

Withy Tree Carol The Bitter Withy

As it fell out on a bright ho-li-day, small hail from the sky did fall, Our
Sav - iour asked His mo - ther dear if ___ he may go and play at ball.

"At ball, at ball, my own dear Son
It is time that you were gone
And don't let me hear of any doings
at night when you come home."

So up Lincull and down Lincull
Our sweetest Saviour ran,
And there He met three rich young lords
"Good morning to you all."

"Good morn, good morn, good morn", said they;
"Good morning, then", said He,
"O which of you three rich young men
Will play at ball with me?"

"We are all lords' and ladies' sons,
Born in our bower and hall
And Thou art nothing but a poor maid's child,
Born in an ox's stall."

"If you're all lords' and ladies' sons,
born in your bower and hall,
I will make you believe in your latter end;
I'm an angel above you all."

So He made Him a bridge with the beams of the sun
And o'er the water crossed He.
These rich young lords followed after Him,
And drowned they were all three.

Then up Lincull and down Lincull
These young lords' mothers ran,
Saying: "Mary mild, fetch home your child,
For ours He has drowned all."

So Mary mild fetched home her child
And laid Him across her knee
With a handful of green withy twigs
She gave Him slashes three.

"O withy, O withy , O bitter withy
Thou hast caused me to smart
And the withy shall be the very first tree
That shall perish at the heart."

Source: Sung by Mrs Hands (65), Snowhill. Collected by Cecil Sharp on 9 April 1909.
Mrs Hands sang the tune and one verse (the last). The text is from George Gibbs of Evesham.

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