

O Bethlem Town Tonight Is Cold
Gordon Bottomley, 1902.
Joseph Barnby, 1872.

O Bethlem town tonight is cold,
And Bethlem town is very dark;
Down tumbling street, on upland wold
Stirs neither wife nor patriarch;
No travelers the inn doors seek
Where still the gust stirred signboards creak.

The dull, dumb shepherds of the heath
Are warm beside their wives in bed;
The mildewed manger chills beneath
The wet thatch gaping overhead;
The ancient stars are tired and dim,
And no new star announces Him.

Or is it that we cannot hear
The least of spiritual songs,
And know not some strange joy more near
Than too familiar angel throngs?
Of Him the greater is our need
Whose life has dwindled to a creed.

Because we know the Lord once woke
Unto a far off people's pain,
We dream, a numb bewildered folk,
That He might think to come again
And save, through new enlightening cares,
A world more sorrowful than theirs.