

WHAT SO ★ PROUDLY ★ WE HAIL

The American Soul in Story, Speech, and Song

Our Christmas Tree

WENDELL BERRY

Like Robert Frost's "Christmas Trees," this 1996 poem by Wendell Berry (b. 1934) questions the American practice of melding commercial activity and spiritual observance in the celebration of Christmas. Why does the poet choose not to decorate his Christmas tree with lights? How is his tree different from "electrified" trees? Do you think it is more appropriate to the celebration of this holiday? Why or why not?

Page | 1

Our Christmas tree is
not electrified, is not
covered with little lights
calling attention to themselves
(we have had enough of little
lights calling attention
to themselves). Our tree
is a cedar cut here, one
of the fragrances of our place,
hung with painted cones
and paper stars folded
long ago to praise our tree,
Christ come into the world.