

I Heard the Drums on Christmas Day

I heard the drums on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar beats did play
Slow, steady
They spoke to me
Of peace on earth, and joy to all!

And thought I, as the drums did roll,
My heart felt good, as in days of old
My people here
Singing so clear
Of peace on earth, and joy to all!

Thrumming, drumming on its way,
The world turned from cold night to day,
A voice, one more,
Soon beauteous roar
Of peace on earth, and joy to all!

Then from the halls of Christendom
His servants from the south did come
Wails and tears drowned
Once happy sounds
Of peace on earth, and joy to all!

And when our families torn apart
Wished at least our language to impart
They stole the way
For us to say
There's peace on earth, and joy to all!

So far from home I hung my head
Beaten, shamed by those come in God's stead
No Christmas cheer
No song sung here
Of peace on earth, and joy to all!

Then thrummed the drum heard long ago
My ears heard none, my heart said so
You urged to me
Don't stop singing
Of peace on earth, and joy to all.

Adapted Lyrics by Vera Starbard (Tlingit/Dena'ina)
Original Arrangement by Ed Littlefield (Tlingit)