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The first Nowell

The first Nowell the An-gel did say, was to
cer-tain poor shep-herds in fields as they lay. In
fields where they lay a-keep-ing their sheep, on a
cold win-ter's night that was so deep.
Now-ell, Now-ell, Now-ell, Now-
ell, born is the King of Is-ra-el.

The musical score is written on six staves in 3/4 time. The melody is simple and consists of eighth and quarter notes. The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes. The piece ends with a double bar line.

15

The first Nowell

1. The first Nowell¹ the Angel did say,
was to certain poor shepherds², in fields as they lay.
In fields where they lay a-keeping their sheep,
on a cold winter's night that was so deep.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell.
Born is the King of Israel.
2. They looked up and saw a star,
shining in the East, beyond them far,
and to the earth it gave great light,
and so it continued both day and night.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell.
Born is the King of Israel.
3. And by the light of that same star,
three wise³ men came from countries far!
To seek⁴ for a King was their intent⁵,
and to follow the star wherever it went.
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell, Nowell.
Born is the King of Israel.

¹ Nowell: from French Noël (= Weihnachten)

² shepherd: Schäfer

³ wise: weise, klug

⁴ to seek: suchen

⁵ intent: die Absicht