

Gifts from Ancient Times: The Sumerians

(to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You")

The Sumerians gave gifts
that we use today.
They controlled their twin rivers
that flooded each spring.

They built levees with soil
and irrigated their crops.
It took a lot of planning,
so they got more organized.

They set up governments
to make laws all would obey.
With a growing population,
they built cities with mud bricks.

Priests and merchants were rich.
They were in the upper class.
Their houses had two stories
in the middle of town.

Middle class homes had one story
for shopkeepers and officials
and also for artisans—
the skilled workers of the day.

The lower class was poor
and lived at the edge of the town.
They were farmers and fishermen
and unskilled workers.

The oldest written records
are Sumerian cuneiform.
They made the first wheel and the first plow
and the first sailboat!

Gifts from Ancient Times: The Babylonians

(to the tune of "Happy Birthday to You")

The Babylonians gave gifts
that we use today.
They improved irrigation
by building canals.

Their leader, Hammurabi,
reformed taxes and laws.
He took laws from the city-states
and made one code for all.

He punished those who lied in court
and appointed judges who answered to him.
"Innocent till proven guilty"
goes back to his day.

Under his rule
trade increased in Babylon.
From China and India
traders bought their surplus goods.

The Babylonian calendar,
based on phases of the moon,
had 12 months and marked out
times for planting and festivals.

They did complex math
with a unique number system.
We get 60 minutes in an hour
and 60-second minutes from them.

360—
the degrees in a circle—
that comes from them, too.
Besides that, they made a clock.