

Lambing Service: Poems



The Lamb

Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little Lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb, I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb, I'll tell thee;
He is calléd by thy name
For He calls Himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild;
He became a little child.
I a child, and thou a lamb,
We are calléd by His name.
Little Lamb, God bless thee!
Little Lamb, God bless thee!

William Blake (1757-1827)

We like Sheep

Sheep will stray together
Through bank or stream or hollow,
Just one will find the weakest place,
And all the rest will follow.
Sheep will take no tempting,
No clinging to their master;
Another voice will sound as sweet
And to a sweeter pasture.
Sheep are never free from danger,
Always prone to plunder,
Stolen, lost or set upon,
No matter what their number.
Lord, make me understand
and keep myself from falling;
Not to follow other sheep
But hear my Shepherd calling.

Wilf Ward, 1948-

In Praise of a Collie

She was a small dog, neat and fluid -
Even her conversation was tiny:
She greeted you with bow, never bow-wow.

Her sons stood monumentally over her
But did what she told them. Each grew grizzled
'Til it seemed he was his own mother's grandfather.

Once, gathering sheep on a showery day,
I remarked how dry she was. Pollochan said 'Ah,
It would take a very accurate drop to hit Lassie'.

And her tact - and tactics! When the sheep bolted
In an unforeseen direction, over the skyline
Came - who but Lassie and not even panting.

She sailed in the dinghy like a proper sea-dog.
Where's a burn? - She's first on the other side.
She flowed through fences like a piece of black wind.

But suddenly she was old and sick and crippled...
I grieved for Pollochan when he took her for a stroll
And put his gun to the back of her head.

Norman McCaig, 1910-96

from Seasonal Worship from the Countryside pages 38-39
authors: The Staffordshire Seven
by kind permission of SPCK