

## 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;  
 cher-u-bim and ser-a-phim thronged the air;  
 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-win-ter a sta-ble 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-win-ter, long a-go.  
 the Lord God in-car-nate, Je-sus Christ.  
 ‡ wor-shipped the be-lov-ed 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.