

## THE HIDDEN ORCHARD POEM PROJECT

Following Coton Orchard's Wassail, we are putting together a video recording of our specially written wassail poem. Orchards are Priority Habitats and a vital part of our heritage, but many – like Coton Orchard – are under threat.

This is a not-for-profit project aimed simply to raise awareness of these special places.

The plan is to have the poem read by well-known voices, each giving a few lines. The images will be mainly of the orchard, but as each new reader comes in there will be a brief talking head, just to establish their identity.

To enable us to do this, the instructions for making a recording are as follows:

- Make a recording of yourself reading the whole poem if you can. This will give us maximum flexibility in the editing. But no worries if you'd rather do just one or two stanzas. Anything will help!
- A video made on your phone will be fine. If it's possible to set this up so that the text is not in shot (so it doesn't look as though you are reading) that would be brilliant.
- The text of the poem is attached. No need to read the title or the name of the poet.
- To save you looking it up, the word *bedizened* in the third stanza is pronounced "be-**die**-zend".
- Send the recording to Anna via WeTransfer or whatever's the most convenient method for you.
- And that's it! But feel free to come back with any questions.

**We really appreciate your contribution. Thank you SO much!**

## THE HIDDEN ORCHARD

1.

Beneath the gaze of winter trees,  
Behind the tangled veil,  
Before the lengthening of days,  
We come to sing, Wassail!"

*Wassail the apple! Beat the bounds!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!*

2.

These sentinels, the ancient seers,  
Where knot and rot are rife,  
All bear the fruit of rolling years,  
Decaying into life.

*Wassail the apple! Beat the bounds!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!*

3.

Beneath each scarred, bedizened branch,  
Flocks and herds are fed.  
Between the heartwood and the bark,  
Multitudes are bred.

*Wassail the apple! Beat the bounds!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!*

4.

Below the sward, in sweetened ground  
A world of being teems.  
And wassail words are passed around  
Between the listening trees.

*Wassail the apple! Beat the bounds!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!*

5.

Walk this forest row by row.  
Read between the lines.  
Bless this ark of applewood.  
Observe this sacred time.

*Wassail the apple! Beat the bounds!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!  
Wassail this hallowed ground!*

Debbie Whitton Spriggs



AVENUE OF APPLE TREES AT COTON ORCHARD –  
INSPIRATION FOR THE POEM