

CHRISTMAS IN A MOTHER'S HEART

She sat there, rocking--wrinkled, old and gray,
and pondered in her heart the Christmases of yesterday.

Memories dearest, perhaps because they were nearest,
to the peace that only God can give.

There was that first Christmas eve--just we two.
We went to midnight Mass. We had a lot of living yet to do.

I remember the year we fenced in the tree--for we were three,
and babies like tinsel and bells, you see.

Then there was the year we bought a train--every boy should have
a train! But it was in vain--he was afraid of it. We were too
young to know that he was too young to enjoy it.

But we grew up--and built a home--our first real home. And we
built our first Christmas crib, from the head of my grand-
father's bed (he was born on Christmas Day, you know).

Our three little ones knelt to pray--by the crib that day.
And all week, one little lamb sneaked up to peek--at Baby
Jesus. And the camel and ox and donkey galloped around the
living room when I didn't see.

As the years flew, the family grew--and memories, too. A very
small tree standing up high, where very small eyes could only
look up and sigh... Cookies of all shapes and kinds--the work
made light by many hands. Handmade balls and stars and things.
Homemade fudge and popcorn strings.

That Christmas week when I went away--and brought home another
little "gift" to stay.

We all grew older--teens a bit bored and blase, as they listened
with thoughts astray, to the oft told story of another family
in Bethlehem. Their voices blended as we sang--Silent Night,
Holy Night.

It seems just yesterday.

My heart is full as I rock--my eyes are dim with happy tears.
There's Jim, in the chair--his boys on either side of him--
his little daughter on his knee. Silent Night. Holy Night.

Ah, yes. They have to live and learn--and learn to live--the
peace that only God can give.

His Gift to us at Christmas.