

Dusty Straw – A Poem for Advent

Rhett Dodson

December 7, 2008

A crowded inn, no place to sleep.
Labor pains, Mary weeps.
A shed for cattle with dusty straw,
A frightened look only Joseph saw.

An ordinary night, like so many gone by,
None suspecting a baby's small cry
Meant salvation to all who would hear,
A cry for those afar, a cry for those near.

In dusty straw lay our Creator
Come to this world, redemption's theatre,
Where angels heralded the news of his birth,
"God's own Son has come to earth!"

From dusty straw to Judean roads,
Temptation, scoffing – heavy loads
To bear as he preached God's kingdom,
"I have come to bring true freedom."

From dusty straw to no place to sleep,
A wandering Shepherd gathering sheep,
Fishermen and farmers, young and old,
Religious and pagan brought into the fold.

From dusty straw to rugged cross,
From swaddling clothes to dreadful loss,
Nails to pierce his hands and feet,
A spear his side – it spelled defeat,

Or so it seemed to the jeering crowd,
Yet a soldier spoke with helmet bowed,
"Truly this man I've seen today
Is God's own Son, he is the Way."

From dusty straw to rock-hewn tomb,
Shades of gray, doubt and gloom,
Some come to mourn at break of day,
But who will roll the stone away?

The garden's hushed at dawn's first light,
There sits a man robed in white
To announce the news of Christ's great day,
"He is not here, he's gone away!"

From dusty straw to Olivet's mount,
Disciples gathered to see the sight,
With hands uplifted, he blessed the men
In Aaronic tones of peace, and then

He ascended back to heavenly light,
His rightful throne of Davidic might—
This son of Mary laid in dusty straw,
This tiny babe the shepherds saw.

From dusty straw to throne on high,
From manger bed with cattle nigh,
To session at the Father's right hand
Where the Trisagion rings from the heavenly band

Of angels who yearn to know
The gospel story that brought Jesus low
To dusty straw to save his people
And make them his holy, living temple.