

[1] THE GARDEN OF JESUS

trad. Dutch

Lord Jesus hath a garden full of flowers gay,
Where you and I can gather nosegays all the day:
*There angels sing in jubilant ring,
With dulcimers and lutes,
And harps and cymbals, trumpets, pipes,
And gentle, soothing flutes.*

There bloometh white the lily, flower of Purity;
The fragrant violet hides there, sweet Humility:

And one thing fairest is in all that lovely maze,
The gardener, Jesus Christ, whom all the flowers
praise:

O Jesus all my good and all my bliss! Ah me!
Thy garden make my heart, which ready is for thee!

[2] IN THE BLEAK MID-WINTER

Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone:
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter,
Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold him
Nor earth sustain:
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God almighty
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him whom cherubim
Worship night and day,
A breastful of milk
And a mangerful of hay:
Enough for Him, whom angels
Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel
Which adore.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man
I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him
Give my heart.

[3] BALULALOW

translation: Wedderburn, 1567

O my dear heart, young Jesus sweet,
Prepare they cradle in my spreit.
And I sall rock thee in my heart
And never mair from thee depart.

But I sall praise thee evermore,
With sangis sweet unto thy gloir:
The knees of my heart sall I bow,

And sing that richt Balulalow.

[4] LULLAY MY LIKING

trad. English

*Lullay my liking, my dear son, my sweeting;
Lullay my dear heart, mine own dear darling.*

I saw a fair maiden
Sitten and sing:
She lulled a little child,
A sweete lording:

Lullay, etc.

That eternal lord is he
That made alle thing;
Of alle lordes he is Lord,
Of alle kinges king:

Lullay, etc.

There was mickle melody
At that childes birth:
Although they were in heaven's bliss
They made mickle mirth:

Lullay, etc.

Angels bright they sang that night
And saiden to that child:
Blessed be thou and so be she
That is both meeke and mild:

Lullay, etc.

Pray we now to that child,
And to his mother dear,
God grant them all his blessing
That now maken cheer:

Lullay, etc.

[5] COVENTRY CAROL

Robert Croo, 1534

*Lully, lulla, thou little tiny child,
By by, lully lullay.*

O sisters too,
How may we do
For to preserve this day
This poor youngling,
For whom we do sing,
By by, lully lullay?

Herod, the king,
In his raging,
Charged he hath this day
His men of might,
In his own sight,
All young children to slay.

That woe is me,
Poor child for thee!
And ever morn and day,
For thy parting
Neither say nor sing
By by, lully lullay!

[7] NOËL NOUVELET

trad. French

Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici
Dévotes gens, disons a Dieu merci.
Chantons Noël pour le roi nouvelet
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

D'un oiselet après le chant ouï
Qui aux pasteurs disait: Partez d'ici
En Bethléem trouverez l'agnelet
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

L'étoile y vis qui la nuit éclaire
Et d'Orient d'où elle était sortie
En Bethléem les trois rois amenait
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

L'un portant l'or, l'autre la myrrhe aussi,
L'autre l'encens qu'il faisait bon sentir.
Du Paradis semblait le jardinier.
Noël nouvelet, Noël chantons ici.

[8] AVEC LES SÉRAPHINS DU CIEL

M. Porchat

Avec les séraphins du ciel, chantons le maître;
Pasteurs, pour nous sauver, chez nous, il vient de naître;
Sa gloire brille dans la nuit,
Et vers sa couche nous conduit:

Heureuse nouvelle!
L'espérance est dans mon coeur,
De l'ange rebelle
L'homme enfin sera vainqueur.

Salut enfant divin, notre espoir notre gage;
Des pauvres, des petits reçois d'abord l'hommage:
Que peuvent-ils pour t'honorer?
T'aimer toujours et t'adorer.

Heureuse nouvelle!
L'espérance est dans mon coeur,
Heureuse nouvelle!
L'espérance est dans mon coeur!

[9] ENTRE LE BOEUF ET L'ÂNE GRIS

trad. French

Entre le boeuf et l'âne gris,
Dort, dort, dort le petit fils;
Mille anges divins,
Mille séraphins
Volent à l'entour de ce Dieu d'amour.

Entre les deux bras de Marie,
Dort, dort, dort le petit fils;
Mille anges divins,
Mille séraphins
Volent à l'entour de ce Dieu d'amour.

En ce beau jour si solennel,
Dort, dort, dort le petit fils;
Mille anges divins,
Mille séraphins
Volent à l'entour de ce Dieu d'amour.

A NEW NOËL

Noël, here let us sing a new Noël,
in our devotion, let us thank God.
Let us sing Noël for a new-born king,
Noël, here let us sing a new Noël.

Then I heard the song of a little bird
who bade the shepherds: Go from here,
in Bethlehem you will find the new-born lamb,
Noël, here let us sing a new Noël.

There I saw the star which lit up the night,
and from the East whence it came
it led the three kings to Bethlehem.
Noël, here let us sing a new Noël.

One bearing gold, the second brought myrrh,
the third bore fine-perfumed frankincense.
The little garden seemed like paradise.
Noël, here let us sing a new Noël.

WITH THE HEAVENLY SERAPHIM

With the heavenly seraphim let us sing to our Lord;
shepherds, to save us he is born here on earth;
his glory shines in the night,
and leads us to his crib:

Joyful tidings!
Hope fills my heart,
man will be victorious
over the fallen angel.

Hail, divine infant, our hope, our pledge;
accept the homage of the poor and lowly first:
what can they do to honour you?
love you for ever and worship you.

Joyful tidings!
Hope fills my heart.
Joyful tidings!
Hope fills my heart!

BETWEEN THE OX AND THE GREY ASS

Between the ox and the grey ass,
sleeps, sleeps, sleeps the little child;
a thousand heavenly angels,
a thousand seraphim
fly to encircle this God of love.

In Mary's arms,
sleeps, sleeps, sleeps the little child;
a thousand heavenly angels,
a thousand seraphim
fly to encircle this God of love.

On this fair and solemn day,
sleeps, sleeps, sleeps the little child;
a thousand heavenly angels,
a thousand seraphim
fly to encircle this God of love.

[10] QUELLE EST CETTE ODEUR AGRÉABLE?

trad. French

Quelle est cette odeur agréable,
Bergers, qui ravit tous nos sens?
S'exhale-t-il rien de semblable
Au milieu des fleurs du printemps?

Mais quelle éclatante lumière
Dans la nuit vient frapper nos yeux!
L'astre du jour, dans sa carrière,
Fut-il jamais si radieux?

A Bethléem dans une crèche,
Il vient de vous naître un Sauveur;
Allons, que rien ne vous empêche
D'adorer votre Rédempteur.

Dieu tout-puissant, gloire éternelle
Vous soit rendue jusqu'aux cieux;
Que la paix soit universelle,
Que la grâce abonde en tous lieux.

[11] IL EST NÉ LE DIVIN ENFANT

trad. French

*Il est né le divin enfant,
Jouez haut-bois, résonnez musettes:
Il est né le divin enfant,
Chantons tous son avènement!*

Depuis plus de quatre-mille ans,
Nous le promettaient les prophètes,
Depuis plus de quatre-mille ans,
Nous attendions cet heureux temps.
Il est né, etc.

Ah! Qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant,
Ah! Que ses grâces sont parfaites!
Ah! Qu'il est beau, qu'il est charmant,
Qu'il est doux, ce divin enfant!

Il est né, etc.

Ô Jesus, ô Roi tout-puissant,
Si petit enfant que vous êtes,
Ô Jesus, ô Roi tout-puissant,
Regnez sur nous entièrement.

Il est né, etc.

[16] IN BETHLEHEM TONIGHT

Norman Gabriel Nurmi, b. 1948

A bed of hay inside a stable,
On a night so cold and deep,
A mother rocks a tiny cradle,
Her baby lies asleep.
Outside a darkened world is mourning,
It has not seen the light,
But hope is born in Bethlehem,
In Bethlehem tonight.

A sense of calm within the manger
As the cattle murmur low,
And there together friend and stranger,
The eastern star aglow.
Outside an angry world is raging,
Prepared to show its might,

WHAT IS THIS SWEET FRAGRANCE?

What is this sweet fragrance,
shepherds, that beguiles our senses?
Do the flowers of spring
give off any such perfume?

And what dazzling light now
strikes our eyes in the night-time!
Did the day star on its heavenly flight
ever shine with such radiance?

At Bethlehem, in a manger,
a Saviour is born to you tonight;
go now, let nothing hinder you
from worshipping your Redeemer.

Almighty God, may eternal glory
be yours in the heavens;
may there be peace on earth,
may grace abound in all places.

HE IS BORN, THE DIVINE CHRIST-CHILD

He is born, the divine Christ-child,
play, you oboes and ring out, you pipes:
he is born, the divine Christ-child,
let us all sing to welcome his birth!

*For more than four thousand years,
the prophets had promised him to us,
for more than four thousand years,
we had been awaiting this joyous time.
He is born, etc.*

*Ah! How fair he is, how lovely!
Ah! How perfect his grace!
Ah! How fair he is, how lovely,
how gentle he is, the divine Christ-child.*

He is born, etc.

*O Jesus, o almighty King,
though you are but a little babe,
o Jesus, o almighty King,
reign over us all for evermore.*

He is born, etc.

But peace is born in Bethlehem,
In Bethlehem tonight.

A gift of hope for all the nations
In a cloth of linen torn,
A hope of peace and true salvation
Within a stable born,
Outside a world in awe and wonder
Will share this glorious sight,
For love is born in Bethlehem,
In Bethlehem tonight.

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[18] IN DULCI JUBILO

trad. German

In dulci jubilo
Now sing with hearts aglow!
Our delight and pleasure
Lies in praesepio,
Like sunshine is our treasure
Matris in gremio
Alpha es et O!

O Jesu parvule,
For thee I long always;
Comfort my heart's blindness,
O puer optime,
With all thy loving-kindness,
O princeps gloriae,
Trahe me post te!

O Patris caritas!
O Nati lenitas!
Deeply were we stained
Per nostra crimina;
But thou for us hast gained
Coelorum gaudia.
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia
In any place but there?
There are angels singing
Nova cantica,
And there the bells are ringing
In Regis curia.
O that we were there!

[19] AWAY IN A MANGER

words anon.

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head.
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus no crying he makes.
I love thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask thee to stay
Close by me forever, and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in thy tender care,
And fit us for heaven, to live with thee there.

[20] THE CHRIST-CHILD'S LULLABY

(collected in Eriskay, words from Father Allan MacDonald)

My joy, my love, my darling thou!
My treasure new, my rapture thou!
My comely, beauteous babe-son thou,
Unworthy I to tend to thee.
Halleluia.

White sun of hope and light art thou!
Of love the heart and eye art thou!
Tho' but a tender babe, I bow
In heav'nly rapture unto thee.
Halleluia.

[21] WEXFORD CAROL

trad. Irish

Good people all, this Christmas-time,
Consider well, and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done,
In sending his beloved Son.
With Mary holy we should pray
To God with love this Christmas day;
In Bethlehem upon that morn
There was a blessèd Messiah born.

The night before that happy tide,
The noble Virgin and her guide
Were long time seeking up and down
To find a lodging in that town.
But mark how all things came to pass:
From every door repelled, alas!
As long foretold, their refuge all
Was but an humble ox's stall.

Near Bethlehem did shepherds keep
Their flocks of lambs and feeding sheep;
To whom God's angels did appear,
Which put the shepherds in great fear.
'Prepare and go', the angel said,
'To Bethlehem, be not afraid;
For there you'll find, this happy morn,
A princely babe, sweet Jesus born.'

With thankful heart and joyful mind,
The shepherds went the babe to find,
And as God's angel had foretold,
They did our Saviour Christ behold.
Within a manger he was laid,
And by his side the virgin maid,
Attending on the Lord of Life,
Who came on earth to end all strife.

English translations of the French texts by Susannah Howe