

Christmas Conflict: 2001

Dawn Baker Brimley

. . . for love is of God, and every one
that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
—1 John 4:7

How were we to know
through the thick, smoking days,
the awful rubble of terror

and the warring words? How were we
to remember, except through the insistence
of our own hearts in the slow blue

of morning, another day for some of us
to take December seriously,
to practice hope like birds anticipating

south? There are towns still wanting to believe:
rooms where trees stand as monuments
so beautiful they might have wings.

And Bethlehem is, after all, as near
as any town where gifts are not bombs,
where greetings are not gunfire,

and where a shepherd could stop for directions.
 It floats, this village, on hills in snow,
 under the same stars flaring over the plains

everywhere, for anyone who survives, shivering
 and wounded, but expecting to be allowed to love
 on this rolling, reeling, fast darkening

Christmas earth.

*DAWN BAKER BRIMLEY graduated from Brigham Young University with a B.S. degree in sociology and psychology (1954). With the equivalent of a major in English, she has taught children's literature at BYU and elsewhere. She has published one poetry collection, *Waking Moments* (Provo, Utah: Bushman Press, 1989), and is working on a second book. Among her honors are first-place and second-place awards in the BYU Eisteddfod competition for lyric poetry, a first-place award in the Eliza R. Snow contest, and second place in a BYU Studies contest. Her poetry has appeared, among other places, in *Dialogue*, *Sunstone*, *BYU Studies*, and *the Ensign*.*