**Ring out, wild bells**

**Alfred Tennyson 1809 - 1892**

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,

The flying cloud, the frosty light:

The year is dying in the night;

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Ring, happy bells, across the snow:

The year is going, let him go;

Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind

For those that here we see no more;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,

Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,

And ancient forms of party strife;

Ring in the nobler modes of life,

With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,

The faithless coldness of the times;

Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes

But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,

The civic slander and the spite;

Ring in the love of truth and right,

Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;

Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;

Ring out the thousand wars of old,

Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,

The larger heart, the kindlier hand;

Ring out the darkness of the land,

Ring in the Christ that is to be.

# Wartime Christmas

**Joyce Kilmer 1886-1918**

Led by a star, a golden star,

The youngest star, an olden star,

Here the kings and the shepherds are,

Akneeling on the ground.

What did they come to the inn to see?

God in the Highest, and this is He,

A baby asleep on His mother’s knee

And with her kisses crowned.

Now is the earth a dreary place,

A troubled place, a weary place.

Peace has hidden her lovely face

And turned in tears away.

Yet the sun, through the war-cloud, sees

Babies asleep on their mother’s knees.

While there are love and home—and these—

There shall be Christmas Day.

**Christmas Bells**

**Henry W Longfellow 1807-1882**

I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
    And wild and sweet
    The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
    Had rolled along
    The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day,
    A voice, a chime,
    A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
    And with the sound
    The carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

It was as if an earthquake rent
The hearth-stones of a continent,
    And made forlorn
    The households born
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
"There is no peace on earth," I said;
    "For hate is strong,
    And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
    The Wrong shall fail,
    The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men."

**Christmastide**

**Christina Rossetti 1830-1894**

Love came down at Christmas,
     Love all lovely, Love Divine;
Love was born at Christmas,
     Star and Angels gave the sign.

Worship we the Godhead,
     Love Incarnate, Love Divine;
Worship we our Jesus:
     But wherewith for sacred sign?

Love shall be our token,
     Love be yours and love be mine,
Love to God and all men,
     Love for plea and gift and sign.

# The Mystic's Christmas

**John Whittier 1807-1892**

"All hail!" the bells of Christmas rang,

"All hail!" the monks at Christmas sang,

The merry monks who kept with cheer

The gladdest day of all their year.

But still apart, unmoved thereat,

A pious elder brother sat

Silent, in his accustomed place,

With God's sweet peace upon his face.

"Why sitt'st thou thus?" his brethren cried,

"It is the blessed Christmas-tide;

The Christmas lights are all aglow,

The sacred lilies bud and blow.

"Above our heads the joy-bells ring,

Without the happy children sing,

And all God's creatures hail the morn

On which the holy Christ was born.

"Rejoice with us; no more rebuke

Our gladness with thy quiet look."

The gray monk answered, "Keep, I pray,

Even as ye list, the Lord's birthday.

"Let heathen Yule fires flicker red

Where thronged refectory feasts are spread;

With mystery-play and masque and mime

And wait-songs speed the holy time!

"The blindest faith may haply save;

The Lord accepts the things we have;

And reverence, howsoe'er it strays,

May find at last the shining ways.

"They needs must grope who cannot see,

The blade before the ear must be;

As ye are feeling I have felt,

And where ye dwell I too have dwelt.

"But now, beyond the things of sense,

Beyond occasions and events,

I know, through God's exceeding grace,

Release from form and time and space.

"I listen, from no mortal tongue,

To hear the song the angels sung;

And wait within myself to know

The Christmas lilies bud and blow.

"The outward symbols disappear

From him whose inward sight is clear;

And small must be the choice of days

To him who fills them all with praise!

"Keep while you need it, brothers mine,

With honest seal your Christmas sign,

But judge not him who every morn

Feels in his heart the Lord Christ born!"

### **In The Bleak Midwinter**

**Christina Rossetti 1830-1894**

In the bleak midwinter, 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 midwinter, 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 midwinter a stable place sufficed

The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom cherubim, worship night and day,

Breastful of milk, and a mangerful of hay;

Enough for Him, whom angels fall before,

The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and archangels may have gathered there,

Cherubim and seraphim thronged the air;

But His mother only, in her maiden bliss,

Worshipped the beloved with a kiss.

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.

**The Meeting**

**Henry W Longfellow 1807-1882**

After so long an absence

At last we meet again:

Does the meeting give us pleasure,

Or does it give us pain?

The tree of life has been shaken,

And but few of us linger now,

Like the Prophet’s two or three berries

In the top of the uppermost bough.

We cordially greet each other

In the old, familiar tone;

And we think, though we do not say it,

How old and gray he is grown!

We speak of a Merry Christmas

And many a Happy New Year;

But each in his heart is thinking

Of those that are not here.

We speak of friends and their fortunes,

And of what they did and said,

Till the dead alone seem living,

And the living alone seem dead.

And at last we hardly distinguish

Between the ghosts and the guests;

And a mist and shadow of sadness

Steals over our merriest jests.

**Christmas Carol**

**Sara Teasdale 1884 - 1933**

The kings they came from out the south,

All dressed in ermine fine;

They bore Him gold and chrysoprase,

And gifts of precious wine.

The shepherds came from out the north,

Their coats were brown and old;

They brought Him little new-born lambs—

They had not any gold.

The wise men came from out the east,

And they were wrapped in white;

The star that led them all the way

Did glorify the night.

The angels came from heaven high,

And they were clad with wings;

And lo, they brought a joyful song

The host of heaven sings.

The kings they knocked upon the door,

The wise men entered in,

The shepherds followed after them

To hear the song begin.

The angels sang through all the night

Until the rising sun,

But little Jesus fell asleep

Before the song was done.

**Music on Christmas Morning**

**Anne Bronte 1820 - 1849**

Music I love -­ but never strain
Could kindle raptures so divine,
So grief assuage, so conquer pain,
And rouse this pensive heart of mine -­
As that we hear on Christmas morn,
Upon the wintry breezes borne.

Though Darkness still her empire keep,
And hours must pass, ere morning break;
From troubled dreams, or slumbers deep,
That music kindly bids us wake:
It calls us, with an angel's voice,
To wake, and worship, and rejoice;

**The House of Christmas**

**G.K. Chesterton 1874 - 1936**

There fared a mother driven forth
Out of an inn to roam;
In the place where she was homeless
All men are at home.
The crazy stable close at hand,
With shaking timber and shifting sand,
Grew a stronger thing to abide and stand
Than the square stones of Rome.

For men are homesick in their homes,
And strangers under the sun,
And they lay their heads in a foreign land
Whenever the day is done.
Here we have battle and blazing eyes,
And chance and honor and high surprise,
But our homes are under miraculous skies
Where the yule tale was begun.

A Child in a foul stable,
Where the beasts feed and foam,
Only where He was homeless
Are you and I at home;
We have hands that fashion and heads that know,
But our hearts we lost – how long ago!
In a place no chart nor ship can show
Under the sky’s dome.

This world is wild as an old wives' tale,
And strange the plain things are,
The earth is enough and the air is enough
For our wonder and our war;
But our rest is as far as the fire-drake swings
And our peace is put in impossible things
Where clashed and thundered unthinkable wings
Round an incredible star.

To an open house in the evening
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden
And a taller town than Rome.
To the end of the way of the wandering star,
To the things that cannot be and that are,
To the place where God was homeless
And all men are at home.