandelas para mi, O!
Una kandelika, dos kandelikas, tres kandelikas,
kuatro kandelikas, sintyu kandelikas,
sej kandelikas, siete kandelikas, ocho kandelas para mi.

Beautiful Hanukkah is here. Eight candles for me. Oh!
One little candle, two little candles, three little candles,
four little candles, five little candles,
six little candles, seven little candles, eight candles for me.

Hanukkah Blessing

From the *Canti liturgici ebraici di rito italiano*, compiled by Elio Piattelli.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe,
Who has sanctified us with thy precepts and has ordained us to light the lamp of Hanukkah!

Ma'oz Tzur

Poetry by Mordechai

Rock of Ages, let our song
praise Your saving power.
You, amid the raging foes,
were our sheltering tower.
Furious, they assailed us,
but Your arm availed us,
And Your word broke their sword
when our own strength failed us.

Hanukkah Blessing

From the *Canti liturgici ebraici di rito italiano*, compiled by Elio Piattelli.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God,
King of the Universe, who has performed miracles for our Fathers
in those times and in this epoch.

Oseh Shalom

Lyrics from liturgy

May God who makes peace in the high places
Make peace for us, for Israel, and for all humankind.
And let us say, Amen.

O Holy Night

English lyrics by John Sullivan Dwight, based on a French text by Placide Cappeau

O holy night!
The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Savior's birth.
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Til He appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!

Fall on your knees!
O hear the angel voices!
O night divine, O night when Christ was born,
O night, O holy night, O night divine!

Truly He taught us to love one another
His law is love and His gospel is peace.
Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother
And in His name, all oppression shall cease.
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus raise we,
Let all within us Praise His holy name.

Christ is the Lord,
O praise His name forever!
His power and glory evermore proclaim,
His power and glory evermore proclaim.

The Work of Christmas

Poetry by Howard Thurman

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music from the heart.

Deck the Hall

Welsh melody dating back to the 16th century, English lyrics written by Thomas Oliphant in 1862

Deck the hall with boughs of holly,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
'Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa la la, la la la, la la la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

See the blazing Yule before us,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Strike the harp and join the chorus.
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
While I tell of Christmas treasure,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Sing we joyous all together,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa la la la la, la la la la.