

## **Made flesh**

After the bright beam of hot annunciation  
fused heaven with dark earth  
his searing sharply-focused light  
went out for a while  
eclipsed in amniotic gloom:  
his cool immensity of splendor  
his universal grace  
small-folded in a warm dim  
female space—  
the Word stern-sentenced  
to be nine months dumb—  
infinity walled in a womb  
until the next enormity—the Mighty,  
after submissions to a woman's pains  
helpless on the barn-bare floor  
first-tasting bitter earth.

Now, I in him surrender  
to the crush and cry of birth.  
Because eternity  
was closeted in time  
he is my open door  
to forever.  
From his imprisonment my freedoms grow,  
find wings.  
Part of his body, I transcend this flesh.  
From his sweet silence my mouth sings.  
Out of his dark I glow.  
My life, as his,  
slips through death's mesh,  
time's bars,  
joins hands with heaven,  
speaks with stars.

*Luci Shaw*

## **Away in a manger**

"The little Lord Jesus  
No crying He makes."  
Bah Humbug.

True God made babe  
bewails the warm womb lost;  
hungry, screams and gropes for mother-milk.

True God made child  
wants will his own;  
in tears surrenders to another.

True God made man  
weeps bitterly for friend death stole,  
sobs silently at Simon's loud rejection.

True God made Christ  
in blood-sweat groans  
that cup be taken from him.

On cruel cross  
with throat dry cries  
asks why Good God has Son forsaken.

*Barbara K. Olson*

## **The risk of birth**

This is no time for a child to be born,  
With the earth betrayed by war & hate  
And a nova lighting the sky to warn  
That time runs out & the sun burns late.

That was no time for a child to be born,  
In a land in the crushing grip of Rome;  
Honour & truth were trampled by scorn—  
Yet here did the Saviour make his home.

When is the time for love to be born?  
The inn is full on the plant earth,  
And by greed & pride the sky is torn—  
Yet Love still takes the risk of birth.

*Madeleine L'Engle*

## **After annunciation**

This is the irrational season  
When love blooms bright and wild.  
Had Mary been filled with reason  
There'd have been no room for the child.

*Madeleine L'Engle*

## **Mary's song**

Blue homespun and the bend of my breast  
keep warm this small hot naked star  
fallen to my arms. (Rest...  
you who have had so far  
to come.) Now nearness satisfies  
the body of God sweetly. Quiet he lies  
whose vigor hurled  
a universe. He sleeps  
whose eyelids have not closed before.  
His breath (so slight it seems  
no breath at all) once ruffled the dark deeps  
to sprout a world.  
Charmed by doves' voices, the whisper of straw,  
he dreams,  
hearing no music from his other spheres.  
Breath, mouth, ears, eyes  
he is curtailed  
who overflowed all skies,  
all years.  
Older than eternity, now he  
is new. Now native to earth as I am, nailed  
to my poor planet, caught that I might be free,  
blind in my womb to know my darkness ended,  
brought to this birth  
for me to be new-born,  
and for him to see me mended  
I must see him torn.

*Luci Shaw*