The Gift

Aselin Debison

A poor orphan girl named Maria
Was walking to market one day
She stopped for to rest by the roadside
Where a bird with a broken wing lay
A few moments passed till she saw it
For its feathers were covered with sand
And soon cleaned and wrapped it was traveling
In the warmth of Maria?s small hand
She happily gave her last peso
On a cage made of rushes and twine
She fed it loose corn from the market
And watched it grow stronger with time
Now the gift-giving service was coming
And the church shone with tinsel and light
And all of the town folk brought presents
To lay by the manger that night
There where diamonds, incense and perfume
And packages fit for a king
But for one ragged bird in a small cage
Maria had nothing to bring

She waited till just before midnight
So no one would see her go in
And crying she knelt by the manger
For her gift was unworthy of him
Then a voice spoke to her through the darkness
?Maria, what brings you to me?
If the bird in the cage is your offering
Open the door, let me see?
So she trembled, she did as he asked her
And out of the cage the bird flew
Soaring up into the rafters
On a wing that had healed good as new
Just then the midnight bells rang out
And the little bird started to sing
A song that no words could recapture
For its beauty was fit for a king
Now Maria felt blessed just to listen
To that cascade of notes sweet and long

As her offering was lifted to heaven
By the very first nightingale?s song

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