**N. TOWN PLAYS 2025, AUDITION PIECE 7: MARY, JOSEPH**

JOSEPH Lord, what travail in man is wrought!

 Rest in this world behoveth him none.

 Octavian, our emperor sadly hath besought:

 our tribute him to bear folk must forth each one.

 It is cried in every borough and city by name.

 I that am a poor timber-wright,

 born of the blood of David,

 the emperor’s commandment I must hold with,

 and else I were to blame.

 Now, my wife, Mary, what say ye to this?

 For surely, needs I must forth wend

 unto the city of Bethlehem, far hence, iwis.

 Thus to labour I must my body bend.

MARY Mine husband and my spouse, with you will I wend.

 A sight of that city fain would I see.

 If I might of my kindred any there find

 it would be great joy unto me.

JOSEPH My spouse, ye be with child, I fear you to carry,

 for meseemeth it were works wild.

 But you to please right fain would I.

Yet women be easy to grieve when they be with child.

 Now let us forth wend as fast as we may,

 and almighty God speed us in our journey.

[*They set out*]

MARY Ah, my sweet husband, would you tell to me

 what tree is yon standing upon yon hill?

JOSEPH Forsooth, Mary, it is called a cherry tree;

 In time of year ye might feed thereon your fill.

MARY Turn again, husband, and behold yon tree,

 how that it bloometh now so sweetly.

JOSEPH Come on, Mary, that we were at yon city,

 or else we may be blamed, I tell you hastily.

MARY Now, my spouse, I pray you to behold

 how the cherries grow upon yon tree.

 For to have thereof right fain I would,

 and it pleased you to labour so much for me.

JOSEPH Your desire to fulfil I shall assay, surely.

 Ow! To pluck of these cherries it is a work wild!

 For the tree is so high it will not be easy –

therefore let him pluck you cherries that got you with child!

MARY Now, good Lord, I pray thee, grant me this boon,

 to have of these cherries and it be your will. [*The tree bows down*]

 Now I thank it God, this tree boweth to me down!

 I may now gather enough and eat my fill.

JOSEPH Oh! I know well I have offended my God in Trinity

 speaking to my spouse these unkind words.

 For now I believe well it may none other be

 but that my spouse beareth the king’s son of bliss.

MARY Now gramercy, husband, for your report.

 In our ways wisely let us frorh wend.

 The Father Almighty, he be our comfort;

 the Holy Ghost glorious, he be our friend.