

## Mum's Nativity Tradition

The cardboard box stored under the stairs  
is placed on the brick hearth.  
Older brothers, sisters and youngest  
gather 'round to listen to her tell the quiet story of Christmas.

One by one, figurines wrapped in newspaper  
unwrap as the Holy Story unfolds.  
She winds the silver key in back of the wood stable  
clicking it tight, *"Silent Night, Holy Night."*

First, the Baby, swaddled, is laid in the manger,  
*"His name Jesus."*  
Mary, the mother watches over.  
Father Joseph kneels.

Wise Men, three, on camels from afar  
followed the star to Little Town of Bethlehem,  
each with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.  
*"Treasures for a King."*

*"See the shepherd boy with lamb tucked under his arm?  
The Angel told where to find the Babe lying in a manger."*  
She places the donkey that carried Mary, near to adore,  
then the sheep and cow.

After the season,  
red, yellow and green lights are unplugged.  
The Nativity . . . saved for last.  
One more time, she winds up the music box.

Youngest gallops the camels,  
*"baas"* the sheep,  
*"moos"* the cow,  
and *"heehaws"* the donkey.

So careful, she takes the Babe  
cradled in small hands to wrap in newspaper.  
The melody slows,  
*"Sleep in Heavenly peace. Sleep in Heavenly peace."*

