"ADVENT"
BY CHRISTINA ROSSETTI

Wikipedia – **Christina Georgina Rossetti (5 December 1830 – 29 December 1894)** was an English poet who wrote romantic, devotional, and children's poems. "Goblin Market" and "Remember" remain famous. She also wrote the words of two Christmas carols well known in the UK: "In the Bleak Midwinter", later set by Gustav Holst and by Harold Darke, and "Love Came Down at Christmas", also set by Darke and by other composers. She was a sister of the artist and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti and features in several of his paintings.

Mark Pallant[1] writes: "Christina Rossetti was born in London to an artistic family — her brother was the famous poet and painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti and her house was a regular meeting place for the group of artists later called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She was a devout Anglican, who despite a lifetime of illness, continued to write poetry."

Rachel Mann - Christina Rossetti was born on 5 December 1830 into a prominent Anglo-Italian family. Casual readers of her work will almost certainly know that she is the sister of one of the nineteenth century's most prominent artists and poets, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and may wish to set her with the Pre-Raphaelite Movement of which Dante Gabriel was part. Christina, however, is so much more. In recent years, her deep Anglican faith has been reckoned as significant not only as a key to understanding her poetry of faith, but as valuable to a mature understanding of her secular verse.3 Indeed, there are grounds for saying that in her mature poetry, one should not be too rigid in separating her poetry into the sacred and the profane. For, running through her writing and her understanding of the world – ecological, aesthetic, personal and political – is her Anglo-Catholicism. [Rachel Mann. *In the Bleak Midwinter: Advent and Christmas with Christina Rossetti* (p. 7). Canterbury Press Norwich. Kindle Edition.]

> Rachel Mann, *In the Bleak Midwinter: Advent and Christmas with Christina Rossetti*
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[1] See: https://markpallant.wordpress.com/2012/12/14/79/.

1.

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,
These Advent nights are long;
Our lamps have burned year after year,
And still their flame is strong.
"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,
Heart-sick with hope deferred:
"No speaking signs are in the sky,"
Is still the watchman's word.

2.

The Porter watches at the gate,
The servants watch within;
The watch is long betimes and late,
The prize is slow to win.
"Watchman, what of the night?" but still
His answer sounds the same:
"No daybreak tops the utmost hill,
Nor pale our lamps of flame."

3.

One to another hear them speak,
The patient virgins wise:
"Surely He is not far to seek,"–
"All night we watch and rise."
"The days are evil looking back,
The coming days are dim;
Yet count we not His promise slack,
But watch and wait for Him."

4.

One with another, soul with soul,
They kindle fire from fire:
"Friends watch us who have touched the goal."
"They urge us, come up higher."
"With them shall rest our waysore feet,
With them is built our home,

With Christ." "They sweet, but He most sweet,
Sweeter than honeycomb."

5.

There no more parting, no more pain,
The distant ones brought near,
The lost so long are found again,
Long lost but longer dear:
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard,
Nor heart conceived that rest,
With them our good things long deferred,
With Jesus Christ our Best.

6.

We weep because the night is long,
We laugh, for day shall rise,
We sing a slow contented song
And knock at Paradise.
Weeping we hold Him fast Who wept
For us,–we hold Him fast;
And will not let Him go except
He bless us first or last.

7.

Weeping we hold Him fast to-night;
We will not let Him go
Till daybreak smite our wearied sight,
And summer smite the snow:
Then figs shall bud, and dove with dove
Shall coo the livelong day;
Then He shall say, "Arise, My love,
My fair one, come away."