

Cowherd

Caedmon was a cowherd at the monastery of Whitby where Hilda was Abbess.

At first he was 'shy and ignorant of the art of song' but he learnt to compose one night in the course of a dream.

In the dream an angel greeted him, 'Caedmon' he said, 'sing something to me'.

Caedmon replied 'I don't know how to sing, that is why I left the feast and came here'. Again the angel spoke and said 'you must sing something'.

'What should I sing?' asked Caedmon. The angel replied 'Sing of the beginning of creation'. Caedmon at once began to sing in praise of God.



*Praise the Lord, O my soul
and all that is in me, praise
his holy name. Psalm 34*

Caedmon's Song

Now we must praise the Maker of
the kingdom of heaven, the power
of the Creator and His wisdom, the
deeds of the Father of glory; how
since He is God eternal, He is the
Author of all wonders, and created
first for the sons of men the heaven
for their roof, and next, almighty
Guardian of mankind, the earth.

Songster

When Caedmon told his superior, the Reeve, of his dream he was taken to Abbess Hilda.

Hilda recognized that Caedmon had been given a great gift and encouraged him to take monastic vows so that he could be taught the scriptures.

Caedmon turned all he learnt into such sweet poetry 'that his teachers become, in turn, his audience'.

Encouraged by Hilda he sang simply and beautifully of the creation of the world and many other stories from the Holy Scriptures.

All who listened to his songs understood them and marveled at their beauty and truth.

