

## Hymn of the Week

April 19, 2019 • Good Friday

### Three Tall Trees Grew on a Windy Hill

**Text:** Herbert O'Driscoll, 1971.

It's a very old folk story. I was told it first as a child and I have always liked it, yet it never triggered anything in me until I heard it told one day in the sermon of a visiting preacher. Later that day, in a very effortless way, it became this ballad. Usually the story ends with the role of the third tree as our Lord's cross. I added a "resurrection" verse to make the hymn a rounded statement of Christian faith.

–Herbert O'Driscoll

**Music:** GRAND ISLE, John Henry Hopkins (Public domain).

THREE TALL TREES, Alfred V. Fedak, 1989. Written for this text, it made its first appearance in *A New Hymnal for Colleges and Schools*, 1992.

**Topics:** Cross, Crucifixion, Good Friday, Incarnation, Lent

**Scriptural References:** Matthew 13:1, Luke 2:7

#### Publications

*A New Hymnal for Colleges and Schools* (Yale University, 1992)

*Praise, My Soul: The Hymns of Herbert O'Driscoll* (Selah, 2005)

*Sing to Our God New Songs of Rejoicing* (Selah, 2011)



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## Three Tall Trees Grew on a Windy Hill

Three tall trees grew on a windy hill  
close by a Hebrew town;  
where once a wood had proudly stood  
now the rest of the trees were down.

“A cradle,” said one, “for a child I will be.”

“As a ship,” said another, “I will sail the sea.”

“I will stay,” said the third, “I will stand strong and free,  
still pointing to God on high.”

One day there came to that windy hill  
those who were seeking wood.  
Their hands reached out to work their will  
where the last of the trees still stood.  
From one did they fashion a manger stall,  
from another the keel of a fishboat small,  
but the third they laid by a workshop wall,  
so straight did it stand, and high.

The seasons passed on that windy hill  
close by a Hebrew town.  
That manger cradled a baby still,  
and a star in the east looked down.  
And when as a teacher he spoke on the shore,  
that boat was brought and the Lord it bore,  
and across the waters he taught them more  
of love, and a God on high.

A voice cried, “Halt,” and a prisoner stood,  
bleeding and bound and still,  
while they chose for his cross the last of the wood  
that had grown on that windy hill.  
It had cradled a baby asleep and awake  
it had held the sail on the stormy lake:  
now it bore him aloft for the whole world’s sake,  
the Son of God most high.

Deep darkness came on the cruel hill,  
silencing grief and pain,  
and it seemed that the heart of the world was still,  
and it never would wake again.  
But a war was fought in the silent hours,  
from the gates of hell up to heaven’s towers,  
till death was robbed of its awful powers  
and Jesus rose on high.

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1 Three tall trees grew on a wind - y hill close by a He - brew  
 2 One day there came to that wind - y hill those who were seek - ing  
 3 The sea - sons passed on that win - dy hill close by a He - brew  
 4 A voice cried, "Halt," and a pris - oner stood, bleed - ing and bound and  
 5 Deep dark - ness came on the cru - el hill, sil - enc - ing grief and



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 spoke on the shore, that boat was brought and the  
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 Lord it bore, and a - cross the wa - ters he  
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stand strong and free, still point - ing to God on high."  
 work - shop wall, so straight did it stand, and high.  
 taught them more of love, and a God on high.  
 whole world's sake, the Son of God most high.  
 aw - ful powers and Je - sus rose on high.

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# Three Tall Trees Grew on a Windy Hill

The musical score is written in G minor (three flats) and 4/4 time. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The vocal line has five verses of lyrics. The first verse is: "1 Three tall trees grew on a wind-y hill close by a He - brew those who were seek - ing 2 One day there came to that wind-y hill those who were seek - ing 3 sea - sons passed on that win - dy hill close by a He - brew 4 voice cried, 'Halt,' and a pris - oner stood, bleed - ing and bound and 5 dark - ness came on the cru - el hill, sil - enc-ing grief and". The second system continues the lyrics: "town; where once a wood had proud - ly stood now the wood. Their hands reached out to work their will where the town. That man - ger cra - dled a ba - by still, and a still, while they chose for his cross the last of the wood that had pain, and it seemed that the heart of the world was still, and it". The third system continues: "rest of the trees were down. 'A cra-dle,' said one, 'for a last of the trees still stood. From one did they fa - shion a star in the east looked down. And when as a teach - er he grown on that wind - y hill. It had cra - dled a ba - by a - nev - er would wake a - gain. But a war was fought in the".

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"I will stay," said the third, "I will stand strong and free, still  
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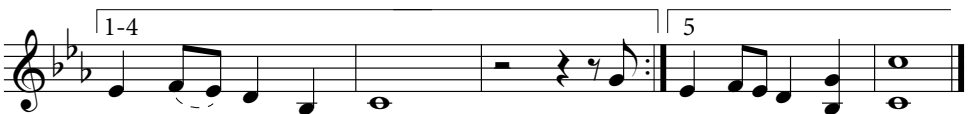
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