I. Icicles (Shakespeare)

When icicles hang by the wall, and Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall, and milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipped, and ways be foul, then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-wit, to-who! A merry note, while greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all around the wind doth blow, and coughing drowns the parson’s saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow, and Marian’s nose looks red and raw,
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl, then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-wit, to-who! A merry note, while greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

II. Winter Nights (Thomas Campion)

Now winter nights enlarge the number of their hours,
And clouds their storms discharge upon the airy towers,
Let now the chimneys blaze and cups o’erflow with wine,
Let well-tuned words amaze with harmony divine.

Now yellow waxen lights shall wait on honey love,
While youthful revels, masques, and courtly sights
Sleep’s leaden spells remove.

This time doth well dispense with lovers’ long discourse;
Much speech hath some defence, though beauty no remorse.
All do not all things well; some measures comely tread,
Some knotted riddles tell, some poems smoothly read.

The summer hath his joys, and winter his delights;
Though love and all his pleasures are but toys,
They shorten tedious nights.

III. Good Ale (15th century)

Bring us in good ale, and bring us in good ale,
For our blessed Lady’s sake, bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no brown bread, for that is made of bran,
Nor bring us in no white bread, for therein is no game,
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no beef, for there is many bones,
But bring us in good ale, for that go’th down at once,
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no bacon, for that is passing fat,
But bring us in good ale, and give us enough of that,
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no mutton, for that is often lean,
Nor bring us in no tripes, for they be seldom clean,
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no eggs, for there are many shells,
But bring us in good ale, and give us nothing else,
And bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no puddings, for therein is all goat’s blood,
Nor bring us in no venison, for that is not for our good,
But bring us in good ale.

Bring us in no capon’s flesh, for that is often dear,
Nor bring us in no duck’s flesh, for they slobber in the mere,
But bring us in good ale!

IV. Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind (Shakespeare)

Blow, blow, thou winter wind, thou art not so unkind
As man’s ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen, because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh ho! Sing heigh ho! Unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh ho, the holly! This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky, that does not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot,
Though thou the waters warp, thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remember’d not.

Heigh ho…

V. Winter Wakeneth All My Care (14th century)

Winter wak’neth all my care, now these leaves waxeth bare;
Oft I sigh and mourn sore when it cometh in my thought
Of this worlds joy, how it goeth all to nought.

Now it is, and now it is not, as if it never were, y-wis;
What many man saith, sooth it is; all goeth but Goddes will.
All we shall die, though us like ill.
All the grove groweth green, now it falloweth all hidden,
Jesu, help that it be seen, and shield us from hell!
For I know not whither I shall, ne how long here dwell.

VI. Hay, Ay (Anonymous, c. 1500)

Hay, ay! Make we merry as we may!

Now is Yule comen with gentil cheer; of mirth and gamen he has no peer;
In ev’ry land where he comes near is mirth and gamen I dare well say.

Now is comen a messenger of your Lorde, Sir New Year,
Bids us all be merry here, and make as merry as we may.

Therefore ev’ry man that is here, sing a carol on his manere;
If he can none, we shall him lere, so that we be merry always.

Whosoever makes heavy cheer, were he never to me dear;
In a ditch I would be were, to dry his clothes till it were day!

Mend the fire, and make good cheer! Fill the cup, Sir Botelere!
Let ev’ry man drink to his fere. This ends my carol with care away!