

**"Very Little Things Which Suddenly Change the World"  
Christmas Eve, 2011**

**Larry Reimer and Sandy Reimer**

*(Photos illustrating the story line of the poem below were shown  
as it was read on Christmas Eve)*

Once upon a time, the story begins  
Joseph didn't know about the crowded inns  
they'd find when they got to Bethlehem.  
They'd travel now, thought Joseph, and worry then.  
That's how the story goes.

Like everyone at Christmas time,  
Joseph's intentions were truly fine.  
We plan too much, he not enough,  
and in the midst of all the fuss  
God sends a child, itself a surprise.

Mary didn't know what lay in store.  
She'd never had a baby before.  
They were young, Joseph and Mary, they were.  
Their parents must have told them it was much too far,  
but they set off, in trust, on their journey.

They didn't know just how it would feel.  
They didn't know kings and shepherds would kneel.  
They didn't know someone would write of their plight  
as they came to the crowded town that night,  
traveling to Bethlehem without reservation.

Of course they had hints and clues and dreams.  
An angel spoke to Joseph, and Mary it seems  
was having this baby out of strange circumstances.  
If it happened today, we'd give her weird glances.  
"Angels" we'd say, "Ha ha! Hey hey!"

But we sit here tonight and watch for their coming.  
We start out with lights and singing and humming.  
Remember how early the decorations appeared?  
The day after Halloween, just as we feared,  
Walgreens unveiled the Major Award Leg Lamp.

After Thanksgiving we began with the cards and the gifts  
We unpacked the lights; we thought of the lifts

our giving would have for those whom we love  
and we thought once again of angels above,  
and hoped we wouldn't forget Jesus.

We started out simple; we vowed not to hassle.  
This year we'd skip all the fringe and the tassel.  
And in the midst of the projects and rush  
we looked over our shoulders so we'd not lose the hush  
of Mary and Joseph walking through it all.

For they couldn't miss it, the baby was theirs.  
And when babies come, you don't put on airs.  
There's excitement and love and even some fear  
when the moment of newness and life comes so near.  
Mary had a baby that way.

What blossomed within them and gave them their light?  
Did they think of a Messiah being born that night?  
Their child, a savior, did they have an inkling  
of what it would mean, what the world would be thinking,  
of a child, born in a barn?

After all, what's a barn? Even today  
they tear them down most any old way  
to build bigger things, like condos and stores  
for plastic Christmases, and even more,  
the barns, that's how they go.

It seems that God planned it to almost be missed,  
no news teams, no videos, a barn just like this.  
As far off the path as far can be,  
that's where God made it happen, you see,  
the birth almost overlooked.

We think that the shepherds and angels and kings  
were like a big parade, with horns and things,  
but they weren't too much in among all the crowd.  
Their coming wasn't much, not even as loud  
as a party near you tonight.

So we make some noise to remember that night  
When just about everyone missed that bright light -  
the star, the manger and the barn full of hay  
where no one had ever thought to say

that holiness would come to be born.

We sing and we celebrate, bringing our love,  
so we won't forget what God's talking of  
That Christmas is a time to touch and to grow,  
a time to be happy and a time to know  
that peace is a vision for all.

And we hope in our singing, we pray in our dreams  
that we don't miss Christmas, as strange as that seems,  
like all of the people that first Christmas Eve  
who never looked up, who would never believe  
that this is the way it would happen.

Sometimes I fear, we try just too hard.  
We eat too much, spend too much, send too many cards.  
We forget about all the out-of-the-way places  
where Christmas truly happens in hearts and in faces,  
in times to be more careful of love.

The looking and listening, wishes floating in air,  
seeking something of hope in the midst of despair.  
This is how we feel the stirring of earth.  
This is the way we sense God's own birth,  
and find the glow of the Spirit in love.

It happens in babies; it happens all hours.  
It happens in bells and songs and in flowers.  
It happens with friends; it happens alone.  
It happens when we know the many are one,  
When God is born in each of us.

Christmas sneaks up in that kind of way.  
It sneaks in with babies asleep in the hay.  
While everyone rushes and looks for great kings,  
Christmas comes along in very little things  
which suddenly change the world.

The secret is knowing to stay quite awake;  
not getting hung up in the rules that we make,  
but going like Joseph and Mary in love  
and hearing the angels who cry from above  
that peace comes to earth through you.

The true test of finding peace on this earth  
is not just in observing a long ago birth,  
But rather as one wise mystic did say,  
it's discovering new birth in us each day  
in the miracle of hope and grace.

So remember the light that shines in the dark,  
that shines on even when life loses its mark.  
It shines in our laughter; it shines through our tears.  
It shines here tonight as it's gleamed all these years  
In the miracle of hope and of grace.