

*Laughter and Libations:
A Pagan-Safe Songbook*



K. S. Wright
2018

Laugh'ter (laf ter) n. mere diversion of pleasure.

Li-ba-tion (lī bā'shen) n. the ritual pouring out of wine to honor a god.

By 1879 caroling was defined as “going around from place to place singing Christmas songs” and was thought to be a revival of an old English custom. This is not the case. In reality, caroling traces its origin back to the Old French carole, “a kind round dance accompanied by singers,” (c. 1300.) Those who did the singing and dancing, carolers, owe their moniker to the root word carl (n.) “bondsmen; a common man of low birth,” from the Old Norse karl, meaning “man.”

When the housecarls went carousing, bawdy drinking songs ensued. It is not hard to imagine the lords and ladies of the manner eagerly offering them a cup of whatever was on hand just to get them to take their signing and dancing elsewhere.

The aim of *Laughter and Libations* is to trace common carols back to their less than pious roots, revving their original intent, which was to celebrate feasting and fornicating, drinking and dancing. This guide is divided into three sections: 1) Traditional Treasures, which provides history and original lyrics of the carols, 2) Simple Substitutions, showing how to change a Christmas carol into one celebrating Yule, Saturnalia, or what-have-you, and 3) Ridiculous Rewrites, which contains Christmas hymns for which there are no other existing lyrics, rewritten in a Pagan-Safe form.

In addition to popular carols, recipes for common winter beverages are included to enhance the spirits of the revilers.



Drink and be Merry!

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I. Traditional Treasurers



Auld Lang Syne

“Auld Lang Syne” is a poem written by Robert Burns in 1788. The phrase “Auld Lang Syne” is also used in a poem by Robert Ayton (1570–1638), as well as older folk songs which predate Burns. Burns acknowledged this in a letter sent with a copy of the song to the Scots Musical Museum, “The following song, is an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old man.”

The title literally translates into English as “old long since,” or colloquially as “old times.” Consequently, “For auld lang syne,” can be loosely translated as “for old time’s sake.” It’s traditionally sung to bid farewell to the old year on Hogmanay or New Year’s Eve. By extension, it’s also sung at funerals, graduations, and as a farewell on other occasions. It is common practice for everyone to join hands with the person next to them with their arms crossed across their breast, so that the right hand reaches out to the neighbor on the left and vice versa.

Below is a 1711 version of the poem, written by James Watson. It is striking in it’s similarity to the song credited to Burns.

Should Old Acquaintance be forgot,
and never thought upon;
The flames of Love extinguished,
and fully past and gone:
Is thy sweet Heart now grown so cold,
that loving Breast of thine;
That thou canst never once reflect
On old long syne.

CHORUS:

On old long syne my Jo,
On old long syne,
That thou canst never once reflect,
On old long syne.

Burns' original Scots verse

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?

CHORUS:

*For auld lang syne, my jo,
for auld lang syne,
we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup!
and surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We twa hae run about the braes,
and pou'd the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary fit,
sin' auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We twa hae paidl'd in the burn,
frae morning sun till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
sin' auld lang syne.

CHORUS

And there's a hand, my trusty fiere!
and gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak' a right gude-willie waught,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

English translation

Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should old acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne?

CHORUS:

*For auld lang syne, my dear,
for auld lang syne,
we'll take a cup of kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.*

And surely you'll buy your pint cup!
and surely I'll buy mine!
And we'll take a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We two have run about the slopes,
and picked the daisies fine;
But we've wandered many a weary foot,
since auld lang syne.

CHORUS

We two have paddled in the stream,
from morning sun till dine†;
But seas between us broad have roared
since auld lang syne.

CHORUS

And there's a hand my trusty friend!
And give me a hand o' thine!
And we'll take a right good-will draught,
for auld lang syne.

CHORUS

Since this song often makes an appearance on New Year's Eve, Champagne cocktails are in order.

CHAMPAGNE COCKTAILS

Citrus Cocktail

2 teaspoons Mandarin Napoleon (tangerine) liquor
6 oz Champagne or sparkling wine
1 thin slice mandarin orange

Pour liquor in glass, top off with champagne. Garnish with orange slice. Makes 1 drink.

Pear Cocktail

1 teaspoon pear eau-de-vie
6 oz Champagne or sparkling wine
1 thin pear slice

Pour liquor in glass, top off with champagne. Garnish with pear slice. Makes 1 drink.

Smashed Berry Cocktail

1 cup berries (raspberry, blackberry, or huckleberry)
½ cup Chambord (Black raspberry liquor)
¼ cup sugar
1 (750 ml) bottle Champagne or sparkling wine

Mash berries. Add liquor and sugar, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Chill, covered, 1 hour. To serve spoon 2 table spoons of berry mash into a Champagne flute and top off with Champagne. Makes 4 drinks.

Deck the Halls

The melody of “Deck the Halls” is taken from “Nos Galan,” a traditional Welsh New Year's Eve carol published in 1794. However, the repeated "fa la la" traces its roots even further back to medieval Welsh ballads. Nos Galan translates as New Year's Eve, so this song was not originally intended for use as a Christmas hymn.

The Welsh lyrics (and translation) are as follows:

Goreu pleser ar nos galan,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Tŷ a thŷn a theulu diddan,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Calon lân a chwyrw melyn,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Pennill mwyn a llais y Delyn
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:

O mor gynnes mynwes meinwen,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
O mor fwyn yw llwyn meillionen,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
O mor felus yw'r cusanau,

[instrumental flourish]

Gyda serch a mwynion eiriau
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:

The best pleasure on new year's eve,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Is house and fire and a pleasant family,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
A pure heart and brown ale,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
A gentle song and the voice of the harp
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:

Oh! how soft my fair one's bosom,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Oh! how sweet the grove in blossom,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:
Oh! how blessed are the blisses,

[instrumental flourish]

Words of love, and mutual kisses,
Fal lal lal lal lal lal lal la:

The English lyrics of Nos Galan were written by Scottish musician Thomas Oliphant, first appearing in 1862, in volume 2 of *Welsh Melodies*. In the original publication, Oliphant's English lyrics were published alongside Talhaiarn's Welsh lyrics. A further variation in English cropped up in America, first appearing in the December 1877 issue of the *Pennsylvania School Journal*. That version eliminated all references to drinking. Another common alteration was exchanging “Christmas” and “Yuletide,” so Pagan revilers today can feel free to do the same.

Thomas Oliphant’s version:

Deck the hall with boughs of holly,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
’Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Fill the meadcup, drain the barrel,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Troul the ancient Yuletide carol,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

See the flowing bowl before us,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Strike the harp and join the chorus.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
While I sing of beauty's treasure,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses!
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Laughing, quaffing all together,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

Pennsylvania School Journal version:

Deck the halls with boughs of holly,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
’Tis the season to be jolly,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Don we now our gay apparel,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Troll the ancient **Christmas** carol,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

See the **blazing yule** before us,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Strike the harp and join the chorus.
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Follow me in merry measure,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
While I tell of Christmas treasure,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

Fast away the old year passes,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Hail the new, ye lads and lasses!
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Sing we joyous all together,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!
Heedless of the wind and weather,
Fa, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!

Because the previous song features the meadcup, barrel, and flowing bowl, a recipe for mead is in order. A good source for old mead recipes is a 17th century book titled, "The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Knight Opened" by Kenelm Digby. This book can be download for free from the gutenberg.org website.

MEAD

1 quart raw honey
4 quarts water
1 lb raisins (dried cranberries, cherries, currents, etc, can be substituted.)

Warm water in a clean kettle. As soon as the water is warm, add the honey, and let it boil. Skim off any froth that rises to the surface.

Add raisins and let them remain in the boiling liquor, until they are thoroughly swollen and soft. Remove the raisins; put them in a doubled cheesecloth bag, straining the juice and pulp from them. Return the liquid to the kettle and let it boil, until it is reduced by one-quarter. Let the liquor cool overnight.

Put the liquor into a clean fermentation bucket, covered with cheesecloth, and let it sit for six weeks. Once the fermentation process is complete, bottle the remaining liquid and store it for nine months before drinking.

This recipe yields one gallon of mead.

*NOTE: This recipe does not call for yeast because 17th century kitchens had an abundance of naturally occurring yeast which would make its way into the barrel. Thanks to the miracle of bleach, kitchens are much cleaner today. If you fear your kitchen may be too sanitary to house naturally occurring yeast spores, feel free to add a packet of Fleischmann's yeast to the mix to get the fermentation started.

O Tannenbaum (O Christmas Tree)

“O Tannenbaum” is based on a traditional German folk song. The original lyrics do not refer to Christmas, or even describe a decorated Christmas tree. Instead, they refer to the fir’s evergreen qualities as a symbol of faithfulness. In German, Tannenbaum translates as fir tree, not Christmas tree. In the original, the faithful fir tree stands in contrast to a faithless lover.

The modern lyrics were written in 1824, by Leipzig organist and composer, Ernst Anschütz. Anschütz based his lyrics on a 16th-century Silesian folk song by Melchior Franck, “Ach Tannenbaum,” which is also known as the tune of Es lebe hoch der Zimmermannsgeselle and of Lauriger Horatius. In the 19th century, Christians began adopting the Pagan custom of bring a tree indoors around the time of the solstice, and “O Tannenbaum” became associated with Christmas when Anschütz capitalized on the new fad by adding two verses of his own.

Anschütz's lyrics still contained *treu* (true/faithful) when describing the fir's leaves (needles.) This was changed to *grün* (green) in the 20th century, after the song had come to be associated with Christmas.

“O Tannenbaum” Lyrics Anschütz (1824)

English Translation

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!
Du grünst nicht nur zur Sommerzeit,
Nein, auch im Winter, wenn es schneit.
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Wie treu sind deine Blätter!

O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
How faithful are your leaves!
You do not only green at summer time,
No, even in winter, when it's snowing.
O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
How loyal are your leaves!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!
Wie oft hat schon zur Winterzeit
Ein Baum von dir mich hoch erfreut!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Du kannst mir sehr gefallen!

O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
I like you very much!
How often does have at winter time
A tree of you rejoiced me!
O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
I like you very much!

O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Dein Kleid will mich was lehren:
Die Hoffnung und Beständigkeit
Gibt Mut und Kraft zu jeder Zeit!
O Tannenbaum, o Tannenbaum,
Dein Kleid will mich was lehren!

O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
Your dress wants to teach me something:
The hope and permanence
Gives courage and strength at all times!
O Fir Tree, O Fir Tree,
Your dress wants to teach me something!

When winter grips the land, Pagans look to evergreens, spruce, fir, pine, and cedar, for proof that spring is on the way. The tree is inherently masculine and symbolizes friendship, loyalty, and longevity. Brining evergreen boughs into the home at midwinter will ensure health and good luck for the coming year. Fairies and wood sprites carried in with the greenery heighten the mood of wintertime festivities as they encourage and delight in a flurry of activity.

Also, mistletoe grows on softwood trees, so gathering evergreen boughs may bring in another magical plant. Unfortunately, the North American mistletoe bears little resemblance to its more comely European cousin. It is worth a visit to a local florist to purchase springs of the European variety.

Below is a more singable version of “O Tannenbaum” so solstice revilers can troll this Yuletide tune while gathering their greenery.

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How thy needles are so verdant!
Not only in the summertime,
But even in winter is thy prime.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How thy needles are so verdant!

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Much pleasure dost thou bring me!
For ev'ry year the evergreen
Brings to us both joy and glee.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Much pleasure dost thou bring me!

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Forever true thy color.
Your boughs so green in summertime,
Stay bravely green in wintertime.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
Forever true thy color.

O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How lovely are thy branches!
Not only green when summer's here
But in the coldest time of year.
O Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum,
How lovely are thy branches!

One Horse Open Sleigh

Jingle Bells, written by James Lord Pierpoint, was copyrighted on September 16, 1857 as “One Horse Open Sleigh.” Originally a drinking song, it was written in commemoration of the annual Thanksgiving sleigh races in Medford, Massachusetts. Tavern goers were supposed to jingle the ice in their glasses while singing and the double meaning of ‘upsot’ was thought to be humorous.

Dashing through the snow,
In a one horse open sleigh,
Over the fields we go,
Laughing all the way.
Bells on bobtail ring,
Making spirits bright,
What fun it is to ride and sing,
A sleighing song tonight!

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to ride
in a one horse open sleigh.

A day or two ago,
I thought I'd take a ride,
And soon Miss Fanny Bright,
Was seated by my side.
The horse was lean and lank,
Misfortune seemed his lot,
He got into a drifted back,
And we got upsot!

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to ride
in a one horse open sleigh.

A day or two ago,
A story I must tell,
I went out in the snow,
And on my back I fell.
A gent was riding by,
In a one horse open sleigh,
He laughed as there I sprawling lie,
But quickly drove away.

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to ride
in a one horse open sleigh.

Now, the ground is white,
So go it while you're young.
Take the girls tonight,
And sing this sleighing song.
Just get a bobtailed bay,
Two-forty for his speed,
Hitch him to an open sleigh,
And Crack! You'll take the lead.

Jingle Bells, Jingle Bells,
Jingle all the way,
Oh what fun it is to ride
in a one horse open sleigh.

Tempus adest floridum (Good King Wenselas)

The carol, “Good King Wenceslas,” as sung today, is the story of a Bohemian king braving inclement weather to give alms to the poor on the Feast of Stephen (December 26th.) English hymnwriter John Mason Neale wrote the lyrics in collaboration with music editor, Reverend Thomas Helmore in 1853. However, these are not the original lyrics.

Neale’s lyrics were set to the melody of “Tempus adest floridum,” (PC 74) a song dating to the 13th century. The “Tempus adest floridum” was published in *Piae Cantiones*, a 1582 Finnish song collection, which was gifted to Neale by G. J. R. Gordon, who was Queen Victoria’s envoy in Stockholm, Sweden.

There are two known versions of “Tempus adest floridum” (It is time for flowering.) Neale’s lyrics are based off the *Piae Cantiones* 1582 version. Another version, dating to the 11th or 12th centuries was published in the *Carmina Burana*, (CB 142) a German manuscript containing poems and dramatic text, which were mostly bawdy, irreverent, and satirical. The major difference between the two texts is that the PC 74 version contains a verse focusing praising the Lord, which seems out of place in context of the rest of the song, whereas the CB 142 verse references “playing the game of Venus” in the meadow.

PC 74 verse (13th Century)

Haec vobis pulchre monstrant Deum
creatorem
Quem quoque nos credimus omnium
factorem
O tempus ergo hilare, quo laetari libet
Renovato nam mundo, nos novari decet.

Through each wonder of fair days God
Himself expresses;
Beauty follows all His ways, as the world He
blesses:
So, as He renews the earth, Artist without
rival,
In His grace of glad new birth we must seek
revival.

CB 142 verse (11th Century)

Stant prata plena floribus, in quibus nos
ludamus!
Virgines cum clericis simul procedamus,
Per amorem Veneris ludum faciamus,
ceteris virginibus ut hoc referamus!

The fields in which we play are full of flowers!
Maidens and clerics, let us go out together,
Let us play for the love of Venus,
That we may teach the other maidens!

The CB 142 version, German translated to Latin, then translated into English, loses much of its singability, so I have included an English translation of “Tempus adest floridum,” PC 74, with one change. In place of the verse praising God, I have written in a singable version of the love scene among the flowers as mentioned in the *Carmina Burana*.

Spring has now unwrapped the flowers, day is fast reviving,
Life in all her growing powers towards the light is striving:
Gone the iron touch of cold, winter time and frost time,
Seedlings, working through the mould, now make up for lost time.

Herb and plant that, winter long, slumbered at their leisure,
Now bestirring, green and strong, find in growth their pleasure;
All the world with beauty fills, gold the green enhancing,
Flowers make glee among the hills, set the meadows dancing.

Maids bare their flesh and pour the wine, indulging sweet caresses.
Beauty follows carnal ways, as the world she blesses.
Maid and consort, forth they went, frolicking in fair weather.
Joyfully tumbling, maid and gent, on a bed of heather.

Earth puts on her dress of glee; flowers and grasses hide her;
We go forth in charity—Lovers all beside her;
For, as man this glory sees in th' awakening season,
Learns that the heart's decrees are seldom led by reason.

The Contest of the Holly and the Ivy

While the version of the carol popular today mentions Mary and Jesus, an earlier mention of the carol's title occurs in William Hone's 1823 work, *Ancient Mysteries Described*. The original manuscript, a contest between the traditional emblems of women and men, respectively, now resides in the British Museum.

In Pagan religions, holly symbolizes the god (male aspect) and ivy symbolizes the goddess (female aspect). The ancient Celts believed holly trees were the winter abode of dryads (dancing wood sprites.) An old charm tells maidens to pluck a leaf of ivy and hold it close to her heart to divine the identity of her future husband. Both plants are associated with the winter solstice.

Holly stands in the hall, fair to behold:
Ivy stands without the door, she is full sore a cold.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Holly and his merry men, they dance and they sing,
Ivy and her maidens, they weep and they wring.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Ivy hath chapped fingers, she caught them from the cold,
So might they all have, aye, that with ivy hold.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Holly hath berries red as any rose,
The forester, the hunter, keep them from the does.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Ivy hath berries black as any sloe;
There come the owl and eat him as she go.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Holly hath birds a fair full flock,
The nightingale, the popinjay, the gentle laverock.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

Good ivy, what birds hast thou?
None but the owlet that cries how, how.
Nay, ivy, nay, it shall not be I wis;
Let holly have the mastery, as the manner is.

The Wassail Song

Wassail is a warm alcoholic drink whose base consists of hot-mulled cider. The drink is traditionally associated with wassailing, a ritual to ensure a good harvest. Wassailers would stop at the land owner's house to refill their cups, and then consume the liquor while wandering through the orchards singing amongst the trees. Given the reference of singing "among the leaves so green" this ritual was likely preformed at the Vernal Equinox or Beltane, not Yule, when the trees would be bare. How this tune became associated with Christmas is a mystery.

Here we come a-wassailing,
Among the leaves so green.
Here we come a wandering,
So fair to be seen.

REFRAIN

*Love and joy unto you,
And to your wassail, too.
Goddess bless you and send you a happy new year.
Goddess send you a happy new year.*

We are not daily beggars
Who beg from door to door,
But we are neighboring kinfolk
Who you have seen before.

REFRAIN

Gentle Lady of this house,
Who wears a golden ring,
Let her bring us a glass of wassail
And we shall better sing.

REFRAIN

We have got a little purse
Of stretching leathers skin;
We want a little of your money
to line it well within.

REFRAIN

Bless the Master of this house,
Likewise the Mistress too,
And all the little children
That 'round the table go.

REFRAIN

Good Master and Good Mistress
While sitting by the fire,
Think of us poor beggars,
a-wandering in the mire.

REFRAIN

WASSAIL

2 quarts apple cider
2 quarts cranberry juice
½ cup raw honey
5 cinnamon sticks (approx. 3 inches long, each)
2 dozen cloves
2 dozen allspice
2 granny smith apples
2 cups apple brandy such as Calvados

In a large stock pot combine cider, cranberry juice, and honey. Make a spice bag by tying the cinnamon sticks, cloves, and allspice in a piece of cheese cloth and add to juice mixture. Bring to a boil, skimming off froth as necessary. Reduce heat to simmer. Half the apples, remove cores, and thinly slice before adding to pot. Simmer 10 min. Add brandy and serve warm.

MULLED WINE

6 whole cloves
6 cardamom pods
3 black peppercorns
3 cinnamon sticks
1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise
6 strips lemon zest
1 (750 ml) bottle dry red wine
1 ½ cups water
1 cup sugar
1 orange thinly sliced

Put cloves, peppercorns, cinnamon sticks, vanilla bean, and zest into a cheesecloth, then tie closed to make a spice bag. Combine wine, water, and sugar in a 5-quart sauce pan, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Add spice bag and bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Add orange slices and let simmer 10 min. Serve warm.

II. Simple Substitutions



We Wish You a Joyous Solstice (We Wish You a Merry Christmas)

“We Wish You a Merry Christmas” is a popular carol written by Arthur Warrell, who arranged the tune for the University of Bristol Madrigal Singers, and performed it with them on December 6th, 1935. The arrangement was published by Oxford University Press, under the title “A Merry Christmas: West Country traditional song.”

The greeting "a merry Christmas and a happy New Year" is illustrated in the short story *The Christmas Mummers* (1858) by Charlotte Yonge, in which a group of boys sing:

I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year,
A pantryful of good roast-beef,
And barrels full of beer.

The carol is easily adapted for non-Christian use by substituting ‘merry Christmas’ with ‘joyous Solstice.’

We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
And a happy New Year!

REFRAIN:

*Glad tidings we bring
To you and your kin;
Glad tidings for ~~Christmas~~-the Solstice
And a happy New Year!*

Oh, bring us some figgy pudding,
Oh, bring us some figgy pudding,
Oh, bring us some figgy pudding,
And bring it right here.

REFRAIN

We won't go till we get some,
We won't go till we get some,
We won't go till we get some,
So bring it right here.

REFRAIN

We all like our figgy pudding,
We all like our figgy pudding,
We all like our figgy pudding,
With all its good cheer!

REFRAIN

We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
We wish you a ~~merry Christmas~~,
Joyous Solstice,
And a happy New Year!

This carol owes its origin to the English tradition of wealthy community members giving treats to carolers on Christmas Eve. Several nineteenth-century sources state that, in England, “figgy pudding” referred to a raisin or plum pudding, not necessarily one containing figs, which would have been hard to come by. Also, what Americans refer to as pudding is known as custard in England. To the English, pudding is synonymous with dessert, thus to Americans, ‘pudding’ is a fruit based cake. Recipes for both raisin and plum puddings follow.

FIGGY PUDDING

Chocolate Plum Cake

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 stick unsalted butter | ½ cup Samuel Smith's Organic Chocolate Stout or other stout, such as Guinness. (Do not measure head.) |
| 1 ¼ cup flour + extra for dusting | ½ cup soft pitted prunes, quartered |
| ¼ teaspoon baking soda | 4 oz fine quality bitter-sweet chocolate, broken into pieces |
| ¼ teaspoon salt | 2 teaspoons confectioners' sugar |
| 2 large eggs | |
| 1 cup packed brown sugar | |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla | |

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray pan with non-stick spray and dust with flour, and set aside. Sift together flour, baking soda, and salt in a bowl and set aside. Bring beer to a boil in a small saucepan and add prunes. Remove from heat and let stand so liquid can be absorbed. In a separate bowl beat together eggs, brown sugar, and vanilla until thick, then set aside. Melt chocolate and butter in a heavy saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly. Once melted, add chocolate mixture to egg mixture and beat until combined. Continue mixing, adding flour a little at a time. Finally, stir in prune mixture. Spoon batter into Bundt pan and bake 45 min. Cool cake in pan, on rack 10 min before removing from pan. Dust with confectioners' sugar just before serving.

Rum-Raisin Cake

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2/3 cup raisins | 2 tablespoons orange zest |
| ¼ cup dark rum | 2 teaspoons vanilla |
| 3 cups flour + extra for dusting | 3 eggs |
| 1 ½ teaspoons baking powder | 1 cup milk |
| ½ teaspoons baking soda | 1/3 cup granulated sugar |
| ½ teaspoons salt | 3 tablespoons light corn syrup |
| ¼ cups butter, softened | 2 tablespoons water |
| ½ cup oil | 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar |
| 1 cup packed brown sugar | |

Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray Bundt pan with cooking spray and dust with flour, then set aside.

Combine raisins and rum in a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave on HIGH for 30 seconds. Set aside to let cool while continuing. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, in a bowl. In a separate bowl, beat butter until light and fluffy. Add oil, brown sugar, orange zest, and vanilla, beating until combined. Add eggs one at a time, beating well between each. Add flour mixture and milk, a little at a time, until all combined. Drain raisins, but reserve liquid, and add raisins to batter. Pour batter into a Bundt pan and bake at 350 for 40 min. After baking, cool cake, in pan, on rack.

While cake cools, combine granulated sugar, corn syrup, and water, in a small saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove pan from heat and stir in remaining rum. Remove cake from pan and brush syrup over cake. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

III. Ridiculous Rewrites



Fleas, Naughty Dog (Feliz Navidad)

“Feliz Navidad” was written in 1970 by Puerto Rican singer and songwriter José Feliciano. With its simple Spanish chorus, “Feliz Navidad, próspero año y felicidad” meaning “Merry Christmas, a prosperous year and happiness” and equally simple English verse “I wanna wish you a Merry Christmas from the bottom of my heart”, it quickly became one of the most aired Christmas songs in the United States and Canada.

Being written in 1970, the song has no older Heathen version to hearken back to, thus a rewrite was in order. Seeing as every witch needs her familiar, an ode to our pets is in order.

Fleas, naughty dog
Fleas, naughty dog
Fleas, naughty dog
Seresto, Advangage, kill ‘da fleas on my dog
Fleas, naughty dog
Fleas, naughty dog
Fleas, naughty dog
Seresto, Advangage, kill ‘da fleas on my dog

A shaking wet dog makes me grimace
A shaking wet dog makes me grimace
A shaking wet dog makes me grimace
Then he wags and he barks!
He licks my face, sayin’ “Hey, kiss this!”
He licks my face, sayin’ “Hey, kiss this!”
He licks my face, sayin’ “Hey, kiss this!”
Then he wags and he barks!

(Repeat both verses until the music stops.)

Hark! The Drunken Pagans Sing (Hark! The Herald Angles Sing)

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” is a Christmas carol which first appeared in 1739, in the collection *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, written by Charles Wesley. It has no other origins and was originally written for Christmastide, hence the necessity of the rewrite appearing below.

Hark! The drunken Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King.
Peace on Earth and mercy mild,
God and Goddess reconciled.
Joyful all our deities rise,
Dancing naked under dark skies.
Witch and Pagan both proclaim,
The sun’s reborn to rise again.

Hark! The drunken Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King.

Oak by highest order adored,
Oak the everlasting lord,
Longing for spring to see him come,
Acorn of the favored one.
Verdant and fresh for Goddess to see,
Hail our glorious deity.
Pleased as men with women to dwell,
Sensuous appetites to quell.

Hark! The drunken Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King.

Hail the winter-born sun entreats,
Hail the sun of rightfulness,
Light and life to all it brings,
Whispering tidings of coming springs.
In winter he lays his glory by,
Born in dark, in dark to die.
Born to bring warmth to earth.
Born during the moon of birch.

Hark! The drunken Pagans sing,
Glory to the Holly King.

To facilitate the drunkenness of pagans, below is an assortment of punch recipes.

PUNCH

Blood-Rum Punch

1 (750 ml) bottle of sparkling white wine, chilled.
3 cups blood-orange juice
1 cup amber rum
1 blood-orange thinly sliced
Ice

Stir together all ingredients in a pitcher, add ice, and serve.

Cranberry Cocktail Punch

6 cups frozen cranberries
2 cups sugar
1 tablespoon fresh rosemary, finely chopped
4 cups water
1 (750 ml) bottle of vodka
Fresh rosemary sprigs
Ice

Simmer cranberries, sugar, and rosemary in water until berries burst. Pour resulting syrup through a fine mesh sieve and discard berries. Chill syrup uncovered 4 hours. In a pitcher stir together syrup and vodka, then add ice. Garnish with rosemary sprigs.

Ginger Pineapple Punch

1 ½ cups water
1 cup sugar
1 cup fresh ginger, unpeeled and thinly sliced.
3 cups pineapple juice
1/3 cup lemon juice
1/3 cup lime juice
3 cups sparkling water, chilled
1 lemon thinly sliced
1 lime thinly sliced
Ice

Bring water, sugar, and ginger to a boil, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Simmer uncovered 10 min. stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and let seep 15 min. Pour syrup through fine mesh sieve and discard ginger. Chill covered for 4 hours. In a punch bowl stir together syrup, juice, and sparkling water, then add fruit slices and ice.

It Came Upon a Solstice Clear (It Came Upon a Midnight Clear)

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear was written by Edmund Sears, who served as a Unitarian Pastor in Wayland, Massachusetts. The song first appeared in 1849 and was remarkable in that it focused on contemporary issues, rather than rehashing events from ancient Bethlehem. Because of its modern focus on contentious political issues, the song required surprisingly little adjustment to make it Pagan-safe and relevant for today's audiences.

It came upon a solstice clear,
That glorious song retold,
From Pagans circling 'round the Earth,
To practice their religion of old.
Peace on Earth, goodwill to men,
From the Goddesses all gracious ring,
The world in solemn stillness lay,
To hear the Pagans sing.

Bound under darkened skies, harm none,
With blessings yet unfurled,
And still their earthly magic floats
O're all the weary world.
Across it's sad and lowly plains,
The coven continues practicing,
And ever o're the prattling sounds,
The blessed Pagans sing.

Yet, with the woes of sin and strife
The world hath suffered long.
Beneath the Pagan-strain have told
Two thousand years of wrong.
And man at war with man, hears not,
The message which they bring.
O hush, thy noise, ye men of strife
And hear the Pagans sing.

For lo, the days are hastening on,
By Druidic bards foretold,
Then with the ever-circling years,
Reclaiming the lore of old.
When peace shall over all the earth,
Its ancient splendors fling,
And all the world give back the song,
Which now the Pagans sing.

Pagans we have Heard get High (*Gloria in excelsis Deo*)

The Bach Cantata 191, “Gloria in excelsis Deo,” dating to 1745, is so obviously Christian that serious re-writing was necessary to make it singable. This version doesn’t have a thing to do with the solstice or Yuletide, but is fun none-the-less.

Pagans we have heard get high,
Secretly token o’re the plains,
And the mountain states in reply,
Echoing their joyous strains.

In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.
In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.

Legislatures now in jubilee,
With dope taxes to proclaim,
Budgets balanced, yes they be,
Increasing pot sales is our aim.

In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.
In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.

Come to Washington and see,
The evergreen state where pot is king,
Adore Colorado on bended knee,
Rocky Mountain High has a new meaning.

In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.
In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.

My woman’s to uptight to get laid,
With a booty worthy of praise.
Mary Jane lend your aid,
With my heart I solemnly beg.

In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.
In Colorado . . . and Washington we get stoned.

Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland (Walking in a Winter Wonderland)

While there is nothing remotely ‘Christmassy’ about Felix Bernard (music) and Richard B. Smith’s (lyrics) original *Walking in a Winter Wonderland*, published in 1934, the tune is, regrettably, still under copyright, and thus cannot be reprinted here. To makeup for that lack, the rewrite below should serve in its place.

Pagans sing, are ya’ listenin’
Altars set, candles glisten,
It’s a beautiful sight, a magical night,
Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.

Blades held high, censer smokin’
Gather ‘round, we’re invokin’.
With elements five, we celebrate life,
Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.

After circle we can light a Yule blaze,
And await the rising of the sun.
Wheel of power turns as winter’s dark days,
Grow lighter until spring-time has begun.

Later on, by the fire,
Crone of Power, getting higher,
It’s a beautiful sight, a magical night,
Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.

In the meadow we can build a snowman,
And joy and laughter surly will abound.
We’ll have lots of fun because, ya’ know man,
The solstice is the greatest gig in town.

Celebrating the solstice sure is thrilling,
Though your nose gets a chilling.
We’ll frolic and play, the Pagan way,
Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.

Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.
Walking in a Wiccan Wonderland.

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