

# Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016

---

Volume 10 *A Collection of Essays Presented at the Tenth Frances White Ewbank Colloquium on C.S. Lewis & Friends*

Article 101

---

6-5-2016

## Chesterton in Heaven

Jennifer Woodruff Tait

Follow this and additional works at: [https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings\\_forever](https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Woodruff Tait, Jennifer (2016) "Chesterton in Heaven," *Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016*: Vol. 10 , Article 101.

Available at: [https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings\\_forever/vol10/iss1/101](https://pillars.taylor.edu/inklings_forever/vol10/iss1/101)

This Essay is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for the Study of C.S. Lewis & Friends at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Inklings Forever: Published Colloquium Proceedings 1997-2016* by an authorized editor of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact [pillars@taylor.edu](mailto:pillars@taylor.edu).

## Chesterton in Heaven

by Jennifer Woodruff Tait

Jennifer Woodruff Tait is an Episcopal priest, the managing editor of *Christian History* magazine, the content editor for The High Calling at the Theology of Work Project, and the author of *The Poisoned Chalice* and the poetry collection *Histories of Us*. She lives in Richmond, KY with her husband Edwin, daughters Catherine Elanor and Elizabeth Beatrice, in-laws, 26 goats, 16 chickens, and a laptop. She invites everyone to check out *Christian History's* 2015 issue on *The Seven Sages* (MacDonald, Tolkien, Lewis, Williams, Chesterton, Sayers, and Barfield).

The wine flowed free enough for friends,  
The chairs were large as thrones,  
The walls were white with blazoned saints  
When God's great child came home.  
For him who sang of all the songs  
The wildest and the best  
God's minstrels waited at the gate  
To welcome him to rest;  
And Heaven was a lovely inn,  
The door flung open wide  
The Keeper standing in the door  
With all the world inside.

He threw his faded hat away,  
He cast his cape behind,  
He hurled his staff into the night  
And carelessly he climbed  
Through all the lower clouds of God  
Up to the golden height  
Lit by the windows of the inn  
And burning day and night;  
The crowd was round him at the close—  
Their wingéd mystery beat  
On every shining windowpane  
Along the golden street.

He seized their hands and touched their wings

As each passed into view;  
He called them by the names they bore  
When earth was all they knew—  
Said “Dickens” with a choking sound,  
Said “Stevenson” and “Scott,”  
And took the wine from open hands  
And gazed like one forgot.  
His father’s eyes, his mother’s face,  
His brother, tall and proud;  
They spoke not, but no other peace  
Has ever spoke so loud.

But through the multitude his eyes  
Saw keenly who was gone,  
Not yet arrived, but laboring still  
And waiting to come on.  
He missed a City-magnate’s hat,  
A boyish grin below,  
The first and wittiest of all friends  
A man might ever know;  
He missed a sturdy-shouldered man  
With French eyes and English chin  
(The gates of Heaven were not yet wide  
To let poor Hilary in.)  
He missed a hush of blue and green,  
He missed an elvish face,  
And all the angels round could not  
Fill up that empty place.

But all the crowd, they took his hand  
And led him to the door,  
That inn where all earth’s wanderers  
Can never wander more.  
That Keeper keeps the doors of light  
Who guards the gates of pain,  
For darkness is as light to Him  
Who has death’s darkness slain;  
And when the pilgrim bent in joy,  
In passion like a child,  
The Innkeeper looked down on him  
And all His glory smiled.