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Christmas on the Off-Trail

Unknown writer

We thought we had forgotten all the years that lie behind us;
And though the vision beckons through the years that wait ahead,
The white and scarlet berries of the season still remind us
That dreams were merely sleeping which we thought forever dead.

For, vagabonds, it's Christmas,
And the clans are congregating;
O, vagabonds, it's Christmas,
And we've come so far away;
And in the lonesome shadows
They are waiting, waiting, waiting
For those who've lost the road that leads
To Home and Christmas Day.

We met our mate, the tramping wind, and so we let it lead us
From one with rose-blood in her veins and sunshine in her hair;
It called us from a mother who we thought would never need us
Until the gray December winds brought in her silent prayer.

For Christmas on the Off-trail
Isn't what we used to think it;
The little horns are calling
With the roll-beat of the drum;
And as we lift our mocking toast
And sullenly we drink it,
A kid calls "Mother—mother"—
And we know how far we've come.



Gray ghosts across the drifting years, they come upon our dreaming,
The kids we used to know before we knew the rover's fate,
The little stockings by the hearth, the mother love a-streaming
From weary eyes that look in vain beyond an old-time gate.

O, vagabonds, tomorrow
We will start with rag and pack again;
And leave a merry song behind
Without a parting word;
But now we'd give our souls to know
The Christmas highway back again,
To whisper "Mother—mother"—
And to know that she had heard.

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