

The Empty Manger



The house was a-bustle with Christmas!
Baking ginger bread scented the air.
Our much-hunted tree stood grandly;
Draped in tinsel, placed on with care!!

I searched for the box marked "Manger"
We'd arrange it under the tree.
Each figure wrapped carefully in paper;
Made the unveiling fun to see!

The sheep, the cow, the donkey,.
All were set in place.
The wise men, the shepherd and Joseph,
With a year-worn nick on his face.

I placed Mary leaning over the cradle.
The manger just awaited the child.
It was then I noticed Him missing!
And my heart began to beat wild!

Where's the baby?! WE had Him last year!
I searched in a panic-state;
The box, the floor, until I had
To quit for work, or I'd be late.

My mind and heart kept searching
As I went to work that day.
It was party-time at the office;
Candles, champagne, a buffet.

I scanned the decorations
and the table with food laden full.
"The baby's missing here, too."
Said a voice within my soul.

I went from there to shopping.
The stores were decked with lights.
There was tinsel. There was garland.
There were stars that glittered bright.

But, instead of children gathering
To worship the babe in the stall,
They were waiting in line for hours
To see Santa Claus in the mall.

My heart sank even deeper.
It's His birthday = and He's not here!
"The baby's missing!" I wanted to shout.
"Doesn't anyone care or fear?"

With a heavy heart I headed home
Where I surveyed my empty scene.
The cattle, the wise men, the Bethlehem star.
Without the baby, what did they mean?

O Lord, I confess You've been missing a lot.
My manger's been empty, I fear.
It's hard to see past the glitter
To the One that I hold so dear.

Well, I did find the baby Jesus
And laid Him in His proper space.
And in my heart I did the same -
Honoring Him with His rightful place.