

The Spirit and Taste of Christmastide

Or Noël in Tudor England

A show in **O**riginal Shakespearean **P**ronunciation



1. Hamlet,

William Shakespeare, 1603 (Act I, Scene I)

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
The bird of dawning singeth all night long:
And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad;
The nights are wholesome; then no planets strike,
No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

1. Hamlet,

William Skakespeare, 1603 (Act I, Scene I)

(tłum. Józef Paszkowski)

Mówią, że ranny ten ptak w owej porze,
Kiedy święcimy narodzenie Pana,
Po całych nocach zwykł śpiewać i wtedy
Żaden duch nie śmie wyjść z swego siedliska:
Noce są zdrowe, gwiazdy nieszkodliwe,
Złe śpi, ustają czarodziejskie wpływy,
Tak święty jest ten czas i dobroczynny.

2. Love's Labour's Lost,

William Shakespeare, 1598 (Act V, Scene 2)

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When Blood is nipped and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
 Tu-who;
 Tu-whit, tu-who: a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
 Tu-who;
 Tu-whit, tu-who: a merry note,
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

2. Love's Labour's Lost,

William Shakespeare, 1598 (Act V, Scene 2)

(tłum. Leon Ulrich)

Gdy z dachów wiszą zimowe sopele,
I kiedy w palce pacholek dmucha,
I ogień z wszystkich kominów bucha,
A w skopku mleka mróz ścina krople
Kiedy śnieg drogi wszystkie zawiewa,
I tylko sowa śród nocy śpiewa

Uhu!

Pieśń wesola, gdy kucharka
Szumowiny zbiera z garka.

Gdy wiatr śnieg pędzi z świstem przez błonie,
Gdy nastrzępione umilkły ptaki,
Gdy nosy dziewczyn niby buraki,
A głos plebana w kaszaniu tonie,
Pieczone jabłka na roszenie syczą,
I tylko sowy śród nocy krzyczą

Uhu!

Pieśń wesola, gdy kucharka
Szumowiny zbiera z garka.

3. A description of the feast of the birth of Christ, commonly called Christmas

Thomas Tusser, 1557
(Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie)

Of Christ cometh Christmas, the name with the feast,
a time full of ioye to the greatest and least;
at Christmas was Christ (our Saviour) borne,
the world through the sinne altogether forlorne.

At Christmas the daies doo begin to take length,
of Christ doth religion cheefly take strenght.
As christmas is onely a figure or trope,
so onely in Christ is the strenght of our hope.

At Christmas we banket, the rich with the poore,
who then (but the miser) but openeth [h]is doore?
At Christmas of Christ many Carols we sing,
and give many gifts in the ioy of that King.

At Christmas in Christ we reioice and be glad,
as only of whom our comfort is had;
At Christmas we ioy altogether with mirth,
for his sake that ioyed us all with his birth.

4. Christmas,

Thomas Tusser, 1557

(Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie)

Get ivy and hull, woman, deck up thine house,
And take this same brawn for to seethe and to souse;
Provide us good cheer, for thou knowest the old guise,
Old customs that good be, let no man despise.

At Christmas be merry and thank God of all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great and the small.
Yea, all the year long have an eye to the poor,
And God shall send luck to keep open thy door.
Good fruit and good plenty do well in thy loft,
Then lay for an orchard and cherish it oft.
The profit is mickle, the pleasure is much;
At pleasure with profit few men will grutch.

At Christmas be merry and thank God of all,
And feast thy poor neighbours, the great and small.
Yea, all the year long have an eye to the poor,
And God shall send luck to keep open thy door.
For plants and for stocks lay aforehand to cast,
But set or remove them, while Twelve-tide do last.
Set one form another, full twenty foot square:
The better the greater they yearly will bare.

5. Christmas husbandly fare,

Thomas Tusser, 1557

(Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie)

Good husband and housewife now cheefly be glad,
things handsom to have, as they ought to be had;
They both doo proudie against Christmas doo come,
to welcome good neighbour, good cheere to have some.

Good bread and good drinke, a good fier in the hall,
brawne, pudding and souse, and good mustard withall.

Beefe, mutton and porke, shred pies of the best,
pig, veale, goose and capon, and turkey well drest;
Cheese, apples and nuts, ioly Carols to heare,
as then in the countrie is counted good cheare.

What cost to good husband is any of this?
good household provision onely it is.
Of other the like, I doo leave out a menie,
that costeth the husbandman never a penie.

6. A description of apt time to spend,

Thomas Tusser, 1557
(Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie)

Let such (so fantastical) liking not this,
nor any thing honest this ancient is,
Giue place to the time that so meete we doo see
appointed of God as it seemeth to be.

At Christmas good husbands haue corne on the ground,
in barne, and in sollar, woorth many a pound,
With plentie of other things, cattle and sheepe,
all sent them (no doubt on) good houses to keepe

At Christmas by labour is little to get,
that wanting, the poorest in danger are set.
What season then better, of all the whole yeare,
thy needie poore neighbour to comfort and cheere?

7. Christmas meat pie recipe,

A Propre new booke of Cokery, 1545

Pyes of mutton or beif must be fyne mynced & seasoned with pepper and salte
and a lytel saffron to colour it
suet or marrow a good quantitie
a lytell vynegre
pruynes
great reasons
and dates
take the fattest of the broath of powdred beefe.
And if you will have paest royall
take butter and yolkes of egges & so to temper the floure to make the paest.

8. Tree wassail

Here's to thee, old apple-tree
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow,
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow!
Hats-full! Caps-full!
Bushel, bushel, sacks-full!
And my pockets full, too! Huzza!

9. For Christmas Day,

Thomas Pestell

Fairest of morning lights, appear,
Thou blest and gaudy day,
On which was born our saviour dear,
Arise and cometh away.

This day prevents His day of doom;
His mercy now is nigh;
The mighty God of Love is come,
The Dayspring from on high.

Behold, the great Creator makes
Himself an house of clay,
A robe of virgin-flesh He takes
Which He will wear for aye.

Hark, hark, the wise Eternal Word
Like a weak infant cries;
In form of servants is the Lord,
And God in cradle lies.

This wonder struck the world amazed,
It shook the starry frame;
Squadrons of spirits stood and gazed,
Then down in troops they came.

Glad shepherds ran to view this sight;
A quire of angels sings;
And eastern sages with delight,
Adore the King of kings.

10. A Hymn on the Nativity of My Savior,

Ben Johnson (1572-1637)

I sing the birth was born tonight,
The Author both of life and light;
The angels so did sound it,
And like the ravished shepherds said,
Who saw the light, and were afraid,
Yet searched, and true they found it.

The Son of God, the eternal King,
That did us all salvation bring,
And freed the soul from danger;
He whom the whole world could not take,
The Word, which heaven and earth did make,
Was now laid in a manger.

The Father's wisdom willed it so,
The Son's obedience knew no "No,"
Both wills were in one stature;
And as that wisdom had decreed,
The Word was now made Flesh indeed,
And took on Him our nature.

What comfort by Him do we win?
Who made Himself the Prince of sin,
To make us heirs of glory?
To see this Babe, all innocence,
A Martyr born in our defense,
Can man forget this story?

11. **Nativity,**

John Donne (1572-1631)

Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves His well-belov'd imprisonment,
There He hath made Himself to His intent
Weak enough, now into the world to come;
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the inn no room?
Yet lay Him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doom.
Seest thou, my soul, with thy faith's eyes, how He
Which fills all place, yet none holds Him, doth lie?
Was not His pity towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pitied by thee?
Kiss Him, and with Him into Egypt go,
With His kind mother, who partakes thy woe.

12. The Nativity,

St Robert Southwell SJ, (1561-1595)

Behold the father is his daughter's son,
The bird that built the nest is hatch'd therein,
The old of years an hour hath not outrun,
Eternal life to live doth now begin,

The word is dumb, the mirth of heaven doth weep,
Might feeble is, and force doth faintly creep.
O dying souls! behold your living spring!
O dazzled eyes! behold your sun of grace!

Dull ears attend what word this word doth bring!
Up, heavy hearts, with joy your joy embrace!
From death, from dark, from deafness, from despairs,
This life, this light, this word, this joy repairs.

Gift better than Himself God doth not know,
Gift better than his God no man can see;
This gift doth here the giver given bestow,
Gift to this gift let each receiver be:

God is my gift, Himself He freely gave me,
God's gift am I, and none but God shall have me.
Man alter'd was by sin from man to beast;
Beast's food is hay, hay is all mortal flesh;

Now God is flesh, and lies in manger press'd,
As hay the brutest sinner to refresh:
Oh happy field wherein this fodder grew,
Whose taste doth us from beasts to men renew!

13. The Burning Babe,

St. Robert Southwell SJ, (1561-1595)

As I in hoary winter's night stood shivering in the snow,
Surprised I was with sudden heat which made my heart to glow ;
And lifting up a fearful eye to view what fire was near,
A pretty babe all burning bright did in the air appear;
Who, scorched with excessive heat, such floods of tears did shed
As though his floods should quench his flames which with his tears were fed.
Alas, quoth he, but newly born in fiery heats I fry,
Yet none approach to warm their hearts or feel my fire but I !
My faultless breast the furnace is, the fuel wounding thorns,
Love is the fire, and sighs the smoke, the ashes shame and scorns;
The fuel justice layeth on, and mercy blows the coals,
The metal in this furnace wrought are men's defiled souls,
For which, as now on fire I am to work them to their good,
So will I melt into a bath to wash them in my blood.
With this he vanished out of sight and swiftly shrunk away,
And straight I called unto mind that it was Christmas day.

13. The Burning Babe,

St. Robert Southwell SJ, (1561-1595)

(tłum. Stanisław Barańczak)

Gdy stałem kiedyś w mroźną noc, dygocząc wśród zamieci,
Znienacka jakiś dziwny żar w mym sercu płomień nieci:
I kiedym podniósł trwożny wzrok, by ujrzeć, co się pali,
Dziecię płonące niby stos zjawiło mi się w dali.
Prażone przez straszliwy żar, z ócz słone lało zdroje,
Na próżno pragnąc morzem łez płomienie zgasić swoje,
„Zaledwem przyszedł na ten świat”, powiada, „w ogniu płonę,
Lecz nikt nie przyjdzie, by w nim grzać swe serce wyziębione!
Pierś ma niewinna – oto piec, opałem cierń jest goły,
Miłość to żar, westchnienia – dym, hańba i ból – popioły;
Podkłada Sprawiedliwość drew, a Litość w węgle dmucha,
Żeliwem pieca zaś jest fałsz i brud ludzkiego ducha;
Skoro więc zbawić ludzi mam, a żar mnie straszny spala,
Roztopię się i własną krwią grzech zmyję, co ich kala.”
To rzekłszy, Dziecię znikło gdzieś; wyrwany z osłupienia,
Pojąłem nagle, że jest dzień Bożego Narodzenia.

14. Coventry Carol

(mid 16th century)

Lully, lulla, thow littell tine child,
By by, lully, lullay thow littell tyne child, by by, lully, lullay!
O sisters too, how may we do
For to preserve this day
This pore yongling for whom we do singe
By by, lully, lullay?
Herod, the king, in his raging,
Chargid he hath this day
His men of might in his owne sight
All yonge children to slay,—
That wo is me, pore child, for thee,
And ever morne and may
For thi parting nether say nor singe, by by, lully, lullay.