

# Amazing Peace: a Christmas poem

by Maya Angelou

Thunder rumbles in the mountain passes  
And lightning rattles the eaves of our houses.  
Flood waters await us in our avenues.

Snow falls upon snow, falls upon snow to avalanche  
Over unprotected villages.  
The sky slips low and grey and threatening.

We question ourselves.  
What have we done to so affront nature?  
We worry God.  
Are you there? Are you there really?  
Does the covenant you made with us still hold?

Into this climate of fear and apprehension, Christmas enters,  
Streaming lights of joy, ringing bells of hope  
And singing carols of forgiveness high up in the bright air.  
The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,  
Come the way of friendship.

It is the Glad Season.  
Thunder ebbs to silence and lightning sleeps quietly in the corner.  
Flood waters recede into memory.  
Snow becomes a yielding cushion to aid us  
As we make our way to higher ground.

Hope is born again in the faces of children  
It rides on the shoulders of our aged as they walk into their sunsets.  
Hope spreads around the earth. Brightening all things,  
Even hate which crouches breeding in dark corridors.

In our joy, we think we hear a whisper.  
At first it is too soft. Then only half heard.  
We listen carefully as it gathers strength.  
We hear a sweetness.  
The word is Peace.  
It is loud now. It is louder.  
Louder than the explosion of bombs.

We tremble at the sound. We are thrilled by its presence.  
It is what we have hungered for.  
Not just the absence of war. But, true Peace.  
A harmony of spirit, a comfort of courtesies.  
Security for our beloveds and their beloveds.

We clap hands and welcome the Peace of Christmas.  
We beckon this good season to wait a while with us.  
We, Baptist and Buddhist, Methodist and Muslim, say come.  
Peace.

Come and fill us and our world with your majesty.  
We, the Jew and the Jainist, the Catholic and the Confucian,  
implore you to stay awhile with us  
so we may learn by your shimmering light  
how to look beyond complexion and see community.

It is Christmas time, a halting of hate time.  
On this platform of peace, we can create a language  
to translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other.  
At this Holy Instant, we celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ

Into the great religions of the world.  
We jubilate the precious advent of trust.  
We shout with glorious tongues the coming of hope.  
All the earth's tribes loosen their voices to celebrate the promise of  
Peace.

We, Angels and Mortals, Believers and Nonbelievers,  
Look heavenward and speak the word aloud.  
Peace.

We look at our world and speak the word aloud.  
Peace.

We look at each other, then into ourselves,  
And we say without shyness or apology or hesitation:

Peace, My Brother.  
Peace, My Sister.  
Peace, My Soul.