

Levi Pennington

People

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1969

## Christmas, 1969

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# Christmas, 1969



## THE INN KEEPER SPEAKS

I kept the inn then at old Bethlehem.  
When guests arrived there, 'twas I cared for them.  
Caesar had ruled the whole world should be taxed.  
No way could that tyrant's law be relaxed.  
Each man must go to the place of his birth.  
Jews had to come from all parts of the earth,  
Back to Judea, and her part of them  
Crowded our little town called Bethlehem.

One evening, just as the sun sank to rest  
Came to the inn door a tired would-be guest.  
I had to tell him that I had no room.  
He looked as if I had uttered his doom.  
He said his wife's time was very near due.  
Said "Please come out and let her talk to you."

There on her donkey she sat like a queen.  
Loveliest face that I ever had seen.  
I did not wait for a word from the woman.  
Everything in me that could be called human  
Went out to her. No room in the inn.  
Every bed, cot or pallet had been  
Taken by others, and even the floor,  
Every square foot of it -- no room for more.  
But for one form of help I still was able.  
I took the weary pair on to the stable.

I took down hay for the sweet lady's bed.  
Wished I could do more. The dear lady said  
"This will be lovely. My thanks from my heart."  
I said "Good night" and I moved to depart.  
Met my wife at the door. A blanket she'd brought.  
Night had turned chill. They'd need it, she thought.  
Wife always eager to do something good.  
She had brought for them a morsel of food.  
Wife and I went to the inn and to bed.  
"Hope all goes well with them." That's all she said.