

What Can I Give?

This was written for an advent service focusing on St. Nicolas and the giving of gifts.

I have nothing to give
I cannot come to your party.

I have nothing to give

I am too young
or too old

too stupid
or too clever

too poor
or too rich

You don't want people like me

I have nothing to give
I cannot come to your party.

A party takes weeks of preparing
A party needs finest food
A party needs music and laughter
A party needs cleaning and polish
A party needs beautiful decorations
A party needs the best wine
A party needs games
A party needs presents
A party needs lists
A party needs finest clothes
A party needs weeks of preparing

I have nothing to give
I cannot come to your party.

I cannot come to your party.

I do not hope

There is no hope
for such as me

I cannot come to your party.

Instead, I will hide out the back.
In the shed, in the cave, in the garden.
I will hide from the beautiful,
partying people
I will hide out the back

in the stable.
I will hide out the back
with the lost
and the lonely
I will hide out the back
with outcasts
I will hide out the back
with the poor
with the rejects
I will hide out the back
with the sinners.

I cannot come to your party
Instead
I will hide out the back in the stable
with the animals sheltering
from cold and wind
I will hide out the back
amid sweat and stench
and the blood of a unplanned birth.

And we'll share stale bread
and we'll drink raw wine
while the beautiful people feast.

and we'll share stale bread
and we'll drink raw wine
and we'll give of our best
and we'll give of our all
and we'll give of our love
as a distant echo of memory
floats across the years

[Share bread and wine]

A hollow echo
of faraway laughter
recalls
a party with no guests.
A party where status is all
A party where appearance matters.

And as we share bread and wine
As we remember a baby
the party
the real party
is in the stable.

Dare we invite them
to join us?

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