

St. Caedmon the Hymnographer

February 11



Our venerable and God-bearing Father Cædmon is the first English poet whose name is known. As the author of the first recorded poem in English, he is known as the Father of English Poetry. According to the monk, author and scholar, Bede, writing in the 7th century, Cædmon was a cow-herd at a Yorkshire monastery, who was unable to sing in public until he miraculously found himself able to sing the Creation, a poem of nine lines.

St. Hilda, the abbess of Whitby Abbey, encouraged his new calling and asked him to join the monastery. The poem we know as "Cædmon's Hymn" was written down by Bede in Latin in his Ecclesiastical History of the English People. The Anglo-Saxon version

commonly read today is not, in actuality, Cædmon's own work, but comes from an Anglo-Saxon translation of Bede's history made sometime during the reign of St. Alfred the Great.