

**Listen to *Out of the Deep* from John Rutter's Requiem.**

The words come from Psalm 130. It is amazing.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JoOPG4eloPs>

**The Shortest Day**

And so the Shortest Day came and the year died  
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white  
world  
Came people singing, dancing,  
To drive the dark away.  
They lighted candles in the winter trees;  
They hung their homes with evergreen;  
They burned beseeching fires all night long  
To keep the year alive.  
And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake  
They shouted, reveling.  
Through all the frosty ages you can hear them  
Echoing behind us - listen!  
All the long echoes, sing the same delight,  
This Shortest Day,  
As promise wakens in the sleeping land:  
They carol, feast, give thanks,  
And dearly love their friends,  
And hope for peace.  
And now so do we, here, now,  
This year and every year.  
Welcome Yule!

--by Susan Cooper for *The Christmas Revels*

**To Know the Dark**

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.  
To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight,  
and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings,  
and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings.  
--by Wendell Berry

**Winter Solstice Blessing**

With faithful progress,  
The Great Sun has traveled,  
From north to south again,  
And on this day pauses.

So we also stand still,  
With the whole Earth,  
In quiet thankfulness,  
To the Source of Blessing,  
The Giver of All Light.

—Eric Williams

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"I have news for you:  
The stag bells, winter snows, summer has gone  
Wind high and cold, the sun low, short its course  
The sea running high.  
Deep red the bracken, its shape is lost.  
The wild goose has raised its accustomed cry,  
cold has seized the birds' wings;  
season of ice, this is my news."

—Irish poem, ninth century

## **Song to the Pleiades**

Look as they rise, rise  
over the line where sky meets the earth;  
Pleiades!

Lo! They ascending, come to guide us,  
Leading us safely, keeping us one;

Pleiades,  
Teach us to be, like you, united.

From the Hako, a Pawnee ceremony  
trans. by Alice Fletcher

*Note: the Pleiades are a cluster of 7 stars, most easily seen in winter.*

## **You, Darkness**

You, darkness, that I come from  
I love you more than all the fires  
that fence in the world,  
for the fire makes a circle of light for everyone  
and then no one outside learns of you.

But the darkness pulls in everything-  
shapes and fires, animals and myself,  
how easily it gathers them! -  
powers and people-

and it is possible a great presence is moving near me.

I have faith in nights.

Rainer Maria Rilke

## **Magic Prayer**

I arise from rest with movements swift  
As the beat of a raven's wings

I arise  
To meet the day

Wa-wa.

My face is turned from the dark of night  
To gaze at the dawn of day,  
Now whitening in the sky.

Iglulik Eskimo

The song, "Turning Toward the Morning"  
sung by Gordon Bok, Ed Trickett, Ann Mayo Muir  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WbKkXR0IHVE>