

## **SHEPHERDS**

The sheep were gathered safely in the fold,  
And now beside the fire we huddling sat  
And wrapped our cloaks around us for the cold,  
And talked of this and that,

When, sudden as a thunderbolt, the night  
Was turned to day as brightness blazed abroad  
And there before us, stood, arrayed in light,  
The Angel of the Lord.

Like burnished bronze his face with glory shone,  
His robe a rainbow, wings of burning gold,  
His eyes, impossible to look upon,  
Like javalins pierced our souls

His holiness was like a cleansing flame,  
So bright, unbearable, in purity  
That set our hearts on fire with guilty shame  
For our iniquity.

We threw ourselves upon the ground and hid  
Our eyes in terror from the awful sight  
Of Heaven's holy messenger of dread  
Come to proclaim our fate.

And then, as we lay trembling in our fright,  
He spoke and like a trumpet blast his voice  
Resounded through the silence of the night  
"Be not afraid! Rejoice!

"Good news I bring! The long-awaited time  
Of God's deliverance at last has dawned.  
For you and all the lost sheep of mankind -  
The Saviour Christ is born!"

--Malcolm Stearman