

The Oxen

Paul Kelly

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock
"Now they are all on their knees,"
An elder said as we sat in a flock
By the embers in hearthside ease

We pictured the meek mild creatures where
They dwelt in their strawy pen
Nor did it occur to one of us there
To doubt they were kneeling then

So fair a fancy few would weave
In these years! Yet, I feel
If someone said on Christmas Eve
"Come see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom
Hoping it might be so