

Folk & Traditional Song Lyrics

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Blest Mary Wanders Through the Thorn

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Blest Mary wanders through the thorn,
Kyrie eleison!
Blest Mary wanders through the thorn,
That seven long years no bloom hath borne.
Jesu et Maria!

What clasps she to her breast so close?
Kyrie eleison!
An innocent child doth there repose,
Which to her breast she claspeth close.
Jesu et Maria!

Fair roses bloom on every tree,
Kyrie eleison!
As through the thorn-wood passeth she
Fair roses bloom on every tree.
Jesu et Maria!

What shall this Infant cal-led be?
Kyrie eleison!
The Christ, he shall be called truly,
Which Name he hath borne from eternity.
Jesu et Maria!

This holy Name, who shall proclaim?
Kyrie eleison!
Saint John Baptist shall do the same,
This holy Name he shall proclaim.
Jesu et Maria!

What christening-gifts to him are giv'n?
Kyrie eleison!
All things that be, the earth, the heav'n,
As christening-gifts to him are giv'n.
Jesu et Maria!

Who hath the world from sin set free?
Kyrie eleison!
This Child alone, and only he,
He hath the world from sin set free.
Jesu et Maria!

This has many of the characteristics of a fifteenth-century German folk carol. The flowering rose is a favorite medieval image and the subject of a multitude of legends. The barren thorn-wood is an image of the fallen world (Genesis 2:9; 3:18), and the birth of Christ, with its promise of redemption, is symbolized by the return of the thorn trees to their prelapsarian condition. "Seven long years," like the Hebrew "forty days," denotes a long passage of time.

(notes and English translation from the Shorter New Oxford Book of Carols)

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