

A Christmas Hymn

RICHARD WILBUR (1921–2017)

And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

St. Luke XIX.39-40

A stable-lamp is lighted
whose glow shall wake the sky;
the stars shall bend their voices,
and every stone shall cry.
And every stone shall cry,
and straw like gold shall shine;
a barn shall harbor heaven,
a stall become a shrine.

This child through David's city
shall ride in triumph by;
the palm shall strew its branches,
and every stone shall cry.
And every stone shall cry,
though heavy, dull, and dumb,
and lie within the roadway
to pave his kingdom come.

Yet he shall be forsaken,
and yielded up to die;
the sky shall groan and darken,
and every stone shall cry.
And every stone shall cry
for stony hearts of men:
God's blood upon the spearhead,
God's love refused again.

But now, as at the ending,
the low is lifted high;
the stars shall bend their voices,
and every stone shall cry.
And every stone shall cry
In praises of the child
by whose descent among us
the worlds are reconciled.

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