

Carol: There was a boy

Two Soprano voices
(solo or small choir)

Tom Fryers

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Words by John Short (1911-?)

Music by Tom Fryers – October 1975

John Short's beautiful poem had long been a favourite of mine, not least because my wife and I both worked in Salford for many years, and four of our children were born there. This setting for two unaccompanied voices had boy sopranos in mind, and certainly should be sung without vibrato, as in early music. It was sung, (transposed into C) by tenor and bass in Cheltenham, Christmas 2007. John Short had a serious mental break-down after the second world war, and lived as a recluse in Ambleside before he died.

There was a boy, bedded in bracken;
Like to a sleeping snake, all curled he lay.
On his thin navel turned this spinning sphere;
Each feeble finger fetched seven suns away.
He was not dropped in good for lambing weather;
He took no suck when shook buds sing together;
But he is come in cold as work-house weather.
Poor as a Salford child.

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Carol

Two similar voices unaccompanied.

Words: John Short

Music: Tom Fryers 4.10.75

♩ = 44 With expression but without vibrato.

Upper

Lower

p There was a boy, bed-ded in brack-en; Like to a

There was a boy, bed-ded in brack-en; Like to a

1 sleep-ing snake, all curled he lay. *mp* On his thin

2 sleeping snake all curled he lay. On his thin

10 nav-el turned this spin-ning sphere; *mf* Each fee-ble

2 na-vel turned this spin-ning sphere; Each fee-ble

14 fin-ger fetched se-ven suns a-way. *f* *p* He was not dropped in good for

2 fin-ger fetched se-ven suns a-way. He was not dropped in good for

19 lamb-ing wea-ther; *mp* He took no suck when shook buds

2 lamb-ing wea-ther; He took no suck when shook buds

22 sing to-geth-er. *mf* But he is come in cold as work-

2 sing to-geth-er. But he is come in cold as work-

25 house wea-ther. *p* Poor as a Sal-ford *pp* child.

2 house wea-ther. Poor as a Sal-ford child.