

## **The Shortest Day**

And so the shortest day came and the year died  
And everywhere down the centuries of the snow-white world  
Came people singing and dancing,  
To drive the dark away.  
They lighted candles in the winter trees;  
They hung their homes with evergreen;  
They burned beseeching fires all night long  
To keep the year alive.  
And when the new year's sunshine blazed awake  
They shouted, reveling.  
Through all the frosty ages you can hear them  
Echoing behind us --- listen!  
All the long echoes sing the same delight  
This shortest day.  
As promise wakens in the sleeping land:  
They carol, feast, give thanks,  
And dearly love their friends,  
And hope for peace.  
And now so do we, here, now,  
This year and every year.  
Welcome Yule!

*By Susan Cooper*