Caedmon’s Hymn
Caedmon of Whitby (?-680)

I cannot speak, unless You loose my tongue;  
I only stammer,  
and I speak uncertainly;  
but if You touch my mouth,  
my Lord,  
then I will sing the story  
of Your wonders!

Teach me to hear that story,  
through each person,  
to cradle a sense of wonder  
in their life,  
to honour the hard-earned wisdom  
of their sufferings,  
to waken their joy  
that the King of all kings  
stoops down  
to wash their feet,  
and looking up  
into their face  
says,  
“I know—I understand.”

This world has become  
a world of broken dreams  
where dreamers are hard to find  
and friends are few.

Lord, be the gatherer of our dreams.  
You set the countless stars in place,  
and found room for each of them to shine.  
You listen for us in Your heaven-bright hall,  
Open our mouths to tell our tales of wonder.

Teach us again the greatest story ever:  
the one who made the worlds  
became a little, helpless child,  
than grew to be a carpenter  
with deep, far-seeing eyes.

In time, the Carpenter began to travel,  
in every village challenging the people
to leave behind their selfish ways,
be washed in living water,
and let God be their king.

the ordinary people crowded round Him.
frightened to miss
a word that he was speaking,
bringing their friends, their children,
all the sick and tired,
so everyone could meet Him,
everyone be touched and given life.

some religious people were embarrassed
—they did not like the company He kept,
and never knew just what He would do next.

He said:
“How dare you wrap God up
in good behaviour,
and tell the poor that they
should be like you?
How can you live at ease
with riches and success,
while those I love go hungry
and are oppressed?
It really is for such a time as this
that I was given breath.”

His words were dangerous,
not safe or tidy.

In secret His opponents said:
“It surely would be better that
one person die.”

“I think that would be better,
if he could.”
Expediency would be the very death of Him.
He died because they thought it might be good.

You died that we might be forgiven,
Lord; but that was not the end.
You plundered death,
and made its jail-house shudder
—or strde into life
to meet Your friends.
I have a dream
that all the world will meet You,
and know You, Jesus,
in Your living power,
that someday soon
all people everywhere will hear Your story,
and hear it in a way they understand.

I cannot speak,
unless You loose my tongue;
I only stammer,
and I speak uncertainly;
but if You touch my mouth,
my Lord,
then I will sing the story
of Your wonders!

so many who have heard
forget to tell the story.

Here am I, my Jesus:
teach me [to sing].