

Talking Turkeys  
by  
Benjamin Zephaniah

Be nice to yu turkeys dis christmas  
Cos' turkeys just wanna hav fun  
Turkeys are cool, turkeys are wicked  
An every turkey has a Mum.

Be nice to yu turkeys dis christmas,  
Don't eat it, keep it alive,  
It could be yu mate, an not on your plate  
Say, Yo! Turkey I'm on your side.

I got lots of friends who are turkeys  
An all of dem fear christmas time,  
Dey wanna enjoy it, dey say humans destroyed it  
An humans are out of dere mind.

Yeah, I got lots of friends who are turkeys  
Dey all hav a right to a life,  
Not to be caged up an genetically made up  
By any farmer an his wife.

Turkeys just wanna play reggae  
Turkeys just wanna hip-hop  
Can yu imagine a nice young turkey saying,  
'I cannot wait for de chop',

Turkeys like getting presents,  
dey wanna watch christmas TV,  
Turkeys hav brains an turkeys feel pain  
In many ways like yu an me.

I once knew a turkey called...Turkey  
He said "Benji explain to me please,  
Who put de turkey in christmas  
An what happens to christmas trees?",

I said "I am not too sure turkey  
But it's nothing to do wid Christ Mass  
Humans get greedy an waste more dan need be  
An business men mek loadsa cash'.

Be nice to yu turkey dis christmas  
Invite dem indoors fe sum greens  
Let dem eat cake an let dem partake  
In a plate of organic grown beans,

Be nice to yu turkey dis christmas  
An spare dem de cut of de knife,  
Join Turkeys United  
an dey'll be delighted

My Night With Santa  
by  
Bob Lazzar-Atwood

I was strolling home from work just after midnight Christmas Eve  
Watching snowflakes softly decorate the houses and the trees,  
I had worked a double shift and I was tired from head to toe  
But I chose to walk back home instead of driving in the snow.

As I hummed a Christmas song I had a picture in my head  
Of my children dreaming joyous dreams all bundled in their beds,  
And I thought of my dear wife who would be waiting up for me  
With a plate of Christmas cookies and a nice hot cup of tea.

Then “splutt!” an object hit me and it knocked me off my feet,  
Then “thwack!” another struck and laid me flat out in the street.  
By the time a third one nailed me, ricocheting off my back,  
I was scrambling to a nearby bush to hide from this attack.

My first thought was of hoodlums throwing snowballs just for fun  
And I vowed to seek revenge on them before the night was done,  
But it soon became apparent that this substance wasn't snow  
From the fresh and pungent odour which was wrinkling up my nose.

As I sat there in confusion trying to sort the whole thing out,  
I heard jingling from above and then a voice began to shout,  
And I stared in stunned amazement from my now quite frozen seat  
As Santa's sleigh and reindeer landed swiftly in the street.

Well Santa rushed right over and extended me a hand  
And his grip was quite impressive as he quickly helped me stand,  
Then he scowled at all his reindeer as his eyes surveyed the scene  
And he handed me a moistened towel to wipe my clothing clean.

“I'm sorry, sir,” he said to me, “for any harm I've caused you,  
It's my reindeer's fault, of course, but they insist they never saw you,  
And when you fly around the world with reindeer I'm afraid,  
That people getting hit is just a hazard of the trade.”

Then he walked me to his sleigh and let me stroke the reindeer's fur,  
And I thought I heard them snicker but I couldn't say for sure,  
Then Santa shook my hand and when convinced I was alright,  
He hopped back inside his sleigh and they flew off into the night.

When morning came and all my children's presents were unwrapped  
I motioned for them both to come and sit upon my lap,  
And their eyes began to widen and they stared with gaping jaws  
As I spoke in vivid detail of my night with Santa Claus.

My wife then brought us over one last present from the tree  
And she said it was from Santa and she handed it to me.  
Inside was an umbrella made completely out of steel  
With a note from Santa calling it a "Flying Reindeer Shield."

Now every year at Christmas I display the shield with lights,  
With a varnished piece of reindeer dung I salvaged from that night,  
And I gather all my loved ones and retell the tale with glee  
Of my special night with Santa when his reindeer pooped on me.

## The Adoration of the Wise Men

Saw you never in the twilight,  
When the sun had left the skies,  
Up in heaven the clear stars shining,  
Through the gloom like silver eyes?

So of old the wise men watching,  
Saw a little stranger star,  
And they knew the King was given,  
And they follow'd it from far.

Heard you never of the story,  
How they cross'd the desert wild,  
Journey'd on by plain and mountain,  
Till they found the Holy Child?

How they open'd all their treasure,  
Kneeling to that Infant King,  
Gave the gold and fragrant incense,  
Gave the myrrh in offering?

Know ye not that lowly Baby  
Was the bright and morning star,  
He who came to light the Gentiles,  
And the darken'd isles afar?

And we too may seek his cradle,  
There our heart's best treasures bring,  
Love, and Faith, and true devotion,  
For our Saviour, God, and King.

## A Christmas Carol

"What means this glory round our feet?"  
The Magi mused, "more bright than morn?"  
And voices chanted clear and sweet,  
"Today the Prince of Peace is born!"

"What means that star?" the shepherd said,  
"That brightens through the rocky glen?"  
And angels answering overhead,  
Sang, "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

'Tis twenty hundred years and more  
Since those sweet oracles were dumb;  
We wait for Him, like them of yore;  
Alas, He seems so slow to come!

But it was said, in words of gold.  
No time or sorrow e'er shall dim,  
That little children might be bold  
In perfect trust to come to Him.

All round about our feet shall shine  
A light like that the wise men saw,  
If we our loving wills incline  
To that sweet Life which is the Law.

So shall we learn to understand  
The simple faith of shepherds then,  
And clasping kindly hand in hand,  
Sing, "Peace on earth, good will to men!"

And they who do their souls no wrong,  
But keep at eve the faith of morn,  
Shall daily hear the angel-song,  
"Today the Prince of Peace is born!"

## Christmas Eve

Outside my window whirls the icy storm,  
And beats upon its panes with fingers white;  
Within, my open fire burns bright and warm,  
And sends throughout the room its ruddy light.

Low on the hearth my good grimalkin lies,  
His supple, glossy limbs outstretched along;  
Now gently sleeps with softly closed eyes,  
Now, half awakened, purrs his even-song.

Near to the fire, touched by its gentle heat,  
A silent, welcome friend, my armchair stands.  
Its cushioned depths invite me to its seat,  
And promise rest for weary head and hands.

Within its depths mine eyes unheeded close,  
And comes to me a vision wondrous sweet.  
Such sights and sounds no wakeful hours disclose  
As then my resting, dreaming senses greet.

I am where gentle shepherds on the plain  
Keep sleepless, faithful watch o'er resting sheep;  
I hear them chant the Psalmist's sweet refrain,  
That Israel's God will sure his promise keep.

Then quick the air is full of heavenly song,  
And radiant light illumines all the ground,  
While angel voices sweet the strain prolong,  
And angel faces shine in glory round.

I see the shepherds' faces pale with fear,  
Then glow with joy and glad surprise, for then  
"Glory to God!" from angel lips they hear,  
And "Peace on earth good will to men."

And then the light marks out a shining way,  
And swift the shepherds are the path to take.  
I long to go! O laggard feet, why stay?  
Alas! the vision fades, and I awake.

Within, the smold'ring fire is burning dim;  
Without, the whirl and beat of storm have ceased.  
I still can hear the angels' peaceful hymn,  
And know the vision hath my peace increased.

## T.S. Eliot - Journey Of The Magi

A cold coming we had of it,  
Just the worst time of the year  
For a journey, and such a journey:  
The ways deep and the weather sharp,  
The very dead of winter.'  
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,  
Lying down in the melting snow.  
There were times we regretted  
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,  
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.

Then the camel men cursing and grumbling  
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,  
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,  
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly  
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:  
A hard time we had of it.  
At the end we preferred to travel all night,  
Sleeping in snatches,  
With the voices singing in our ears, saying  
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,  
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;  
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,  
And three trees on the low sky,  
And an old white horse galloped in away in the meadow.  
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,  
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,  
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.  
But there was no information, and so we continued  
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon  
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,  
And I would do it again, but set down  
This set down  
This: were we led all that way for  
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,  
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,  
But had thought they were different; this Birth was  
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.  
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,  
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,  
With an alien people clutching their gods.  
I should be glad of another death.

## The Christmas Silence

Hushed are the pigeons cooing low  
On dusty rafters of the loft;  
And mild-eyed oxen, breathing soft,  
Sleep on the fragrant hay below.  
Dim shadows in the corner hide;  
The glimmering lantern's rays are shed  
Where one young lamb just lifts his head,  
Then huddles 'gainst his mother's side.  
Strange silence tingles in the air;  
Through the half-open door a bar  
Of light from one low-hanging star  
Touches a baby's radiant hair.  
No sound: the mother, kneeling, lays  
Her cheek against the little face.  
Oh human love! Oh heavenly grace!  
'Tis yet in silence that she prays!  
Ages of silence end to-night;  
Then to the long-expectant earth  
Glad angels come to greet His birth  
In burst of music, love, and light!

## The Shepherds in Judea

Oh, the Shepherds in Judea,  
They are pacing to and fro,  
For the air grows chill at twilight  
And the weanling lambs are slow!  
Leave, O lambs, the dripping sedges, quit the bramble and the brier,  
Leave the fields of barley stubble, for we light the watching fire;  
Twinkling fires across the twilight, and a bitter watch to keep,  
Lest the prowlers come a-thieving where the flocks unguarded sleep.  
Oh, the Shepherds in Judea,  
They are singing soft and low—  
Song the blessed angels taught them  
All the centuries ago!  
There was never roof to hide them, there were never walls to bind;  
Stark they lie beneath the star-beams, whom the blessed angels find,  
With the huddled flocks upstarting, wondering if they hear aright,  
While the Kings come riding, riding, solemn shadows in the night.  
Oh, the Shepherds in Judea,  
They are thinking, as they go,  
Of the light that broke their watching  
On the hillside in the snow!—  
Scattered snow along the hillside, white as springtime fleeces are,  
With the whiter wings above them and the glory-streaming star—  
Guiding-star across the housetops; never fear the Shepherds felt  
Till they found the Babe in manger where the kindly cattle knelt.  
Oh, the Shepherds in Judea!—  
Do you think the Shepherds know  
How the whole round earth is brightened  
In the ruddy Christmas glow?  
How the sighs are lost in laughter, and the laughter brings the tears,  
As the thoughts of men go seeking back across the darkling years  
Till they find the wayside stable that the star-led Wise Men found,  
With the Shepherds, mute, adoring, and the glory shining round!

Christmas  
by  
John Betjeman

The bells of waiting Advent ring,  
The Tortoise stove is lit again  
And lamp-oil light across the night  
Has caught the streaks of winter rain.  
In many a stained-glass window sheen  
From Crimson Lake to Hooker's Green.

The holly in the windy hedge  
And round the Manor House the yew  
Will soon be stripped to deck the ledge,  
The altar, font and arch and pew,  
So that villagers can say  
'The Church looks nice' on Christmas Day.

Provincial public houses blaze  
And Corporation tramcars clang,  
On lighted tenements I gaze  
Where paper decorations hang,  
And bunting in the red Town Hall  
Says 'Merry Christmas to you all'

And London shops on Christmas Eve  
Are strung with silver bells and flowers  
As hurrying clerks the City leave  
To pigeon-haunted classic towers,  
And marbled clouds go scudding by  
The many-steepled London sky.

And girls in slacks remember Dad,  
And oafish louts remember Mum,  
And sleepless children's hearts are glad,  
And Christmas morning bells say 'Come!'  
Even to shining ones who dwell  
Safe in the Dorchester Hotel.

And is it true? and is it true?  
The most tremendous tale of all,  
Seen in a stained-glass window's hue,  
A Baby in an ox's stall?  
The Maker of the stars and sea  
Become a Child on earth for me?

And is it true? For if it is,  
No loving fingers tying strings  
Around those tissued fripperies,  
The sweet and silly Christmas things,  
Bath salts and inexpensive scent  
And hideous tie so kindly meant.

No love that in a family dwells,  
No carolling in frosty air,  
Nor all the steeple-shaking bells  
Can with this single Truth compare -  
That God was Man in Palestine  
And lives to-day in Bread and Wine.