

## POEMS FOR CHRISTMASTIDE

*From the Sibyl's Book*

The scudding cloud has heard in the night  
From the fretted forest white with frost,  
A glittering Word, a singing Word,  
And youth has won and age has lost.

We shall grow young, my soul,  
As young as Bethlehem—  
Brows bound with fadeless green of holy bay.  
The fire dies before the tents of Shem  
As sinks the daystar in the blaze of day,  
And all the age-old paths, the weary roads,  
Are glad with children singing in the way.  
The orb of earth runs piping round the sun,  
And, like the sky, knows naught of yesterday,  
For Jacob's ladder has grown obsolete,  
Shepherds can tell. The ancient is undone.  
Even the breath of winter is May-sweet,  
The stars bow down, earth and the heaven are one.

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From the fretted forest white with frost,  
A glittering Word, a singing Word,  
And youth has won and age has lost.

FRANCIS BEAUCHESNE THORNTON.

*The Babe*

Who made the heavens of a blue bird's wing?  
Who could so tender be?  
Who but the Babe Whom we  
Hail in our caroling?

Who spilled the starlight in the lap of night?  
Who but the Babe Who set  
His Mother's coronet  
Higher than heaven's height?

Who in His amorous mischief wrought the dawn?  
Who but the Babe Who smiled  
At shepherds uncouth, wild,  
Shy to His cradle drawn?

Who hid the world's magnificence in flowers?  
Who but the Babe Who pressed  
Warm to His mother's breast  
In the stark midnight hours?

DANIEL SARGENT.

*Vigil Lights*

Make my heart a vigil light,  
With its flickering spark  
Dimly heralding the Sun  
When the room is dark.

MARIE SCHULTE KALLENBACH.

*Mary Walks*

In the shadow of every candle  
She walks the world tonight—  
Every candle in every heart—  
Oh, Mary's face is white!

In the shadow of every candle  
That every woman knows  
Mary walks with the Infant  
And the flame grows—grows.

Child in the reeking ghetto,  
Child on a snow-still moor,  
Shelter your ragged dolly  
In the light—clean, pure.

Princess with lily-body  
Or slave-girl chained to your color,  
Hover the light in the shadow  
Where jewels burn duller.

In the shadow of every candle  
She walks the world tonight.  
And the star comes low, comes lower—  
Oh, Mary's face is white!

QUEENE B. LISTER.

*Holy Hay*

O little humble wonder-flower,  
Wearing your badge of that far time  
When you first blossomed in the hour  
That summoned you with silver chime  
To undreamed beauty. How could you know  
Little Lord Jesus was calling low?

No silken coverlet wrapped Him round,  
No downy pillow eased His head,  
Sun-dried herbs and grass unbound  
Made a nest of the manger bed,  
And you—a tiny thing hidden there—  
Crept close and touched His radiant hair.

Barren you were, with never a bloom,  
Then lo! along your quickened stem  
Rosy-hued buds leapt forth in the room,  
One with the joy of Bethlehem—  
And sheep and kine stirred with glad surprise,  
But Love lit a star in Jesus' eyes.

IMOGEN CLARK.

*The Nativity*

Eternity and time are one,  
Infinity is joined to space—  
The firefly glows beside the sun;  
One Baby hides the human race.

RICHARD LINN EDSALL.