

FIRST CHRISTMAS

Darkest night in the countryside
Shepherds abiding, watchful, wakeful
And suddenly Heaven erupting
The veil between the worlds torn asunder
In glory like liquid light
Bursting forth in ecstasy

The couple tracing weary steps
Trudging, footsore, numbed
Yet buoyed by incredible knowledge
Selected from all mankind
And Mary's song, ringing in her ears:
Be it unto me according to thy word

Watchers of the skies, the Magi
Trekking onward, never counting the miles
Plodding hoof upon plodding hoof
Their minds preoccupied by their shared dream:
While beyond them, constant in the darkness, a guiding star
Which one day wise men would dismiss as fable

And the couple, beyond weariness
But upheld by the Word
Time and eternity and destiny meeting in them
Found no room in the inn
But knowing all the while it was meet, it was very meet
For a servant king to be born in a stable

So the tableau was set:
The loving couple, the loving parents
Fulfilling scripture in the cold and wondrous night,
Laying in the feeding trough the ineffable babe,
Servant and master, the lowest and the highest:
While shepherds and wise men worshipped and adored

And Herod the king
Sharpened yet again his deadly sword,
Preparing yet again to unleash cold death:
But the glory of God dismissed it
Like Ozymandias, consigning it to irrelevancy
One night in Bethlehem changing Heaven and the world