In the Bleak Midwinter

1. In the bleak mid-winter, frost-y wind made moan;
2. Our God, heaven can-not hold him, nor earth sus-tain;
3. An-gels and arch-an-gels may have gath-ered there;
4. What can I give him, poor as I am?

Earth stood hard as i-ron, wa-ter like a stone;
Heaven and earth shall flee a-way when he comes to reign;
If I were a shep-herd, I would bring a lamb;

Snow had fall-en, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place suf-ficed;
But his moth-er on-ly, in her maid-en bliss,
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;

In the bleak mid-winter, long a-go,
The Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ,
I wor-shiped the be-loved with a kiss,
Yet what I can I give him: give my heart.

Though this text describes winter weather in England rather than in Palestine, the poet is using familiar surroundings as a means of making the Nativity more immediate and personal. The tune name honors a Gloucestershire village near the composer's birthplace in Cheltenham.

TUNE: Christina Rossetti, c. 1872, alt.
MUSIC: Gustav Holst, 1906

CRANHAM
Irregular