

O Little Town of Bethlehem
Phillip Brooks, Lyrics, 1865; Lewis Redner, 1868

The lyrics to "*O Little Town of Bethlehem*" were written by Phillip Brooks, an Episcopal priest from Boston, Christmas 1865, shortly after returning from a trip to Jerusalem & Bethlehem. A few years later, while preparing for Christmas Services at Boston's Holy Trinity Church, he shared the 5-stanza poem with Lewis Henry Redner, the church organist and talented composer, who added music. Redner shares that experience in "*Studies of Familiar Hymns*" by Louis F. Benson, D.D., in 1903.



Quoting Redner, he writes, "*Mr. Brooks told me he had written a simple little carol, and he asked me to write the tune to it. I had trouble putting my brain to it. But, Saturday night, I was roused from sleep hearing an angel-strain whispering in my ear, and seizing a piece of music paper I jotted down the treble of the tune as we now have it, and on Sunday morning before going to church I filled in the harmony. That morning, the children's choir performed the song. Neither Mr. Brooks nor I ever thought the song would live beyond that Christmas of 1868.*"

This song is listed as having '1 part', the melody. The two tabs are two separate 'versions' of the melody, not '2 parts'. One is written in the key of A, using a capo at the 4th fret. The second is written in the key of D, using the 1+ fret.

For an interesting contrast to the song, try playing the bridge (measures 10 to 13) using a 'dampened strings' technique. To do so, gently lay the palm, wrist, or little finger across all the strings, while strumming

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