

## IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT

It was the fourth watch, and we were alone,  
Minding our business and chilled to the bone,  
Doing our duty of guarding the sheep,  
Each taking turns for a smidgeon of sleep.

Suddenly, there in the dark of the night,  
We were engulfed in a radiant light!  
Right in those fields of our common routine,  
We were caught up in a glorious scene.

Our knees were knocking! All heaven broke out!  
Then came an angel who started to shout:  
“Don’t be afraid! I have Good News to tell,  
Not just for you, but the whole world as well.

“Go to the City of David—not far.  
Search in a stable beneath the bright star,  
Look in a feeding trough, humble and cold,  
There you will find what the prophets foretold:

“Yahweh’s Messiah! The Savior at last  
Comes to the Earth! Be no longer downcast!”  
Then with the angel an army on high  
Sang as they swarmed overhead in the sky,

“Glory to God! To the Lord, highest praise!  
Peace in God’s will for the rest of your days!”  
Quickly they’d come, and as quickly they fled.  
We ran in search of the crude manger-bed.

What a surprise! Amid dung and wet straw,  
Animals crowded around what we saw:  
Just a small baby, wrapped up in rag—  
Parents asleep on a worn saddlebag. . . .

This was the Savior? Then this was the news!  
So we all scattered, this tale to diffuse.  
Folks were astounded that such was revealed  
To simple, poor shepherds out in the field.

— *David L. Hatton, 12/16/2000*