

A Long Christmas Dinner

Carrie Newcomer

Cal made the long table for his bride June
When the first child was born and they needed more room
Cal was one of four sons, and there was too little farm
And the railroad had work so they move into town

First came Emmet and Clara, William and Grace
Around the long table they all took their place
Every year that would gather sing carols and hymns
With canned peaches and shortcake and four wide grins

Chorus: but it feels like it's been one long Christmas diner
One unending prayer one unbroken line
Singing "Be Thou My Vision" by day or by night
All is calm and all is bright.

Eating strawberry jam from our victory garden
June kept giving Emmet more food than he wanted
As if she could fill him with enough food and faith
To last him through Europe and bring him home safe

Clara moved back at Christmas with her two children
When her husband ran off, with girl who was willing
And when Grace's small daughter offered up her shortcake
Clara leaned on Will's shoulder and covered her face

Chorus:

Long ago Emmet came home, now he carves the ham
Though Since then he's needed a leg brace to stand
He and Grace visit often, and help mom with yard work
Who still can't believe what their wearing to church

Cousin ann. is in Chicago and she stayed good friends
With cousin Rose who's a painter and lives in South Bend
And William's boy Michael is a young handsome rogue
Cruisin' town with an eight track of Abby Road

Chorus:

There's been so many joys and so many cradles
But there was one who spent only one year at the table
It must have been grandma who gathered her close
So she'd have no fear when they both passed across

Put out the canned peaches in honor of June
And Michael's grown daughter who's coming home soon
For all we've lost or haven't found yet
All who come to the table and clasp hands around it.