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Ther is no rose of swych vertu

(Christmas)

Fifteenth-century
(Trinity roll)

REFRAIN

Ther is no rose of____ swych[1] ver - tu

As is the rose____ that__ bare__ Jhe - su.

Fine

VERSE

1. Ther is____ no rose of swych____ ver -
2. For in____ this__ rose con - tey - nyd____

-tu As__ is____ the__ rose____ that bare Jhe - su.
was He - ven____ and__ erthe____ in ly - tyl space,

[1] such

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3 "Be[3] that rose we may weel see
   That he is God in personys thre,
      Pari forma.[4]

4 The aungelys sungyn the sheperdes to:
   'Gloria in excelsis Deo.'[5]
      Gaudeamus.[6]

5 "Leive[7] we al this worldly merthe,
   And folwe we this joyful berthe:
      Transeamus.[8]

Fifteenth-century
(Trinity roll)

[2] a wonderful thing   [3] by   [4] of the same form   [5] glory to God on high   [6] let us rejoice   [7] leave   [8] let us go

From the same early fifteenth-century manuscript as 'Hayl, Mary, ful of grace' (27). It is the last item, and discoloration and decay make some of the music difficult to decipher: in bar 13, a hole has swallowed the second note of the lower voice. Our added middle part in the refrain is of a kind that might have been improvised. (The resulting succession of ⁶₃ chords is characteristic of the English technique known as faburden, which is in fact the addition of parts *above* and *below* a melody: three-part realizations with treble tune such as the present one have more in common with the related technique of *fauxbourdon*.)

The use of the first verse as a refrain is unusual in a carol, and recalls what was sometimes done in processional performances of sequences. The identification of Mary with the rose was a common medieval conceit which forms the basis of several surviving English carols and a multitude of Latin hymns. The Latin in the first three verses is from the sequence 'Letabundus' (5). 'Gaudeamus' (verse 4) is perhaps from the Christmastide office (*Introit*) antiphon 'Gaudeamus, omnes fideles: Salvator noster natus est in mundum . . .' ('Rejoice, all we faithful: our Saviour is born into the world . . .'). 'Transeamus' is the first word of the shepherds' response to the angels' 'Gloria in excelsis': 'Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass' (Luke 2:15).

See 'There is no rose' (120) for a modern setting of this text by John Joubert. There is also a setting by Britten in *A Ceremony of Carols*, for high voices and harp.

PERFORMANCE Refrain, two or three voices, or choir; verse, two voices. For a guide to pronunciation see Appendix 1.