

## The Falcon

*“Corpus Christi Carol” is a Middle English hymn (or carol), first found in an anonymous manuscript<sup>4</sup> 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".*

*Benjamin Britten used it in the fifth variation of "A Boy Was Born" (Choral Variations For Mixed Voices), Opus 3, in 1933. Roud 1523.*

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

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

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

*may: maid, maiden*

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

### Chorus

*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*

Unison

<sup>4</sup> <https://balladindex.org/Ballads/L691.html>