

Wintershade

By Kevin Hayes



Baghdad's bomb ripped through town like a WMD:
Andrew H. Nelson, 19 of St. Johns, U.S. Army PFC,
Instantly died on 12/25, killed by an insurgent's IED,
Last word from Iraq - arrangements to follow ASAP.

Denial and delay ceded to eulogies the 12th day as a thousand condolences were sifted.
For there was no mistake, no nightmare escape - no ghost of Dickens pretended.
Yet wistfully I thought of his last Christmas a lot, and as the fog of war lifted
these questions arose from childhood I suppose before his interment ended:

Did you find any wise men in that country afar?
Did you caravan with them towards Bethlehem's star?
Did shepherds join in as you proceeded westward that way?
Did Bob Hope schedule an appearance that Christmas day?
Did a chorus of angels sing sweetly o'er your Orient ride?
Did you fall on you knees before Him with Mary and Joseph along side?
And were you welcomed into His kingdom on the day that you died?

As mourners dispersed, came softly a verse which beckoned me to cease walking.
And so I tarried there to seek whence came such fair mysterious and kind talking,
until clearly I heard Mt. Rest's carol of One Word the winds penned out of nothingness:
T'was Epiphany sure which blew through its trees of myrrh, the Magi answering "Yes".

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