

6 So it was, that while they were there, the

---

days were completed for her to be delivered.

---

7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son,

---

and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid

---

Him in a manger, because there was no room

---

for them in the inn.

---

8 Now there were in the same country

---

shepherds living out in the fields, keeping

---

watch over their flock by night.

---

9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood

---

before them, and the glory of the Lord shone

---

around them, and they were greatly afraid.

---

10 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be

---

afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of

---

great joy which will be to all people.

---

11 For there is born to you this day in the

---

city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

---

12 And this will be the sign to you: You will

---

find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying

---

in a manger.”

---

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a

---

multitude of the heavenly host praising God and

---

saying:

---

14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth

---

peace, goodwill toward men!”

---

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away

---

from them into heaven, that the shepherds said

---

to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem

---

and see this thing that has come to pass, which

---

the Lord has made known to us."

---

16 And they came with haste and found Mary

---

and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

---

17 Now when they had seen Him, they made

---

widely known the saying which was told them

---

concerning this Child.

---

18 And all those who heard it marveled at

---

those things which were told them by the

---

shepherds.

---

19 But Mary kept all these things and

---

pondered them in her heart.

---

20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and

---

praising God for all the things that they had

---

heard and seen, as it was told them.

---

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went

---

into the hill country with haste, to a city of

---

Judah,

---

40 and entered the house of Zacharias and

---

greeted Elizabeth.

---

41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the

---

greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her

---

womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy

---

Spirit.

---

42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and

---

said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed

---

is the fruit of your womb!

---

43 But why is this granted to me, that the

---

mother of my Lord should come to me?

---

44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your

---

greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped

---

in my womb for joy.

---

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will

---

be a fulfillment of those things which were

---

told her from the Lord.”

---

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,

---

These Advent nights are long;

---

Our lamps have burned year after year,

---

And still their flame is strong.

---

"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,

---

Heart-sick with hope deferred:

---

"No speaking signs are in the sky,"

---

Is still the watchman's word.

---

The Porter watches at the gate,

---

The servants watch within;

---

The watch is long betimes and late,

---

The prize is slow to win.

---

"Watchman, what of the night?" but still

---

His answer sounds the same:

---

"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,

---

Nor pale our lamps of flame."

---

One to another hear them speak,

---

The patient virgins wise:

---

"Surely He is not far to seek," –

---

"All night we watch and rise."

---

"The days are evil looking back,

---

The coming days are dim;

---

Yet count we not His promise slack,

---

But watch and wait for Him."

---

One with another, soul with soul,

---

They kindle fire from fire:

---

"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."

---

"They urge us, come up higher."

---

"With them shall rest our waysore feet,

---

With them is built our home,

---

With Christ," "They sweet, but He most sweet,

---

Sweeter than honeycomb."

---

There no more parting, no more pain,

---

The distant ones brought near,

---

The lost so long are found again,

---

Long lost but longer dear:

---

Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,

---

Nor heart conceived that rest,

---

With them our good things long deferred,

---

With Jesus Christ our Best.

---

We weep because the night is long,

---

We laugh, for day shall rise,

---

We sing a slow contented song

---

And knock at Paradise.

---

Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept

---

For us,—we hold Him fast;

---

And will not let Him go except

---

He bless us first or last.

---

Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;

---

We will not let Him go

---

Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,

---

And summer smite the snow:

---

Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove

---

Shall coo the livelong day;

---

Then He shall say, "Arise, My love,

---

My fair one, come away."

---

Night walks with a heavy step round yard and

---

hearth,

---

As the sun departs from earth, shadows are

---

brooding.

---

There in our dark house, walking with lit candles,

---

Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

---

Night walks grand, yet silent, now hear its

---

gentle wings,

---

In every room so hushed, whispering like wings.

---

Look, at our threshold stands, white-clad with

---

light in her hair,

---

Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

---

Darkness shall take flight soon, from earth's

---

valleys.

---

So she speaks wonderful words to us:

---

A new day will rise again from the rosy sky

---

Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

---

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all

---

through the house

---

Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;

---

The stockings were hung by the chimney

---

with care,

---

In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;

---

The children were nestled all snug in their beds;

---

While visions of sugar-plums danced in

---

their heads;

---

And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,

---

Had just settled our brains for a long

---

winter's nap,

---

When out on the lawn there arose such

---

a clatter,

---

I sprang from my bed to see what was

---

the matter.

---

Away to the window I flew like a flash,

---

Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.

---

The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,

---

Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,

---

When what to my wondering eyes did appear,

---

But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,

---

With a little old driver so lively and quick,

---

I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.

---

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,

---

And he whistled, and shouted, and called them

---

by name:

---

"Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now Prancer and

---

Vixen!

---

On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donner and Blitzen!

---

To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!

---

Now dash away! dash away! dash away all!"

---

As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,

---

When they meet with an obstacle, mount to

---

the sky;

---

So up to the housetop the coursers they flew

---

With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas

---

too—

---

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof

---

The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

---

As I drew in my head, and was turning around,

---

Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a

---

bound.

---

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his

---

foot,

---

And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes

---

and soot;

---

A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,

---

And he looked like a pedler just opening his pack.

---

His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples, how

---

merry!

---

His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry!

---

His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,

---

And the beard on his chin was as white as the

---

snow;

---

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,

---

And the smoke, it encircled his head like a

---

wreath;

---

He had a broad face and a little round belly

---

That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of

---

jelly.

---

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,

---

And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of

---

myself;

---

A wink of his eye and a twist of his head

---

Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;

---

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his

---

work,

---

And filled all the stockings; then turned with

---

a jerk,

---

And laying his finger aside of his nose,

---

And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;

---

He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a

---

whistle,

---

And away they all flew like the down of a

---

thistle.

---

But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of

---

sight—

---

“Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good night!”

---

---

---