



Christmas
1994

SLEEPY LITTLE BETHLEHEM

Sleepy little Bethlehem
Your streets grow quiet now.
The restless throng of pilgrims
Is bedding down somehow.

From all across Judea
They've come to be with you
To answer to the census
And pay the taxes due.

Men and women, young and old
Have jammed your streets of clay,
And now that night is drawing nigh
They seek a place to stay.

They fill the inn and rest their heads
In comfortable repose.
They close their eyes on pallet beds
And soundly start to doze.

One poor couple in your midst
Is different from the others.
They have no place to rest their heads
And comfort one another.

The teenage girl and older man
Are quite a pathetic sight.
The darkness of the evening hour
Conceals their dreadful plight.

Joseph pounds upon the door
Of the old, Bethlehem inn.
The innkeeper's raspy voice says,
"Sorry, there's no room within."

Joseph presses urgently
Pushing for some space
Where he can form a makeshift bed
To be a birthing place.

Now the time of Mary's pain
Is quickly drawing nigh
When she will writhe the dance of life
And yield a child whose cry

Will wake the stars up in the sky
Announcing to the earth
That God has done some holy work
In this poor baby's birth.

In that stable long ago
That first Christmas night
Came the birth of the child
That lifts our souls in flight.

In sleepy little Bethlehem
Amid the dust and hay,
The Son of God came down to earth
To take our sins away.

There was no place for him that night
Within the rustic inn,
But a greater tragedy it is
When our hearts make no room for him.

O sleepy little Bethlehem
The place where the Christ was born,
Teach my heart to be a manger
To cradle him Christmas morn.

C. Handlee Vige
Christmas 1994

Dear Friends,

May the Christ who comes at Christmas as the child in the manger find room in your heart to dwell each and every day. And may he bring your heart all the joy of God's love.

The Viges
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* Cover Line Drawings by Lynne and Beth
Back Line Drawing by Tim

