

## Sheep like stones

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In silent fold,

Snow like ash

Settling cold.

Walk a world bereft as dream,

Birdless wood

Standing stream.

Bethlehem: the children whine;

Travellers wait in line.

Tired men ring the courtyard fire,

Tethered mules cram the byre.

Stumble through the cattle pens;

Overhead roosting hens.

Spread with bales the reeking floor;

Birthing bed: sacks and straw.

Trim the lamp;

Bemused and numb,

Watch and wait:

Soon a son.

**Jenny Overton**

**From *The thirteen days of Christmas***