

PREMIERE SNOWMAN

Lee Evans

Before the universe was born
Out of the mind of Man;
Before Mankind himself was formed
By his own unconscious hands,—

Far stretching through the wilderness
The snow lay on the ground,
So dense within the forest depths
No food could there be found.

The birds and deer grew small and thin
For hunger in those woods;
The wolves and owls were languishing
For prey to feed upon.

So faint were all the animals,
So weakened and so chilled,
That they were inconsolable
And slept to ease their ills.

Then night came on, and with it Wind
That shivered all the trees,
And scattered falling branches in
The drifts that lay beneath.

It was as though the Wind itself
Had feet and hands and arms,
The way it pushed the snow about
And shaped it to a form

No animal before had known,
Or dreamt of in its sleep.
What we would call a Snowman rose
Upon the hoary deep,

And sparkled in the morning sun
Before the startled eyes
Of elk and timid chipmunks,
That fled from it to hide.

But as the day waxed brighter,

The Snowman did appear
As shelter from the wintry blast;
And beast and fowl drew near,

And by it were protected
From storm and bitter cold.
And on the sheet before it
A feast they did behold

Of seed and nuts and tubers;
Green grass that they might find
The teeming marshes over,
When Summer was so kind.

All through the dreary Winter
They fed this shrine before,
Till Spring dissolved the Giver
And offered its own store.

The legend you have heard now,
Of how it all began
Before the world was dreamed anew
To stroke the pride of Man.

When next you sculpt a blizzard,
Remember this, and mind
To let the breath of Winter
Your freezing fingers guide.

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