The Second Shepherds Play

Adapted to modern English by Ian Borden

First produced by Revelry Theatre on Grandville Island in Vancouver, Canada, 1991

Cast –

Coll: Terry Sherbino
Gib: Graham Shiels
Daw: Art Kitching
Mak: Ian Borden
Gill: Cyndi Janzen

Directed by: Ian Borden and Cyndi Janzen
SCENE 1

[The open fields.]

Coll.
Lord but this weather is cold, and I am ill wrapped.
Near numb, were truth told, so long have I napped:
My legs bend and fold, my fingers are chapped.
It is not as I would, for I am all lapped
In sorrow.
In storms and tempest,
Now in the east, now in the west,
Woe is him has never rest
Mid-day nor morrow.

But we simple shepherds that walk on the moor,
In faith, we are near-hands out of the door.
No wonder, as it stands, if we be poor,
For the tilth of our lands lies as fallow as the floor,
As ye ken.
We are so lamed,
Overtaxed and shamed,
Me are made hand-tamed
By these gentry-men.

Thus they rob us of rest, our Lady them harry!
These men that are Lord-fast, they cause the plow tarry.
That, men say, is for the best: we find it contrary.
Thus are husbandmen oppressed, in point to miscarry
In life.

Thus hold they us under,
Thus bring us to blunder,
It were great wonder,
If ever we should thrive.

Get a man a painted sleeve or a brooch, nowadays,
Woe is him that grieves, or once him gainsays!
Dare no man him reprieve, what mastery he may:
And yet none believe one word that he says,
No letter.

He can make good purveyance,
With boasting and bragance:
And all through the maintenance
Of men who are greater.
There shall come a swain, a proud peacock, know,
He must borrow my wain, my plow, also.
These I am full fain to grant ere he go.
Thus live we in pain, anger and woe,
By night and day.
He must have what he longs for,
What I must needs lose, sure:
I were better be hanged, or
E’en once say him nay.

It does me good, as I walk thus by mine own,
Of this world to talk in manner of moan.
To my sheep will I stalk and hearken anon,
There abide on a balk, or sit on a stone
Full soon.

For, by God, I believe,
True men if they be,
We get more company,
Ere it be noon.

[He steps aside. Gib enters.]

Gib:
*Benste* and *Dominus!* What may this mean?
Why fares the world thus? Oft have we not seen.
Lord, this weather works through us, and the winds full keen,
And the frosts so hideous, they water mine een,
No lie.
Now in dry, now in wet,
Now in snow, now in sleet,
When my shoes freeze to my feet,
It is not at all easy.

But as far as I ken, or yet as I go,
We poor wedded men suffer much woe:
We have sorrow without end, it falls often so.
Silly Copple, our hen, both to and fro
She cackles:
But begin she to croak,
To groan or to cluck,
Woe is him our cock,
For he is in shackles.

These men that are wed have not all their will:
When put full hard to it, they sigh mighty still.
God knows they are led full hard and full ill:
In bower or in bed they speak not their will,
This tide.
My part have I found,  
Learned my lesson sound:  
Woe to him who is bound,  
For he must it abide.

But now late in our lives, a marvel to me,  
That I think my heart rives such wonders to see:  
That which destiny drives should so be;  
Some men will have two wives, and some men three,  
In store:  
Some are grieved that have any,  
But I wager a penny  
Woe is him that has many,  
For he feels sore.

But, young men of wooing, for so God us wrought,  
Beware well of wedding, and hold well in thought:  
"Had I known" is a thing that serveth of nought.  
Much constant mourning has wedding home brought,  
And grief,  
With many a sharp shower:  
For thou mayst catch in an hour  
What shall savour full sour  
As long as thou lives.

For as ever I read epistle, I have one by the fire,  
As sharp as a thistle, as rough as a briar.  
She is browed like a bristle, with a sour face dire.  
Had she once wet her whistle she could sing like a choir  
Her paternoster.  
She is as great as a whale,  
She has a gallon of gall:  
By him that died for us all,  
I would I had run till I lost her.

Coll :  
Gib, look over the row! Full deafly you stand.

Gib:  
Yea, the devil in thy maw, so tarrying!  
Saw'st thou aught of Daw?

Coll:  
Yea, on the lea-land  
I heard him blow. He comes near at hand,  
Not far.  
Stand still.

Gib:
Why?

Coll:
For he comes, think I.

Gib:
He will beguile us with a lie
Unless we beware.

[Daw enters.]

Daw:
Christ's cross me speed, and Saint Nicholas!
Thereof had I need: it is worse than it was.
Who knows should take heed and let the world pass:
It is ever in dread and brittle as glass,
And sleeps.
This world never fared so:
The marvels greater grow,
Now in weal, now in woe,
And everything weeps.

Never since Noah's flood have such floods been seen,
Winds and rains so rude, and storms so keen:
Some stammered, some stood in doubt, as I ween.
Now God turn all to good! I say as I mean,
For ponder:
These floods so drown,
Both in fields and in town,
They bear all down:
And that is a wonder.

We that walk in the nights our cattle to keep,
We see fearful sights when other men sleep.
Yet my heart grows light: I see rascals a-peep;
Ye are two true men. I will give my sheep
A turn.
But full ill have I meant,
As I walk on this bent,
I may lightly repent
My toes if I spurne.

Ah, sir, God you save, and master mine!
A drink would I have and somewhat to dine.

Coll:
Christ's curse, my knave, thou art a lazy hind!

Gib:
What, let the boy rave! Abide a while:
We have just ate it.
Ill thrift on thy pate!
Though the knave came late,
Yet he is in a state
To dine if he had it.

Daw:
Such servants as I, who work and sweat,
Eat our bread full dry, and that makes me fret.
We are oft wet and weary while our masters sleep yet:
Yet comes our dinner and drink full late,
Which satisfies never.
Both our dame and our sire,
When we have run in the mire,
Take a nip at our hire,
And pay us late, ever.

But hear the truth, master: for the fare that you give
I shall work hereafter: work as I live.
I shall do little, sir, my work shall be brief,
For ne'er does my supper my stomach grieve
In fields.
Why should I threap?
With my staff can I leap:
Men say, “Bartering cheap
A poor return yields.”

Coll:
You were an ill lad to go a-wooing
With a master that had but little for spending.

Gib:
Peace, I say, lad. No more jangling,
Or I shall make thee afraid, by Heaven's King!
Your gauds:
Where are our sheep, boy? no scorn.

Daw:
Sir, this same day at morn
I left them in the corn
When they rang Lauds.
They have pasture good, they cannot go wrong.

Coll:
That is right. By the rood, these nights are long!
Yet I would, ere we go, someone gave us a song.

Gib:
So I thought as I stood, to cheer us along.

Daw:
I too, grant.

Coll:
The tenor will I try.

Gib:
And I the treble so high.

Daw:
Then the middle falls to me.
Let see how ye chant.

[They sing. Mak enters.]

Mak:
Now Lord, by thy name that made both stars and moon,
More than I can speak thy will, Lord I am undone,
I am all uneven, I am moved to swoon,
Would God I might in heaven dwell, for there no children croon,
So shrill.

Coll:
Who is't that pipes so poor?

Mak:
That should I have asked you before.
Lo, a man that walks on the moor,
And hast not all his will.

Gib:
Mak, where hast thou gone? Tell us tidings.

Daw:
Is he come? Then take heed each to his things.

Mak:
I be a yeoman, I tell you, of the king,
The self and the same. A Lord’s message I bring -
No lie.

[Daw moves to take Mak's cloak.]

Fie on you! Go hence
Out of my prescence!
I must have reverence.
Why, who be I?
Coll:
Why make it so quaint? Mak, you do wrong.

Gib:
Shall we call you a saint? For that do you long?

Daw:
With words the shrew can paint, the devil might him hang!

Mak:
I shall make complaint: ye will be beaten ere long,
At a word,
And tell even how ye doth.

Coll:
But, Mak, is that sooth?
Now take out that haughty tooth,
And set in a turd!

Gib:
Mak, the devil in your eye! A stroke would I lend you.

Daw:
Mak, know ye not me? By God, I could beat you!¹

Mak:
God keep you, all three! Methought I had seen you.
Ye are a fair company.

Coll:
Now ye remember mean you?

Gib:
No lies!
When thus late a man goes,
What will folks suppose?
Ye have a bad name. God knows,
For stealing of sheep.

Mak:
That I am true as steel, all men can state,
But a sickness I feel that holds me full hot,
My belly lacks a meal, it is out of state.

Daw:

¹ A scuffle may have been staged here.
Seldom lies the devil dead by the gate.

Mak:
Therefore
Full sore I am and ill:
May I turn stone still
If I’ve had e’en a little
This month and more.

Coll:
How fares thy wife? By my hood, how fares she now?

Mak:
Sprawling, by the rood, at the fire laid low,
And a house full of brood. She drinks well, too:
Ill speed other good that she will do!
But she
Eats as fast as she can,
And each year that comes to man
Brings forth a baby to our clan,
And some years two.

But were I not more gracious and richer by far,
I were eaten out of house and harbor.
She is a foul wench, if look you should dare;
There is none can see her, who worse knows more
Than know I.
Will you see what I proffer?
To give all in my coffer
To mourn might I offer
At her funeral for aye.

Gib:
I know so wearied none is in this shire:
I would sleep though I made less for my hire.

Daw:
I am cold and naked and would have a fire.

Coll:
I am weary, exhausted and covered with mire.
Wake thou!

Gib:
Nay, I will lie down-by,
For I must sleep true.

Daw:
As good a man's son was I
As any of you.

[They lie down.]

But, Mak, come hither, the space between us shalt take.

Mak:
Then might I keep you from staying awake.

Daw:
Better thus to be hindered and know ye are nigh.

No dread.
From my top to my toe,
*Manus tuas commendo,*
Poncio Pilato.
Christ's cross me speed!

[He rises.]

Now were time for a man that lacks what he would
To stalk privily then unto a fold,
And nimbly to work then, and be not too bold,
For he might abuy the bargain, if it were told
At the ending.
Now were time for to revel;
But he needs good counsel
That fain would fare well,
And has but little spending.

[Mak casts a spell.]

Put about you a circle as round as the moon,
Till I have done what I will, until it be noon,
That ye lie stone still until I have done
And thes few good words shall I croon:
On height:
Over your heads my hand I lift,
Out go your eyes, forgo thy sight.
But yet I must make better shift
And it be right.

Lord, but they sleep hard. Like you who lie here
Never yet was I shepherd, but I’ll soon be without peer.
If the flock be scared yet shall I nip near.
How, draw hitherward!

[He seizes a sheep.]
Now mends our cheer
From sorrow.
A fat sheep, I dare say,
A good fleece, dare I lay.
When I can, I'll repay,
But this will I borrow.

[Mak leaves with the sheep.]

SCENE 2

[Mak's Cottage.]

Mak:
How, Gill, art thou in? Get us some light.

Gill:
Who makes such din this time of night?
I've sat down to spin: I doubt a penny I might
Gain getting up again: I curse them on high!
So fares
A housewife that has been
Bothered 'twixt and between.
Here may no note be seen
For such small chores.

Mak:
Good wife, open the door. See you not what I bring?

Gill:
I will let you come indoors.

[Mak opens door.]

Ah, come in my sweeting

Mak:
You care not for my long standing.

Gill:
By the naked neck are you like to be hanging.

Mak:
Away!
I am worth my meat,
For in a strait can I get
More than they that toil and sweat
All the long day.
Thus it fell to my lot, Gill, I had such grace!

Gill:
It were a foul blot to be hanged for the case.

Mak:
I've often escaped, Gill, just as hard a chase.

Gill:
But so long goes the pot to water, men say,
At last
Comes it home broken.

Mak:
Well I know the token,
But let it never be spoken,
But come and help fast.

I would he were slain, I want so to eat;
Not this year did I yearn for one sheep's meat.

Gill:
Come they ere he be slain and here the sheep bleat –

Mak:
Then might I be ta'en. That were a cold sweat!
Go bar
The outer door.

Gill:
Yes, Mak,
For if they come at thy back –

Mak:
Then might I buy from the whole pack
The devil, and more.

Gill:
A good trick have I spied, since thou can none:
Here shall we him hide till they be gone:
In my cradle, abide. Let me alone,
And I shall lie beside in childbed and groan.

Mak:
Get thou ready;
And I shall say that born this night
A boy-child saw the light.
Gill:
Now well is that day bright
That saw me born and bred!

This is a good guise and a far cast:
Ever a woman's advice helps at the last.
We never know who spies: go you back fast.

Mak:
I must come ere they rise, else blows a cold blast!
I will go sleep.

[He returns to the shepherds.]

Yet sleep these fools many,
And I shall slip in privily,
As if it had never been I
That carried their sheep.

SCENE 3

[The open fields]

Coll:
Resurrex a mortruis! Take hold a hand!
Judas carnus dominus! I may not well stand:
My foot sleeps, by Jesus: my mouth feels like sand.
I thought we laid us full near England.

Gib:
Ah, ye!
Lord, but I have slept well!
As fresh as an eel,
As light I do feel
As leaf on a tree.

Daw:
A blessing within! So my heart quakes
My heart from my skin, so far it makes
Who makes all this din? So my brow aches
To the door will I win. Hark, fellows, wake!
We were four:
See ye aught of Mak now?

Coll:
We were up ere thou.

Gib: [sees Mak.]
Man, to God I vow,
He's yet gone nowhere.

Daw:
Methought he was wrapped in a wolf's skin.

Coll:
So many are wrapped now, namely within.

Daw:
When we had long napped, methought with a gin
A fat sheep he trapped: but he made no din.

Gib:
Be still:
Thy dream makes thee woed:
It is but phantom by the rood.

Coll:
Now God turn all to good,
If it be his will.

Gib:
Rise, Mak, for shame! Thou lies right long.

Mak:
Now Christ's holy name be us among!
What is this? By Saint James, I can't walk along.
I trust I be the same. Ah, my neck has lain wrong
Enough.

[The shepherds help Mak up.]

Many thanks! Since yester-even,
Now by Saint Stephen,
I was so afraid of a dream
My heart jumped my skin through.

I thought Gill began to croak and travail full sad,
Well-nigh at the first cock, she bore a young lad
To add to our flock. Then be I never glad.
All I have is trouble in hand.
Ah, my head!
Too many children I've gained;
The devil knock out their brains!
Woe is him that has many bairns
And has but little bread.

I must go home, by your leave, to Gill, as I thought.
I pray you search my sleeve that I steal nought:  
I am loath you to grieve or from you take aught.

[Mak exits.]  

Daw:  
Go forth, ill might thou fare! Now would I we sought  
This morn  
That we had all our store.

Coll:  
I will go afore;  
Let us meet.

Gib:  
Where?

Daw:  
At the Crooked Thorn.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE 4

[Mak's cottage.]

Mak:  
Undo this door! Who is here? How long shall I stand?

Gill:  
Who makes such a fleer? Now walk in the wenyand!

Mak:  
Ah, Gill, what cheer? It is I, Mak, your husband.

Gill:  
Then may we see here the devil in a band,

[Opens door.]

Sir Guile!  
Lo he comes with a note,  
As though held by the throat.  
I may not sit or devote  
To my work any while.

Mak:  
Will ye hear what noise she makes to sound an excuse?
Naught but leisure she takes, and scrtaches her toes.

Gill:
Why, who works and who wakes? Who comes, who goes?
Who brews, who bakes? Who makes me this hose?
And then
It is sad to behold,
Now in hot, now in cold,
Full woeful the household
That wants a woman.

But what end hast thou made with the shepherds, Mak?

Mak:
The last word they said when I turned my back,
They would look that they had their sheep, all the pack.
They will not be pleased when they their sheep lack,
By God!
But so how the game goes,
To me they will I suppose,
And make a foul noise,
And cry out upon me.

But thou must do as thou said.

Gill:
I accord me there till.
I shall swaddle him right in my cradle.
Were it a greater trick, yet could I play ill.
I will lie down straight. Come cover me.

Mak:
I will.

[He does so.]

Gill:
Behind!
Come Coll and his mates,
They'll pinch us straight.

Mak:
But I'll cry to the fates
If the sheep they find.

Gill:
Hark now when they call; they will come anon.
Come and make ready all, and sing by thine own,
Sing lullay thou shall, for I must groan
And cry out by the wall on Mary and John
Full sore.
Sing lullay full fast
When thou hear at the last.
And but I play a false cast,
Trust me no more.

SCENE 5

[The Crooked Thorn]

Daw:
Ah, Coll, good morn! Why sleepest thou not?

Coll:
Alas that ever I was born! We have a foul blot.
A fat sheep we have lorn.

Daw:
God forbid, that it’s not!

Gib:
Who should do us this scorn? That were a foul spot.

Coll:
Some shrew.
I have searched with my dogs
Every field and shrog,
And of fifteen hogs
Found I but one ewe.

Daw:
Now trust me, if you will, by Saint Thomas of Kent,
Either Mak or Gill our sheep from us rent.

Coll :
Peace, man, be still! I saw when he went.
Thou slander’s him ill: you ought to repent
With good speed.

Gib:
Now as ever I might see
If he should never here be,
I would say it were he
That did that same deed.

Daw:
Then off we go thither, be brisk on our feet.
Till we’ve figured out all I’ll never bread eat.

Coll:
Nor have drink in my head till with him I meet.

Gib:
I will rest in no stead till that I him greet,
My brother.
One vow I will hight:
Till I see him in sight
Shall I ne’er sleep one night
Where I do another.

[Mak’s Cottage. Mak and Gill begin to sing and groan as they hear the shepherds approach.]

Daw:
Will ye hear how they sing? Our sire tries to croon,

Coll:
I never heard a thing so clear out of tune.
Call on him.

Gib:
Mak, undo your door soon.

Mak:
Who is it that spoke, as if it were noon,
On high.
Who is it I say?

Daw:
Good fellows, were it day.

[The shepherds enter.]

Mak:
As far as ye may,
Good, speak soft,
Over a sick woman's head, that is at malease:
I had rather be dead than she had any disease.

Gill:
Go on to another stead! I cannot well breathe.
Each foot that you tread goes through my knees
So sorely.

Coll:
Tell us, Mak, if ye may,
How fare ye, I say?
Mak:
But are ye in town today?
Now how fare ye?

Ye have run in the mire, and now are all wet:
I shall make you a fire, if ye will sit.
A nurse would I hire. Think ye on it,
My wages paid, no liar: my dream, this is it:
My new possession.
I have bairns, if ye knew,
Well more than a few:
But we must drink as we brew,
And that is but reason.

Would ye dine ere ye walk the road? Methinks that ye sweat.

Gib:
Nah, neither mends our mode, not drink nor meat.

Mak:
Why, sir, alas, you are not good?

Daw:
Our sheep is gone yet,
Stolen all be told. Our loss is great.

Mak:
Sirs, drink!
Had I been there,
Some should have bought it full sore.

Coll:
Marry, some say that you were,
And that makes us think.

Gib:
Mak, some men believe that it must have been thee.

Daw:
Either ye or your spouse, so say we.

Mak:
Now if ye have suspicion of Gill or of me,
Come and search our house, and then may ye see
Who had her.
No sheep have I brought,
Neither heifer nor goat,
And Gill, my wife, rose not,
Here since she laid her.

As I am true and loyal, to God, here I pray
That this be the first meal I shall eat this day.

Coll:
Mak, as I want for good weal, advise you, I say:
He learned timely to steal that could not say nay.

[The shepherds begin to search.]

Gill:
I die!
Out, thieves, from my home,
You've come to rob us, then be gone.

Mak:
Hear ye not how she groans?
Your hearts should melt!

Gill:
Out thieves, from my bairn. Go not to him more.

Mak:
How she has fared this morn: your hearts should be sore.
Ye do wrong, I you warn, that comes thus before
A woman that has borne: but I say no more.

Gill:
Ah, my middle!
I pray to God so mild,
If ever I you beguiled
May I eat the child
That lies in this cradle.

Mak:
Peace, woman, for God's pain, and cry not so!
Thou spillest thy brain and make me feel woe.

Gib:
I believe our sheep be slain. What find ye two?

Daw:
All work we in vain: we may as well go.
Save a few tatters,
I can find no flesh,
Hard nor nesh,
Salt nor fresh,
Save two empty platters.

No creature but this, wild nor tame,
None, as I have bliss, smelled the same.

Gill:
No, so God me bless, and give me joy of my child!

Coll:
We have marked amiss: I hold us beguiled.

Gib:
Sir,
Our Lady him save.
Is your child a knave?

Mak:
Any Lord might him have,
This child, for his son.

When he wakens, he grabs and grips: that is joy to see!

Daw:
Good blessing to him and good luck, say we!

But who are his godparents, so soon ready?

Mak:
Fare well their lips.

Coll: [Aside]
Hark now, a lie.

Mak:
So God them thank.
Parkin and Gibbon Waller, I say,
And gentle John Home, in good faith -
He made noise all day
With his long shanks.

Gib:
Mak, friends will we be, for we are all one.

Mak:
We? I hold out for me, for amends get I none.
Farewell all three! And I’ll be glad when you’re gone.

[The shepherds leave.]
Daw:
Fair words may there be, but love is there none
This year.

Coll:
Gave ye the child anything?

Gib:
No, not one farthing.

Daw:
Back again I will fling.
Abide ye me there.

[Daw reenters the cottage, Coll and Gib slowly following.]

Daw:
Mak, take it to no woe, if I come to your babe.

Mak:
Nay, thou hast done me sorrow: and trouble hast thou made.

Daw:
Such a mild little day-star, may he not know grief paid.
Mak, by your leave let me give your babe
But sixpence.

[He goes to cradle]

Mak:
Nay, go 'way! He sleeps.

Daw:
Methinks he peeps.

Mak:
When he wakens, he weeps.
I pray you go hence.

Daw:
Give me leave him to kiss and lift up the clout.

[He lifts cover.]
What the devil is this? He has a long snout!

Coll :
He is marked amiss. Watch for the devil about.

Gib:
An ill-spun weft ever comes foul out.
Aye, so!
He is like to our sheep!

Daw:
How, Gib, may I peep?

Coll:
I believe nature will creep
Where it may not go.

Gib:
This was a quaint gaud and a far cast.
It was a high fraud.

Daw:
Yea, sirs, that it was't.
Let’s burn this bawd and bind her fast.
A false scold will hang at the last.
So shall thou!
Do ye see how they swaddle
His four feet in the middle?
Saw I never in the cradle
A horned lad ere now.

Mak:
Peace, I say! What, let be your fare!
It was I him begot and yon woman him bore.

Coll:
What devil is he named, Mak? Lo, God, Mak's heir!

Gib:
Let be all that. Now God give him care,
I say.

Gill:
A pretty child is he
As sits on a woman's knee,
A darling pretty
To give a man glee.

Daw:
I know him by the ear-mark: that is a good token.

Mak:
I tell you, sirs, hark! His nose was broken.
Then a priest told me a curse was spoken.
Coil:
This is a false work: my revenge is now working.
Get a weapon!

Gill:
He was taken by an elf;
I saw it myself.
When the clock struck twelve,
Was he misshapen.

Gib:
Ye two are guilty in fain, as one in this stead.

Coll:
Since their theft they maintain, let's strike them dead.

Mak:
If I trespass again, cut off my head.
With you will I remain.

Daw:
Sirs, listen to what I have said:
For this trespass,
We'll neither curse nor deride,
Fight nor chide,
But seize him tight,
And toss him in canvas.

[The shepherds wrap Mak in a blanket and sling him off stage, then scare Gill after him.]

**SCENE 7**

[The open fields.]

Coll:
Lord, but I am sore, ready to burst!
In faith, I may no more: therefore will I rest.

Gib:
Like a sheep of seven score he weighed in my fist.
To sleep anywhere methinks I wish.

Daw:
Now, I pray you.
Lay down on this green.
Coll:
Over those thieves yet am I worked.

Daw:
Where to are ye irked?
Do as I say you.

[They sleep. An angel sings "Gloria in Excelsis," then afterwards speaks.]

Angel:
Rise herdsmen kind, for now is he born
That shall take from the fiend what Adam had lorn:
That warlock to end, this night is he born.
God is made your friend now on this morn.
He behests:
To Bethlehem go see:
Where He lies so free,
In a crib full poorly,
Betwixt two beasts.

[The angel vanishes.]

Coll:
'Twas a beauteous song my ears did hear.
'Tis a marvel to speak on, to be thus afeared.

Gib:
Of God's son from Heaven he spoke so dear.
All the wood like lightning, he made appear.

Daw:
He spoke of a bairn
In Bethlehem, not far.

Coll:
That betokens yon star.
Let us seek him there.

Gib:
Say, what was his song? Heard you not how he roared?
Three breves to a long.

Daw:
Yes, marry, his voice soared;
There was not a note wrong, a perfect chord.

Coll:
For to sing it among us, the notes as he scored
I can.
Gib:
Let see how ye croon.
Can ye bark at the moon?

Daw:
Hold your tongues! Have done.
Hark after then.

[They joyfully sing “Gloria in Excelsis.”]

Gib:
To Bethlehem he bade we should along,
And we are surely mad to tarry long.

Daw:
Be merry and not sad, of mirth is our song;
May our hearts ever be filled by such song
And such joys.

Coll:
Then let us therefore thither hie,
Though we be wet and weary,
To that child and that lady:
We have no time to lose.

Gib:
We find by the prophecy – let be your din! –
Of David and Isaiah, and more remembering,
They prophesied by clergy that in a virgin
Should he come to lie, to lessen our sin,
And remove it,
Our kind, ta’en from woe.
For Isaiah said so.
Ecce virgo
Concipiet, a child that is naked.

Daw:
Full glad may we be if we abide that day,
That beauty to see, that all might sway.
Lord, well were me, for once and for aye,
Might I kneel on my knee some word for to say
To that child.
But the angel said
In a crib was he laid;
He was poorly arrayed,
Both meek and mild.
Coll:
Patriarchs that have been and prophets before,
Desired to have seen this child that is born.
They are gone full clean, that they have lorn.
We shall see him, I ween, ere it be morn,
Proof’s token.
When I see him and feel,
Then know him full well,
It is true as steel,
What prophets have spoken:

To so poor as we are that he would appear
First, find, and declare by his messenger.

Gib:
Go we now, let us fare: the place to us is near,

Daw:
I am ready and dare. Go we in fear
To him so mild.
Lord, if thy will it be,
We are simple, all three,
Some comfort grant we
To give to this child.

[The stable in Bethlehem.]

Coll:
Hail, comely and clean! Hail young child!
Hail creator, as I mean, of a maiden so mild!
Thou hast cursed, I ween, the warlock so wild:
The deceiver of men, now goes he beguiled.
Lo he merries,
Lo he laughs, my sweeting!
Oh happy meeting!
I promised you a greeting:
Of a bob of cherries.

Gib:
Hail, sovereign saviour, for thou hast us sought!
Hail, noble child and flower, that all things hast wrought!
Hail, full of favour, that made all of naught!
Hail! I kneel and I cower. A bird have I brought,
Little babe that you are.
Hail, little tiny mop!
Of our creed thou art top:
I would drink from thy cup,
Little day-star.

Daw:
Hail, darling dear, full of Godhead!
I pray thee be near when that I have need.
Hail, sweet is thy cheer! My heart would bleed
To see thee sit here in so poor a weed
With no pennies.
Hail! Hold out thy hand tall.
I bring thee but a ball:
Take it and play withal,
And go to the tennis.

Mary:
The Father of Heaven, God omnipotent,
That made all in days seven, his son has he sent.
My name he did leaven, in me alighted ere he went.
I conceived him full even, through might, as he meant:
And now is he born.
May he keep you from woe!
I shall pray him so.
Speak forth as you go,
And remember this morn.

Coll:
Farewell, Lady, so fair to behold,
With thy child on thy knee.

Gib:
But he lies full cold.
Lord, well is me! Now we go, thou behold.

Daw:
Forsooth, already it seems to be told
Full oft.

Coll:
What grace have we found!

Gib:
Come forth, now are we won.

Daw:
To sing are we bound:
Then send it aloft!

[They exit singing.]

THE END