

The Trees Are All Bare



1. The trees are all bare, not a leaf to be seen
And the meadows their beauty have lost.
Now winter has come and 'tis cold for man and beast
And the streams they are all fast bound down with frost.
2. 'Twas down in the farmyard where oxen feed on straw
They send forth their breath like the steam.
Sweet Betsy the milkmaid now quickly she must go
For flakes of ice she finds a-floating on her cream.
3. 'Tis now all the small birds to the barn-door fly for food
And gently they rest on the spray
A-down the plantation the hares do search for food
And lift their footsteps sure for fear they do betray.
4. Now Christmas is come and our song is almost done
For we soon shall have the turning of the year.
So fill up your glasses and let your health go round
For I wish you all a joyful New Year.

"The Trees are all Bare" was originally a poem written by Thomas Brerewood of Horton, Cheshire (d. 1748); part of a set of four called 'The Seasons'. A setting by 'Mr Lockhart' appears in Joseph Ritson's **A Select Collection of English Songs: With Their Original Airs: and a Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song** (1813)

The song is best known from the singing of the Copper family although Lockhart's tune doesn't appear to be related to the one used by the Coppers. The Copper Family are a family of singers of traditional, unaccompanied English folk song. Originally from Rottingdean, near Brighton, Sussex, England, the nucleus of the family now live in the neighboring village of Peacehaven. They have been known outside of the family since they came to the attention of Kate Lee (d.1904), one of the founders of the Folk Song Society (later the English Folk Dance and Song Society) in 1898. Descendants of the original singers still perform today.

The text appears as 'Winter' in **The Universal Songster** (1834).

It was printed in Bob Copper's **A Song for Every Season** (1971).

It was also recorded by the Coppers.