

# Wassail the Trees

for voices and instruments

Paul Burnell

words adapted from Robert Herrick

VERSE

Give way, give way ye gates, and win an eas - y bless - ing  
So that your cook - er nev - er weeps for want of warmth, nor

verses 2,3,4  
(ay)

verses 3,4  
(ay)

verse 4  
(ay)

to your kitch - en cup - board by our en - t'ring in.  
stom - aches keep, With noise the chil - dren's eyes from sleep.

1. 2.

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2.  
Next, may your larders grow and grow  
So that your pans no ebb may know:  
But if they do, the more to flow,  
Just like a solemn sober stream  
Bank'd all with lilies, and the cream  
Of sweetest cowslips filling them.

3.  
Then may your trees be full of fruit,  
Nor bee, or hive you have be mute;  
But sweetly sounding like a lute.  
Last, may the savings you have now  
With stocks and shares may you allow  
To prosper by your virgin vow.

4.  
Sadly we bless, but see none here  
That brings us either wine or beer;  
In this dry house all things are near.  
Let's leave a longer time to wait,  
Where rust and cobwebs bind the gate,  
And all live here with needy fate.

5.  
It is in vain to sing, or stay  
Our free feet here; but we'll away:  
Yet to the household gods we'll say:  
The day will come when you'll be sad  
And reckon this for fortune bad,  
T'ave lost the good ye might have had.

REFRAIN

Was-sail the trees that they may bear you ma-ny a plum, and ma-ny a pear: For

more or less fruits they will bring, as you do give them was-sail-ing.

was-sail-ing. Was - sail  
verses 2,3,4  
verses 3,4

was-sail-ing. Was - sail  
verse 4

was-sail-ing. Was - sail

The piece can be performed in several ways - possible options are:

The 1st verse/refrain is solo voices (perhaps one voice, or one section). Men would sing an octave lower.

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th verses/refrains are accompanied by an increasingly layered drone. This drone could be a mix of organ and/or instruments and voices (obviously the voices will need to stagger their breaths). By the 4th verse the drone is in three lines - and perhaps in organ or instruments alone because voices are all singing the melody line. I would like the chromatic ascending line to be obvious (it could be doubled an octave lower). Each line of the drone begins at the end of the previous refrain.

At each verse more singers join the melody line. I've no objection to the melody line being played by organ/instruments as well. The 4th refrain is the loudest.

The 5th verse is without drone. It might be effective for this to be performed with a gradual dim, or for singers to drop out one by one.