

## Down in Yon Forest

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the song 'Down in Yon Forest'. The first staff is in 6/8 time and contains five measures of music with chords Am and G. The second staff starts with a measure rest (marked '8') and contains three measures of music with chords Am, E7, Am, G, and Am.

### Current version:

1. Down in yon forest there stands a hall:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
It's covered all over with purple and pall  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
2. In that hall there stands a bed:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
It's covered all over with scarlet so red:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
3. At the bed-side there lies a stone:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which the sweet Virgin Mary knelt upon:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
4. Under that bed there runs a flood:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
The one half runs water, the other runs blood:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
5. At the bed's foot there grows a thorn:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Whichever has blossomed since he was born:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
6. Over that bed the moon shines bright:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Denoting our Saviour was born this night:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

### Earliest version:

1. O'er yonder's a park, which is newly begun:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which is silver on the outside and gold within:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
2. In that park there stands a hall:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
It's covered all over with purple and pall:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
3. In that hall there stands a bed:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which is hung all around with silk curtains so red:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
4. And in that bed there lies a knight:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Whose wounds they do bleed by day and by night:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
5. At the bedside there lies a stone:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which our blest Virgin Mary knelt upon:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
6. At the bed's foot there lies a hound:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which is licking the blood as it daily runs down:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.
7. At the bed's foot there grows a thorn:  
The bells of Paradise I heard them ring:  
Which was never blossomed since Christ was born:  
And I love my Lord Jesus above anything.

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"Down in Yon Forest" was collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams from Mr. Hall of Castleton, Derbyshire.

The earliest version is more directly related to the medieval stories of the Grail Quest including the wounded knight who must be cured for the waste land to become fertile again. An extensive study of the transition from pagan rituals to Christian romance is covered in Jesse's Weston's **From Ritual to Romance** (1920). Weston's book is an academic examination of the roots of the King Arthur legends and seeks to make connections between the early pagan elements and the later Christian influences. The book's main focus is on the Holy Grail tradition and its influence, particularly the Wasteland motif. The origin of Weston's book is in James George Frazer's seminal work on folklore, magic and religion, **The Golden Bough** (1890).

This is included in **The Oxford Book of Carols** (#61).

It was recorded by Joan Baez. I learned it from her recording.