

Bucolic

by [Muriel Nelson](#) in the [December 10, 2014](#) issue

So tonight we carol again squinting  
at words by candlelight: *betwixt*  
*an ox and a silly poor ass,*  
and (louder) *mortal flesh keep silence.*

Animal warmth in this darkness rises  
among us with each singer's breath, as shadows  
suggest great slumbering beasts  
whose fur brushes us with peace and eases

our way to believe *Incarnatus est.*  
Bodies and beast-shadows sway and grow still.  
No one startles as candle  
flames tongue air that now seems alive. Breathing. Blessed.