
THE CHERRY TREE CAROL

BY UNKNOWN (C. 1500 CE)

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As often is the case with the more ancient Carols in the West, there exist different versions of the text. See, for example, a “fuller” text at: <https://www.allsaintskingston.co.uk/anthems/the-cherry-tree-carol>.

Musical performances: Marty Haugen, *Night of Silence* (1987); José Feliciano, *Feliz Navidad* (2002); John Rutter and the Cambridge Singers, *Christmas Night: Carols of the Nativity* (remastered version 2020).

When Joseph was an old man, an old man was he,
He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee
He married Virgin Mary, the Queen of Galilee

Joseph and Mary walked through an orchard green
There were cherries and berries, as thick as might be seen
There were cherries and berries, as thick as might be seen

Mary said to Joseph, so meek and so mild:
Joseph, gather me some cherries, for I am with child
Joseph, gather me some cherries, for I am with child

Then Joseph flew in anger, in anger flew he
Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee!
Let the father of the baby gather cherries for thee!

Then up spoke baby Jesus, from in Mary's womb:
Bend down the tallest branches, that my mother might have some
Bend down the tallest branches, that my mother might have some

And bend down the tallest branches, it touched Mary's hand
Cried she: Oh look thou Joseph, I have cherries by command
Oh look thou Joseph, I have cherries by command