Apple Tree Wassail

trad. English (Devonshire)



A luck charm for the Devon and Somerset cider country. To be sung either at the orchardman's door or in front of his trees. Epiphany (12 days after Christmas) was reckoned a good time for the ceremony. Roy Palmer prints the Apple Tree Wassail in his Everyman's Book of English Country Songs, and quotes the Illustrated London News of January 11, 1851: "On Twelfth Eve, in Devonshire, it is customary for the farmer to leave his warm fireside, accompanied by a band of rustics, with guns, blunderbusses, etc., presenting an appearance which at other times would be somewhat alarming. Thus armed, the band proceed to an adjoining orchard, where is selected one of the most fruitful and aged of the apple trees, grouping round which they stand and offer up their invocations in the following doggerel rhyme: 'Here's to thee/Old apple tree!/ Whence thou mayst bud,/ And whence thou mayst blow,/ And whence thou mayst bear,/ Apples enow:/ Hats full,/ Caps full,/ Bushels,/ bushels, sacks full,/ And my pockets full, too!/ Huzza! huzza! The cider-jug is then passed around, and with many a hearty shout, the party fire off their guns, charged with powder only, amidst the branches."

Apple Tree Wassail

O lily-white lily, o lily-white pin,
 Please to come down and let us come in!
 O lily-white lily, o lily-white smock,
 Please to come down and pull back the lock!

For it's our wassail jolly wassail!
Joy come to our jolly wassail!
How well they may bloom, how well they may bear,
So we may have apples and cider next year.

2. O master and mistress, o are you within?
Please to come down and pull back the pin.
Good luck to your house, may riches come soon,
So bring us some cider, we'll drink down the moon.

For it's our wassail jolly wassail! Joy come to our jolly wassail! How well they may bloom, how well they may bear, So we may have apples and cider next year.

3. There was an old farmer and he had an old cow, But how to milk her he didn't know how. He put his old cow down in his old barn. And a little more liquor won't do us no harm. Harm me boys harm, harm me boys harm, A little more liquor won't do us no harm.

For it's our wassail jolly wassail!
Joy come to our jolly wassail!
How well they may bloom, how well they may bear,
So we may have apples and cider next year.

4. O the ringles and the jingles and the tenor of the song goes Merrily merrily.O the tenor of the song goes merrily.

Shouted:

Hatfulls, capfulls, three-bushel bagfulls, Little heaps under the stairs. Hip hip hooray!

Arise and Hail the Joyful Day

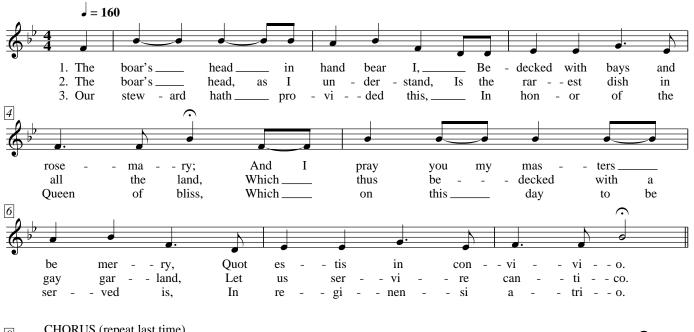


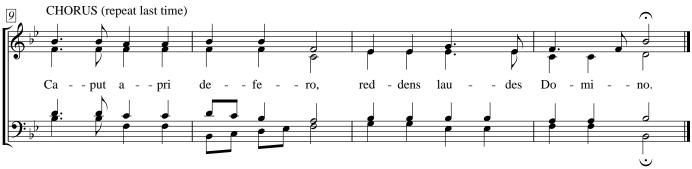


- Arise and hail the joyful day
 Of your Redeemer's birth;
 Lift up your voices to the sky;
 A Saviour born on earth.
- 2. Behold and hear what news we bring To lost mankind this day; Sweet hallelujah let us sing, And join the heav'nly lay.
- He comes, poor sinners to redeem, Who so affronted God; To heal their souls from death and sin, And save them with his blood.
- Then let us join in choirs above
 To celebrate His name,
 In singing of His wonderous love,
 And spreading forth his fame.

The Boar's Head

traditional, arr. Edward L. Stauff





- The boar's head in hand bear I,
 Bedecked with bays and rosemary;
 And I pray you my masters be merry,
 Quot estis in convivio.
 [So many as are in the feast.]
 Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.
 [The boar's head I bring,
 giving praises to God.]
- The boar's head, as I understand,
 Is the rarest dish in all the land,
 Which thus be decked with a gay garland,
 Let us servire cantico.
 [Let us serve with a song.]
 Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.
- 3. Our steward hath provided this,In honor of the Queen of bliss,Which on this day to be served is,In reginensi atrio.[In the Queen's hall.]Caput apri defero, reddens laudes Domino.

We use the Queen's College, Oxford setting from The Oxford Book of Carols.

The Boys Carol Personent Hodie

14th Century tune (Piae Cantiones, 1582) Translation from Elizabeth Poston's Penguin Book of Christmas Carols

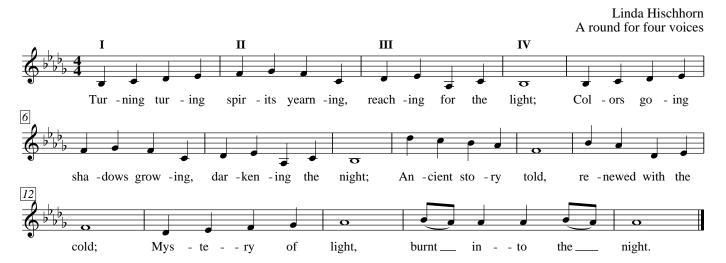


- 1a. Personent hodie, Voces puerulae, Laudantes jocunde, Qui nobis est natus, Summo Deo datus, Et de vir, vir, vir, Et de vir, vir, vir, Et de virginneo Ventre procreatus.
- 1b. Let the boys' cheerful noise, Sing today none but joys, Praise aloud, clear and proud, Praise to him in chorus, Giv'n from heaven for us, Virgin-born, born, born, Virgin-born, born, born, Virgin-born on that morn, Procreated for us.
- 2. He who rules heaven and earth Lies in stall at his birth, Humble beasts at his feast See the Light eternal Vanquish realms infernal: Satan's done, done, done, Satan's done, done, done, Satan's done, God has won, Victor he, supernal.

- 3. Magi come from afar
 See their sun, tiny one,
 Follow far, little star,
 At the crib adoring,
 Man to God restoring,
 Gold and myrrh, myrrh, myrrh,
 Gold and myrrh, myrrh, myrrh,
 Gold and myrrh offered there,
 Incense for adoring.
- 4. Clerk and boy, join in joy,
 Sing as heaven sings for joy,
 God this day here doth stay,
 Pour we forth the story
 Of his might and glory:
 Ideo, o, o,
 Ideo, o, o,
 Ideo gloria
 In excelsis Deo.

Piae Cantiones, a book of Latin carols compiled in Finland in 1582, gives us The Boys' Carol, with a translation of the original text from Elizabeth Poston's Penguin Book of Christmas Carols. [Notes from Nowell Sing We Clear.]

Chanukah / Solstice



Chariots

John Kirkpatrick, 1995



1. O Shepherd O shepherd come leave off your piping Come listen come learn come hear what I say For now is the time that has long been forespoken For now is the time there'll be new tunes to play For soon there comes one who brings a new music Of sweetness and clarity none can compare So open your heart for heavenly harmony Here on this hill will be filling the air

CHORUS

With chariots of cherubim chanting And seraphim singing hosanna And a choir of archangels a-caroling come Hallelujah Hallelu All the angels a-trumpeting glory In praise of the Prince of Peace

- 3. Bring your sheep bleating to this happy meeting To hear how the lamb with the lion shall lie It's mooing and braying you'll hear the song saying The humble and lowly will be the most high Let the horn of the herdsman be heard up in heaven For the gates are flung open for all who come near And the simplest of souls shall sing to infinity Lift up and listen and you shall hear
- 4. The warmonger's charger will thunder for freedom
 The gun-maker's furnace will dwindle and die
 And muskets and sabers and swords shall be sundered
 Surrendered to the sound that is sweeping the sky
 And the shoes of the mighty shall dance to new measures
 And the jackboots of generals shall jangle no more
 As sister and brother and father and mother
 Agree with each other the end to all war
- 5. As a candle can conquer the demons of darkness As a flame can keep frost from the deepest of cold So a song can give hope in the depths of all danger And a line of pure melody soar in your soul So sing your songs well and sing your songs sweetly And swear that your singing it never shall cease So the clatter of battle and drums of disaster Be drowned in the sound of the pipes of peace

We do verses 1, 3, 4, and 5.

2. See on yon stable the starlight is shimmering
And glimmering and glistening and glowing with glee
In Bethlehem blest this baby of bliss will be
Born here before you as bold as can be
And you'll be the first to hear the new symphony
Songs full of gladness and glory and light
So learn your tunes well and play your pipes proudly
For the Prince of Paradise plays here tonight

The Cutty Wren

Collected from an Adderbury shepherd by A.L. Lloyd -set to a version of the tune, "Green Bushes"



Oh where are you going, said Milder to Moulder. Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. We're off to the woods, said John the Red Nose. We're off to the woods, said John the Red Nose.

And what will you do there, said Milder to Moulder. Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. We'll hunt the Cutty wren, said John the Red Nose. We'll hunt the Cutty wren, said John the Red Nose.

And how will you shoot her, said Milder to Moulder. Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. With bows and with arrows, said John the Red Nose. With bows and with arrows, said John the Red Nose.

Oh that will not do, said Milder to Moulder. Oh what will you do then, said Festel to Fose Big guns and big cannon, said John the Red Nose. Big guns and big cannon, said John the Red Nose.

And how will you carry her, said Milder to Moulder Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose On four strong men's shoulders, said John the Red Nose. On four strong men's shoulders, said John the Red Nose.

But that will not do, said Milder to Moulder Oh what will do then, said Festel to Fose In a big horse and wagon, said John the Red Nose. In a big horse and wagon, said John the Red Nose.

And how will you cut her up, said Milder to Moulder Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. With knives and with forks, said John the Red Nose. With knives and with forks, said John the Red Nose.

But that will not do, said Milder to Moulder Oh what will you do then, said Festel to Fose Hatchets and cleavers, said John the Red Nose. Hatchets and cleavers, said John the Red Nose. Oh how will you cook her, said Milder to Moulder Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. In pots and in pans, said John the Red Nose In pots and in pans, said John the Red Nose

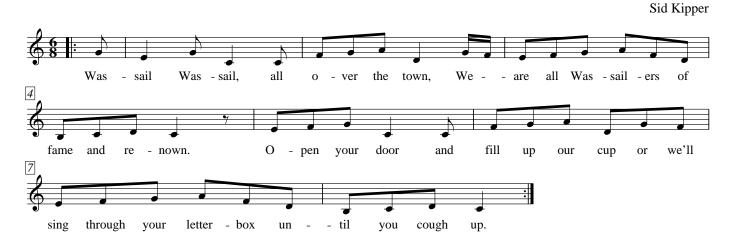
Oh but that will not do, said Milder to Moulder Oh what will you do then, said Festel to Fose In a bloody great brass cauldron, said John the Red Nose. In a bloody great brass cauldron, said John the Red Nose.

Oh who'll get the spare ribs, said Milder to Moulder Oh we may not tell you, said Festel to Fose. We'll give 'em all to the poor, said John the Red Nose. We'll give 'em all to the poor, said John the Red Nose.

The well-known Cutty Wren or Hunting the Wren is often thought of as an amiable nursery piece, yet when it was recorded from an old shepherd of Adderbury West, near Banbury, he banged the floor with his stick on the accented notes and stamped violently at the end of the verses, saying that to stamp was the right way and reminded of old times. What memories of ancient defiance are preserved in this kind of performance it would be hard to say, but we know that the wren-hunting song was attached to a pagan midwinter ritual of the kind that Church and authority fulminated vainly against - particularly in the rebellious period at the end of the Middle Ages when adherence to the forms of the Old Religion was taken to be evidence of subversion, and its partisans were violently persecuted in consequence. (Lloyd, England 90f)

Tune is a version of "Green Bushes" from Sharp's book, "English Folk Songs".

Death or Glory Wassail

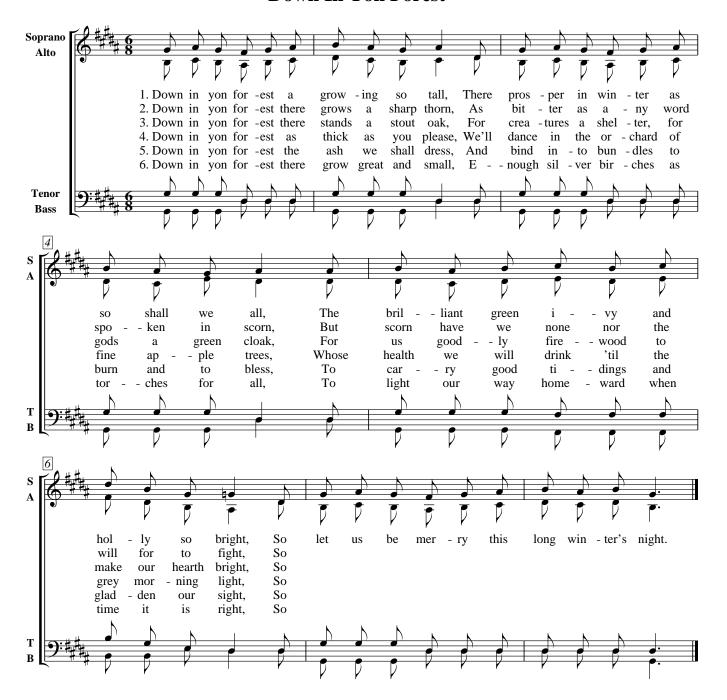


Chorus:

Wassail Wassail, all over the town
We are all Wassailers of fame and renown
Open your doors and fill up our cup
Or we'll sing through your letter box until you cough up

- 1. Wassail Wassail, we know you're about
 Though you sit in the dark and pretend that you're out
 If you're thinking of calling the police to give chase
 Just who do you think is singing the bass
- Wassail Wassail, all over your garden
 If we've done any damage then we beg your pardon
 We're sorry to call upon you so late
 But we had to pick the lock on your gate
- 3. Wassail Wassail, that you may believe
 Tis more blessed to give than it is to receive
 The more that you give the more blessed are you
 The more we receive the less damage we'll do
- 4. Wassail Wassail, with a crisp ten pound note We can all drink your health down at the Old Goat If you haven't a tenner two fivers will do If not things don't look very healthy for you
- 5. Wassail Wassail, all over for now Now you've seen sense we will make no more row Peace be upon you all at your repose And we'll come no more nigh you until the pubs close

Down In Yon Forest



(Sopranos only)

1. Down in yon forest a-growing so tall
There prosper in winter as so shall we all
The brilliant green ivy and holly so bright
So let us be merry this long winter's night

(Sopranos and Altos)

2. Down in yon forest there grows a sharp thorn As bitter as any word spoken in scorn But scorn have we none nor the will for to fight So let us be merry this long winter's night (All parts)

3. Down in yon forest there stands a stout oak
For creatures a shelter, for gods a green cloak
For us goodly firewood to make our hearth bright
So let us be merry this long winter's night

(All parts)

4. Down in yon forest as thick as you please
We'll dance in the orchard of fine apple trees
Whose health we will drink 'til the grey morning light
So let us be merry this long winter's night

(All in unison; Soprano part)

5. Down in yon forest the ash we shall dress And bind into bundles to burn and to bless To carry good tidings and gladden our sight So let us be merry this long winter's night

(All parts)

6. Down in yon forest there grow great and small Enough silver birches as torches for all To light our way homeward when time it is right So let us be merry this long winter's night

Gaudete

14th Century tune (Piae Cantiones, 1582) harmony arrangement John Bromka, 1996



Gaudete, gaudete! Christus est natus Ex Maria virgine, gaudete! Gaudete, gaudete! Christus est natus Ex Maria virgine, gaudete!

- Tempus adest gratiae, Hoc quod optabamus; Carmina laetitiae

 Devote reddamus.
- Deus homo factus est, Natura mirante; Mundus renovatus est A Christo regnante.
- 3. Ezechielis porta Clausa pertransitur; Unde lux est orta, Salus invenitur.
- 4. Ergo nostra contio Psallat iam in lustro; Benedicat Domino: Salus Regi nostro.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ is born Of the Virgin Mary, rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice! Christ is born Of the Virgin Mary, rejoice!

- 1. The time of grace has come For which we have prayed Let us devoutly sing Songs of joy.
- 2. God is made man, While nature wonders The world is renewed By Christ the King.
- 3. The closed gate of Ezekiel
 Has been passed through
 From where the light has risen [the East],
 Salvation is found.
- 4. Therefore let us sing praises now At this time of purification Let it bless the Lord: Greetings to our King.

Translation from the New Oxford Book of Carols, 1992, provided only for the curious. We only sing the Latin.

Gloucestershire Wassail



Verses in this order and chorus only on the last time.

- 1. Wassail, wassail, all over the town!

 Our toast it is white and our ale it is brown,

 Our bowl it is made of the white maple tree;

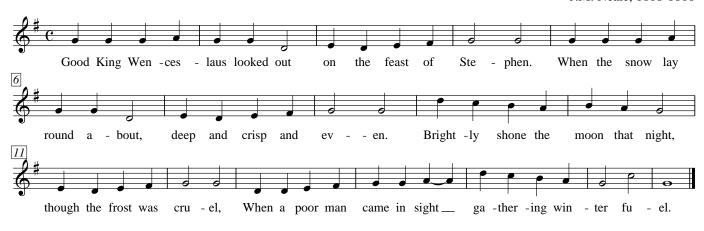
 With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.
- 6. And here is to Colly and to her long tail, Pray God send our master he never may fail, A bowl of strong beer; I pray you draw near, And our jolly wassail it's then you shall hear.
- 7. Come butler, come fill us a bowl of the best, Then we hope that your soul in heaven may rest; But if you do draw us a bowl of the small, Then down shall go butler, bowl and all.
- 8. Then here's to the maid in the lily-white smock, Who tripped to the door and slipped back the lock! Who tripped to the door and pulled back the pin, For to let these jolly wassailers in.
- 5. And here is to Fillpail and to her left ear, Pray God send our master a happy New Year, And a happy New Year as e'er he did see; With our wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee. Chorus: Drink to thee, drink to thee, With our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

We don't sing verses 2-4.

- 2. So here is to Cherry and to his right cheek, Pray God send our master a good good piece of beef, And a good piece of beef that may we all see; With a wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee. Drink to thee, drink to thee, With a wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.
- 3. And here is to Dobbin and to his right eye,
 Pray God send our master a good Christmas pie,
 A good Christmas pie that may we all see;
 With our wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee.
 Drink to thee, drink to thee,
 With our wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.
- 4. And here is to Broad May and to her broad horn, May God send our master a good crop of corn, And a good crop of corn that may we all see; With the wassailing bowl, we'll drink to thee. Drink to thee, drink to thee, With the wassailing bowl we'll drink to thee.

Good King Wenceslaus

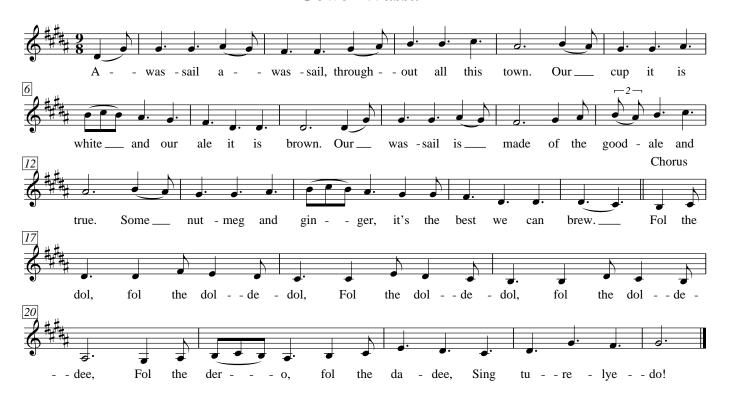
J.M. Neale, 1818-1866



We arrange the parts by king, page, and all.

- A. Good King Wenceslaus looked out on the feast of Stephen. When the snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even. Brightly shone the moon that night, though the frost was cruel, When a poor man came in sight, gathering winter fuel.
- K. Hither page and stand by me, if thou knowst it telling, Yonder peasant, who is he, where and what his dwelling?
- P. Sire, he lives a good league hence, underneath the mountain, Right against the forest fence, by Saint Agnes' fountain.
- K. Bring me flesh and bring me wine, bring me pinelogs hither Thou and I will see him dine, when we bear them thither
- A. Page and monarch forth they went, forth they went together; Through the rude winds wild lament and the bitter weather.
- P. Sire, the night is darker now, and the wind blows stronger Fails my heart, I know now how; I can go no longer.
- K. Mark my footsteps, my good page, tread thou in them boldly; Thou shalt find the winter's rage freeze thy blood less coldly.
- A. In his master's steps he trod, where the snow lay dinted;
 Heat was in the very sod which the saint had printed.
 Therefore, Christian men be sure, wealth or rank possessing,
 Ye who now will bless the poor, shall yourselves find blessing.

Gower Wassail



A-wassail, a-wassail, throughout all this town.
 Our cup it is white and our ale it is brown.
 Our wassail is made of the good ale and true,
 Some nutmeg and ginger, it's the best we can brew.

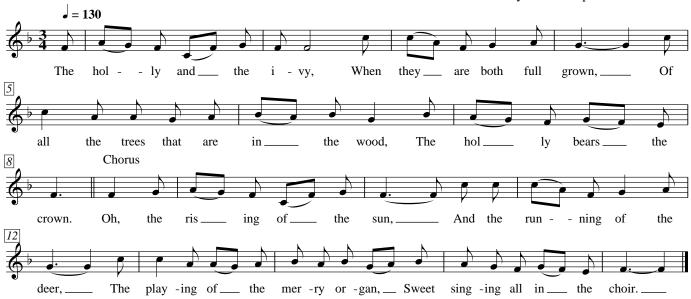
CHORUS

Fol the dol, fol the dol-de-dol, Fol the dol-de-do, fol the dol-de-dee, Fol the der-o, fol the da-dee, Sing tu-re-lye-do!

- 2. Our wassail is made of the elderberry bough, And so, my good neighbor, we'll drink unto thou. Besides all on earth, you'll have apples in store, Pray let us come in for it's cold by the door.
- 3. We hope that your apple trees prosper and bear So that we may have cider when we call next year. And where you've one barrel, we hope you'll have ten So that we may have cider when we call again.
- 4. We know by the moon that we are not too soon,
 And we know by the sky that we are not too high,
 We know by the stars that we are not too far,
 And we know by the ground that we are within sound.

The Holly and the Ivy

collected by Maud Karpeles and Pat Shaw



The holly and the ivy,
 When they are both full grown.
 Of all the trees that are in the wood
 The holly bears the crown.

CHORUS

Oh, the rising of the sun, And the running of the deer, The playing of the merry organ, Sweet singing all in the choir.

- The holly bears a blossom, As white as any milk, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, All wrappéd up in silk.
- The holly bears a berry,
 As red as any blood,
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
 To do poor sinners good.

- 4. The holly bears a prickle, As sharp as any thorn, And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ, On Christmas Day in the morn.
- The holly bears a bark,
 As bitter as any gall,
 And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ,
 For to redeem us all.

We don't sing the last verse

6. The holly and the ivy,
When they are both full grown.
Of all the trees are in the wood
The holly bears the crown.

Horsham Tipteerers Carol

Sussex Mummers Carol

Horsham Tipteerers, Sussex collected by Lucy Broadwood, 1880



- When righteous Joseph wedded was Unto a virgin maid,
 A glorious angel from Heaven came Unto that virgin maid;
 Unto that virgin maid.
- As joyful shepherds brought their gifts
 To Christ, the savior dear.
 And so we come upon this night
 With blessings and good cheer;
 With blessings and good cheer.
- 3. God bless the mistress of this house With gold all round her breast; Where e'er her body sleeps or wakes, Lord, send her soul to rest; Lord, send her soul to rest.
- 4. God bless the master of this house With happiness beside; Where e'er his body rides or walks, Lord Jesus be his guide; Lord Jesus be his guide.
- God bless your house, your children too, Your cattle and your store.
 The Lord increase you day by day, And send you more and more; And send you more and more.

This carol was collected by Lucy Broadwood near Horsham, Sussex, in 1880, from the singing of Christmas mummers locally known as tipteers or tipteerers. Its verses were something of a mix: a stanza from another carol about The Annunciation; some moralistic lessons; and several blessings common to other house-visiting wassails. In this version from Finest Kind, the song keeps the opening verse and the house-visiting verses, eliminates the lessons, and adds a new verse written by Shelley Posen.