



My companion nodded. She put out a mittened hand to knock on the door but shook her head as I started to remove my scarf. “Better keep it on,” she said, smiling as the door opened. “We’ll probably have to sit outside.”

“Outside?” I stopped as the door slid open, forcing myself to smile into the faces of the people who grinned at us from inside the hut.

Sister Kelly hugged Sister Han and their two children. They laughed together, Brother Han booming, “Merry Christmas!” in halting English.

Sister Han took my hand, smiling deep into my eyes. Her face glowed as she maneuvered us into their tiny one-room home. I smiled back, already feeling warmer.

Brother Han attempted to shut the door, but the small room would not hold all of us, so we sat in the doorway near their outdoor cooking pot. He loaded my shoulders with blankets.

I held my hands toward the small portable gas heater, their only piece of furniture. Sister Han handed me a bowl of oranges and a plateful of biscuits.

LIGHT

By Elin Roberts

*In the beginning,
God called for light,
And the stars were made
according to His word.
They are here tonight,
flecks of silver and gold—
And once again heaven’s
voice is heard.*

*But this is a new star—
Its light will never dim.
Others fill the sky tonight,
But this one leads to Him.*

The author lives in Texas, USA.

Stumbling over my Korean, I attempted to thank her for her offering. Suddenly, I wasn’t thinking of that loaded kitchen table anymore.

“You are sick for home?” Sister Han looked at me with concern. She studied me for a moment before whispering,

“We are glad you are here.”

I looked into her face, then into her husband’s. Their home was too small for a Christmas tree. They had no presents crowding the floor. There was no music, no turkey, no tinsel or bows. All their worldly possessions were crammed into the shelves that lined one wall of their home.

As I studied my surroundings, the pains of homesickness left me, replaced instead by visions of another humble place, a stable that was small and unadorned, where animals and shepherds felt at ease.

I took Sister Han’s hand, holding it close between my own. A spot had been cleared on their crowded shelves. In this spot was a miniature manger scene made of plastic; beside it sat a picture of the Savior. Gazing at the picture, I realized how comfortable He must be in these surroundings.

“I’m glad I’m here,” I whispered. “Merry Christmas.” ■

The author lives in Utah, USA.