

A Christmas Eve Choral

Poem by Bliss William Carman

Halleluja!

What sound is this across the dark
While all the earth is sleeping? Hark!
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why are thy tender eyes so bright,
Mary, Mary?
On the prophetic deep of night
Joseph, Joseph,
I see the borders of the light,
And in the day that is to be
An aureoled man-child I see,
Great love's son, Joseph.

Halleluja!

He hears not, but she hears afar,
The Minstrel Angel of the star.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy gentle smile so deep,
Mary, Mary?

It is the secret I must keep,
Joseph, Joseph, —

The joy that will not let me sleep,
The glory of the coming days,
When all the world shall turn to praise
God's goodness, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Clear as the bird that brings the morn
She hears the heavenly music borne.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy radiant face so calm,
Mary, Mary?
His strength is like a royal palm,
Joseph, Joseph;

His beauty like the victor's psalm,
He moves like morning o'er the lands
And there is healing in his hands
For sorrow, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Tender as dew-fall on the earth
She hears the choral of love's birth.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

What is the message come to thee,
Mary, Mary?
I hear like wind within the tree,
Joseph, Joseph,
Or like a far-off melody
His deathless voice proclaiming peace,
And bidding ruthless wrong to cease,
For love's sake, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Moving as rain-wind in the spring
She hears the angel chorus ring.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why are thy patient hands so still,
Mary, Mary?
I see the shadow on the hill,
Joseph, Joseph,
And wonder if it is God's will
That courage, service, and glad youth
Shall perish in the cause of truth
Forever, Joseph.

Halleluja!

Her heart in that celestial chime
Has heard the harmony of time.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!

Why is thy voice so strange and far,
Mary, Mary?
I see the glory of the star,
Joseph, Joseph,

And in its light all things that are
Made glad and wise beyond the sway
Of death and darkness and dismay,
In God's time, Joseph.

Halleluja!

To every heart in love 't is given
To hear the ecstasy of heaven.
Halleluja! Halleluja! Halleluja!