Story of the Shepherd
Luis de Gngora y Argote(1561-1627)
Joseph Barnby.

It was the very noon of night, the stars above the fold,
More sure than clock or chiming bell, the hour of midnight told;
When from the heavens there came a voice, and forms were seen to shine,
Still brightening as the music rose with light and love divine.
With love divine the song began; there shone a light serene:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen?
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen!

Oh, ne'er could nightingale at dawn salute the rising day
With sweetness like that bird of song in his immortal lay;
Oh, ne'er were wood-notes heard at eve by banks with poplar shade
So thrilling as the concert sweet by heav'nly harpings made;
For love divine was in each chord, and filled each pause between:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen?
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen!

I roused me at the piercing strain, but shrunk as from the ray
Of summer lightning; all around so bright the splendor lay.
For oh, it mastered sight and sense, to see that glory shine,
To hear that minstrel in the clouds, who sang of love divine,
To see that form with bird-like wings, of more than mortal mien;
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen?
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen!

When once the happy trance was past, that so my sense did bind,
I left my sheep to Him whose care was in the western wind;
I left them, for instead of snow, I trod on blade and flower,
And ice dissolved in starry rays at morning's gracious hour,
Revealing where on earth the steps of love divine had been:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen?
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen!

I hasted to a low-roofed shed, for so the angel bade;
And bowed before the lowly rack where love divine was laid:
A newborn babe, like tender lamb, with lion's strength there smiled,
For lion's strength, immortal might, was in that newborn Child;
That love divine in childlike form had God forever been:
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen?
Oh, who hath heard what I have heard or seen what I have seen!