

## The Falcon

"Corpus Christi Carol" is a Middle English hymn (or carol), first found in an anonymous manuscript written around 1504. One theory is that it is concerned with the legend of the Holy Grail. In Arthurian traditions of the Grail story, the Fisher King is the knight who is the Grail's protector, and whose legs are perpetually wounded. When he is wounded his kingdom suffers and becomes a wasteland. This would explain the reference to "an orchard brown". There are also references to the Crucifixion including - obviously - "ston, Corpus Christi wretyn theron".

mak: companion, match, mate (Northern England dialect, now obsolete)

pall: a funeral pall, a cloth spread over a coffin

may: maid, maiden

Benjamin Britten used it in the fifth variation of "A Boy Was Born" (Choral Variations For Mixed Voices), Opus 3, in 1933.

Jeff Buckley included his interpretation of Britten's work on his debut 1994 album, Grace.

He bare him u-p, he ba-re him down,  
He bare him in-to an or-chard brown.

*Lul-ley, lul-lay, lul-ley, lul-lay,  
The falcon hath born my mak away.*

And in that orchard there was a hall,  
It was hang-ed with purple and pall.

And in that hall there was a bed,  
It was hang-ed with gold so red.

And in that bed ther li-eth a knight,  
His wo-und-es ble-e-ding da-ay and night.

And by that bed-side there kneeleth a may,  
And she weepeth both ni-ght and day.

*And by that bed side there standeth a stone,  
"Cor-pus Chri-stie" written thereon.*