THE EDDAS:
THE KEYS TO THE
MYSTERIES OF THE NORTH

By
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# List of Abbreviations

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Introduction

This is a practical manual of self-transformation. It takes the form of a working edition of the mythological poems of the ancient Norse Poetic Edda for modern “pagans” who practice the magic and religion of the North. The poems of the Poetic Edda form the most complete and authentic body of surviving pre-Christian Germanic religious and magical lore. The mythological poems of the Elder Edda hold the keys to the understanding and practice of the pre-Christian religion of the Germanic peoples. This book enables the reader to fathom the mysteries of the Eddic poems so that the elder Troth of the Gods of Europe may again be rightly hailed in holy groves, and the hidden wisdom of the rune-masters rediscovered. This book is especially practical for those who wish follow the authentic pre-Christian religion and magic of the English and other Teutonic folk.

A new translation of the mythological poems of the Edda is the main component of this work. The religious content is revealed with accuracy and clarity. Earlier renditions have been artful paraphrases by scholars who valued the poems as literary monuments, but disregarded the religious and mythic content as the nonsensical but amusing folklore of a more primitive world. None of them ever imagined that their audiences would include practitioners of the Eddic religion. The inaccuracies of such translations have led many modern pagans astray. This is the truest translation for purposes of understanding the religious content of the Poetic Edda.

The original Old Norse text is included in its entirety on the facing pages of the English version so that the reader can easily compare the two. Notes to each poem, a glossary of religious terminology, in depth discussions, and illustrations are included to illuminate and help in the exploration of the deeper levels of the religious and magical content. These also to provide the keys by which this understanding may be applied in ritual blessings to the Gods and in magical workings.

The poems of the Poetic Edda were probably compiled by Saemundr Sigfusson in the 12th century in Iceland. None of the poems can be dated with any certainty, but it is clear that many of the heroic poems go back to the lore of the 6th and 7th centuries. It is generally believed that none of the poems were actually composed in their present form before the 9th century.

For the rune-magicians, poetry was a powerful form of magic. The Eddas hold the wisdom of the Erulian Rune-Magicians, and many of these poems may be fathomed to incredible depths and heights, by those who know how to ask. This book is about asking. These poems provide sufficient material for an accurate reconstruction and revivification of the Odian religious and magical philosophies. These poems hold spells, invocations, and lore from which rituals, sacred dramas, and initiatory rites can be reconstructed or authentically created, as well as the keys to understanding the soul and the nine worlds of Yggdrasil - the world tree of the ancient North. Many of the keys are provided also for unlocking the secrets of mysteries of the cults of Thor, Tyr and the Vanir, though much of this lore is filtered through an Odian lens.

The Eddic poems are spells, in which the mysteries of the old lore are encoded by word, rhythm, alliteration, idea, and rune. The words of a given stanza are not juxtaposed merely because the resulting rhythms and word plays are pleasing, but because of there are deep magical resonances among such words. The impact of these magical stanzas perhaps may not be registered consciously, but the magic of Eddic lines reaches far below the shallow waters of mundane conscious understanding into the depths of the collective unconscious, into the realms where our souls mingle with the realms of the Gods. The power of the Eddic verses can be used for invocations and magical operations. It is the task of the modern elders (priests) and vitkis (magicians) to gain a conscious knowledge of the meanings and powers of these combinations of word, meter and rune. The stanzas of the Eddic poems hold the secrets of our Gods. It is the task of this book to provide the modern seeker with the keys to understanding deeper levels of meaning and to encode these into modern English for fashioning invocations to the Gods and for shaping powerful poetic staves in magic.
When you are unraveling the mysteries of the Eddic poems, keep in mind that there are three basic levels of meaning associated with these myths. The first level is that of the narrative itself. From this we find out what our Gods are like and what they stand for. Fundamental truths of the northern social order are reflected in the deeds of the Gods and heroes. The myths tell of basic virtues, of right and honorable conduct, of heroism, and of criminal and dishonorable conduct.

The second level of meaning may be termed the natural. This is the level at which the myths may be connected to seasonal festivals. This is the level important to understanding the Vanic mysteries explored in chapter 3.

The third level of meaning is the initiatory. Here the myths are considered in their connection to rituals of initiation, especially magical initiation. It is at this level that you can explore the mysteries that lay behind the apparent meanings. Here you may seek the magical applications of a poem. Keys to this level of understanding are provided in chapters - and in the notes to each poem. It is the third level with which this book is most concerned, for the Eddas were composed by initiates into runic mysteries. Deeper linguistic and meta-linguistic levels of meaning may be fathomed by those who work closely with the Old Norse text.

The main component of this book is a facing page translation. The translation was rendered as clearly and as accurately as possible. For the sake of accuracy, it is sometimes necessary to use Old Norse words, or their Old English equivalents in order to translate words that convey religious ideas are no longer found in English. These words are defined in the glossary and some are discussed in detail in the notes or chapters. I trust that the lost concepts may be reintroduced into our culture with the reintroduction of these words. Notes are provided to each chapter to allow brief elaboration of important words and ideas and explanations or translations of obscure names.

The four chapters following the notes provide keys to understanding the lore and applying it in ritual and magic. Chapter 1 tells how to transliterate the rune poems into the Viking Age runes for purposes of fathoming the runic content of the poems and the meta-linguistic content of the poems. This virtually enables the reader to discover a “Teutonic Kabbalah”. It tells how to create galder or magical runic songs based on Eddic stanzas, and also how create runic sigils based on these poems for gand-magic.

Chapter 2 explains the uses of holy names in invocations and magic. Specifically, it tells how to use the holy names of the magical streams of numinous power associated with the natural elements and forces of the nine worlds. In Midgard -the manifest universe- this is the stuff of which weather magic is made. It also tells how to understand these holy names as keys to the magical languages used by the wights of the nine worlds and to use this language in ritual blessings to ettins, dwarves, and elves. The chapter contains a list of other sources for lists of names and deeds, of these wights as well as the rituals for blessings and magical operations in which these wights are summoned.

Chapter 3 tells how to recognize Spring Drama motifs in Eddic myths and how to adapt these myths to Spring Dramas and festivals. Chapter 3 contains a spring drama based on the Lay of Svipdag that was performed at the blessing to Ostara in 1989 CE. This chapter also provides other keys to the natural interpretation of Eddic myths.

Chapter 4 discusses magical initiation in the Eddas and “faring forth” into the outer worlds for such “shamanic” operations. This chapter discusses kinds of magic that may be performed in some of the outer worlds, and geography of the outer homes.

This book provides the fundamental tools by which the seeker may get a grip on the northern lore and by which Rune-Gild siblings may decode the Eddic poems. These poems may be taken as a model of the divine order and used magically for self-transformation. By reading and internalizing these poems, the self goes from ignorance of harmony with the divine order as the forms represented in the myths are realized in one’s life. Reading and contemplating these poems are magical acts in themselves.
Volume I

The Eddas
**Völuspá**

1. Hljóðs bið ek allar meiri ok minni
   Viltu at ek, Valföðr,
   forn spjóll fira,
   helgar kindir,
   mögu Heimdallar.
   vel fyr telja
   þau er fremst um man.

2. Ek man jötna
   þá er forðum mik
   Níu man ek heima,
   ár um borna,
   faëdda höððu.
   níu íviðjur,
   fyr mold neðan.

3. Ár var alda,
   vara sandr ná sær
   jórð fannsk æva
   þat er ekki var,
   né svalar unnir;
   né upphimininn,
   en gras hvergi.

4. Áðr Burs synir
   þeir er Midgarð
   söl skeið sunnan
   bjöðum um ypptu,
   mæran skópu;
   á salar steina,
   grænum lauki.

5. Sól varp sunnan,
   hendi inni hægri
   sól þat né vissi
   sinni mána,
   um himinjòður;
   hvat hann meðgins átti
   hvar þær staði áttu.

6. Þá gengu regin öll
   ginnehilög goð,
   nót ok miðjum
   á röktstóla,
   ok um þat gættusk;
   nófn um gáfu,
   ok miðjan dag,
   árum at telja.

7. Hittusk æsir
   þeir er hörg ok hof
   afla lögðu,
   á løavelli,
   hátimbruðu;
   auð smíðuðu,
   ok tól gerðu.

8. Tefldu í túni,
   var þeim vettergis
   uns þrjár kvámu
   teitir váru,
   vant ór gulli,
   þursa meyjar
   ör Jötunheimum.

**The Spae of the Volva**

1. I bid a hearing from all holy wights,
   the greater and lesser of Heimdall’s children.
   It is your wish, Valfather, that I speak
   the old spells of the world, the earliest I can recall.

2. I recall the children of Ettins,
   who, in the days of yore, brought me to life.
   I recall the nine worlds, the nine steads,
   of the Glorious Meting Wood, beneath the ground.

3. It was in the earliest times that Ymir dwelled.
   Neither sand nor sea, nor cold waves, nor earth
   were to be found. There was neither heaven above,
   nor grass anywhere, there was nothing but Ginnungagap.

4. Soon Bur’s sons heaved up the earth.
   They shaped Midgard, the earth. The sun
   shone from the south on the stones of the stead,
   and green leeks grew from the ground.

5. From the south the sun, companion of the moon,
   threw her right hand across the edge of the world
   The sun did not know what hall it had.
   The stars did not know what stead they had.
   The moon did not know what main it had.

6. All the Regin went to the doom chair,
   the Ginn Holy Gods mooted over this.
   They gave names to night and the new moons,
   they named midday, mid afternoon,
   and early evening, to reckon the years.

   High they timbered hof and harrow,
   they founded forges and smithied,
   they shaped tongs and wrought tools.

8. They played tables in the garth and were blissful.
   None of them lacked gold, until three maidens
   came from the Thurses. Their might was awesome,
   they came from Ettinhome.
9. Then all the Regin went to the doom chair. They held moot to say who should shape the Drighten of the dwarves from Brim’s blood, from Blain’s bones.

10. There was Motsognir, the greatest in speech of all the dwarves. But Durinn was second. These dwarves made many man-like-bodies out of the earth as Durinn had asked.

11. Nyr and Nithi, North and South, East and West, Alithief, Enthroned, Nar and Nain, Nithing, Dain Bifor, Bofor, Bombur, Nari, An, and Anarr, Oinn and Meadvolf.

12. Veig and Gand-Elf, Windelf, Thorinn, Thror and Thrainn, Thekk, Lit and Vit, Nar and Nyrath, Reginn and Rathsvith. Now are the dwarves rightly listed.


14. I speak of the dwarves in Dvalinn’s host to tell of their kind down to Lofar, of those who sought the abode of Aurvang at Jorovallar from the stone of the hall.

15. Draupnir was there, and also Dolgthrasir, Har, Haugsthor, Hievang, Gloi, Dori, Ori, Duf, Andvari Scirvir, Virvir, Skafith, and Ai.

16. Alf and Yngvi and Eikinskjalde, Fjalarr and Frosti, Finn and Ginhar. The long line of down to Lofar will be known while men live.
17. Unz þrír kvámu or því líði
öflgir ok ástkir æsir at húsi,
fundu á landi litt megandi
Ask ok Emblu örlöglaua.

18. Önd þau né áttu, óð þau né höfðu,
lá né læti nè litu göða;
þó gaf Öðinn, óð gaf Hænir,
lá gaf Lóðurr ok litu göða.

19. Ask veit ek standa, heitir Yggdrasill,
hár batmr, ausinn þaðan koma döggvar
stendur æ yfir grænn Þaðan koma meyjar
þjár ör þeim sæ, marg viðandi
Urð hétu eina, er und þölli stendr;
- skáru á skíði,- aðra Verðandi,
Þær lög lögðu, Skuld ina þríðju.
aða bórn, þær líf kuru
alda börnum, örlög seggja.

20. Þaðan koma meyjar margs vitandi
þjár ör þeim sæ, er und þolli stendr;
Urð hétu eina, aðra Verðandi,
- skáru á skíði,- Skuld ina þríðju.
Þær lög lögðu, þær líf kuru
alda börnum, örlög seggja.

21. Þat man hon fólkvíg fyrst í heimi,
er Gullveigu geirum studdu
ok í höll Hárs þrisvar brenndu,
oft, ósjaldan; þó hon enn lífir.
Heiði hana hétu hvars til húsa kom,
völu velspáa, vitti hon ganda;
seið hon, hvars hon kunni, seið hon hug leikinn,
æ var hon angan illrar brúðar.

22. Pá gengu regin öll á röktstóla,
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk
hvárt skyldu æsir afráð gjalda
eða skyldu goðin öll gildi eiga.
Fleygði Öðinn ok í folk um skaut,
þat var unn folkvíg fyrst í heimi;
brotinn var borðvegr borgar ása,
knáttu vanir vígpá völlu sporna.

23. Þá gengu regin öll á röktstóla,
ginnheilög goð, ok um þat gættusk
hvárt skyldu æsir afráð gjalda
eða skyldu goðin öll gildi eiga.
Fleygði Öðinn ok í folk um skaut,
þat var unn folkvíg fyrst í heimi;
brotinn var borðvegr borgar ása,
knáttu vanir vígpá völlu sporna.
25. Þá gengu regin öll
    ginnheilög goð,
    hverjir heði loft altt
    eða ætt jötuns
á rökstóla,
ok um þat gættusk
levi blandit
Öðs mey gefna.
26. Pórr einn þar vá
    - hann sjaldan sitr -
Á gengusk eðar,
mál öll meginlig
þrunginn móði,
er hann slíkt um frekn.
orð ok særí.
er á meðal fóru.
27. Veit hon Heimdallar
    und heívönum
    á sér hon ausask
af veði Valföðrs.
hljóð um folgit
helgum baðmi;
aurgum fossi
Vituð ér enn - eða hvat?
28. Ein sat hon úti
    yggiungr ása
    Hvers fregnið mik?
    Allt veit ek, Óðinn,
    Drekkur mjöð Mímir
af veði Valföðrs.
þá er inn aldni kom
ok í augu leit:
Hví freistið mín?
hvar þú auga falt,
morgun hverjan
Vituð ér enn - eða hvat?
29. Valði henni Herföðr
    fekk spjöll spaklig
sá hon vítt ok um vítt
hringa ok men,
ok spá ganda,
of veröld hverja.
30. Sá hon valkyrjur
    gövar at ríða
Skuld helt skildi,
Gunnr, Hildr, Göndul
Nú eru talðar
gövar at ríða
vít um komnar,
til Goðþjóðar;
en Skógul önnur,
ok Geirskógul.
nönnur Herjans,
grund valkyjur.
31. Ek só Baldri,
    Óðins barni,
    stóð um vaxinn
mjór ok mjög fagr
blódgum tívur,
örlög fólgin;
völlum hæri
mistilteinn.
32. Varð af þeim meði,
harmflaug hættling,
Baldrs bróðir var
sá nam Óðins sonr
er meir sýndisk,
Höðr nam skjóta.
of borinn snemma,
einnéttr vega.
33. Þó hann æva hendr né höfuð kemboði,
áðr á bál um bar Baldrs andskota;
en Frigg um grét í Fensólum
vá Valhallar. Viðuð ér enn - eða hvat?

34. Pá kná Váli vígþönd snúa,
heldur váru harðger höft ór þörmum.

35. Haft sá hon liggja undir Hveralundi,
leggjarns líki Loka Æppkkjan.
Þar sár Sigyn þeygi um sínnum
ver vel glyjúð. Viðuð ér enn - eða hvat?

36. Á fellur austan um eitrdala
söxum ok sverðum, Slíðr heitir sú.

37. Stóð fyr norðan á Níðavöllum
salr ór gulli Sindrættar;
en annarr stóð á Ókólni
bjórsalr jötuns, en sá Brimir heitir.

38. Sal sá hon standa sólu fjarrí
Náströndu á, norðr horfa dyrð.
Falla eitrdropar inn um ljóra,
sá er undinn salr orma hryggjum.

39. Sá hon þar vaða þunga strauma
menn meinsvara ok morðvarga
ok þann er annars glepr eyrarðu.
Þar saug Niðhögggr sleit vargr vera.
Vituð ér enn - eða hvat?

40. Austr sat in aldna í Járnviði
ok fæddi þar Fenris kindir.
Verðr af þeim öllum einna nokkurð
tungls tjúgari í trölls hamí.

41. Fyllisk fjörví feigra manna,
ryðr ragna sjót rauðum dreýra.
Swört verða sólskin um sumur eftir,
veðr öll válynd. Viðuð ér enn - eða hvat?

He never washed his hands nor combed his hair, until he had born Baldr’s foe to the pyre. Frigg wept in Fensalir for Valhalla’s woe. Would you know more, or what?

Then Vali wound war fetters. They were real strong bonds made of guts.

She saw one lying in bonds, in the grove of kettles. It was the hated form of guileful Loki. Sigyn sits there, sad by her husband. Do you want to know more, or what?

A stream of saxes and swords flows from the east through Poison-Dales. It is called Slith.

A golden hall stood in the North on the vales of Nitha, it was the dwelling of the tribe of Sindra. Another stood on Okaini, it was the beer hall of the Ettin Brim.

She saw a hall stand, quite far from the sun, on Nastrond. The doors face north, drops of venom fall in through the smoke hole. The hall is wound with the spines of snakes.

She saw there oath breakers and murderers, wading the swift stream. There were also those who deceived the female advisers of others. Nithogg sucks dead bodies there, and the warg rips men apart. Do you want to know more, or what?

The old one sat in the Iron-woods in the east and raised the brood of Fenrir. The worst one of them all, shall take the sun in the shape of a troll.

He fills himself on the flesh of dead men, reddens the seat of the gods with gore. The sun turned swarthy in the following summers. The weather grew entirely shifty. Do you want to know more, or what?
42. He sat on a howe hill strumming a harp. 
He was the herdsman of a giantess, he was 
the glad Eggther. The fair red cock called Fjalar 
sang to him from the gallows tree.

43. Gullinkambi sang for the Ases.
He wakes the heroes of Warfather.
But another sings beneath the earth, 
a soot red cock in the halls of Hel.

44. Garm bays loudly before Gnipa-Cave. 
The bonds are sheared and he runs hungry. 
I know much lore, yet see even more, 
of Ragnarok and the powerful victory Tivar.

45. Brothers shall battle one another and fight to the 
death. Sister’s sons bring ruin on their sib. 
There is hardness on the world and great whoredom 
An axe age, a sword age, shields are cloven. 
A wind age, a warg age, before the world falls, 
no man will spare the other.

46. Mim’s sons play. The Meter will be set alight. 
Heimdall blows loudly on old Gjallarhorn 
with the horn aloft. 
Odin speaks with Mim’s head.

47. Yggdrasil, the standing ash, is shaking. 
The old tree howls, the Ettin is loose. 
All who walk the Hel-roads are terrified, 
right before the kin of Surt swallow it.

48. How fare the Ases, how fare the elves? All of 
Ettinhome is in an uproar. The Aesir met in things. 
The dwarves groaned before stone gates, 
masters of the mountain walls. 
So do you want to know more, or what?

49. Garm bays loudly before Gnipa-cave. 
The bonds are sheared and he runs hungry. 
She knows much lore, but I see more 
of Ragnarok and the powerful victory Tivar.
50. Hrymr ekr austan, hefisk lind fyrir, 
snýsk Jörmungandr í jötunmóði. 
Ormr knýrunnir, en ari hlakkar, 
slítr nái Niófölr, Naglfar losnar.

Hrym fares from the east, bearing a linden board. 
The worm Jormungand is engulfed by an ettin rage 
and churns the waves. The eagle screams 
and its pale beak is cutting corpses. Naglfar is loose.

51. Kjóll ferr austan, koma munu Múspells 
um lög lýðir, en Loki stýrir. 
Fara fíflmegir með freka allir, 
þeim er bróðir Býleists í för.

The ship fares from the East. 
The folk of Muspell come over the sea, 
with Loki steering. Kinsmen of fools 
fare with Freki, Beylast's brother.

52. Surtr ferr sunnan með sviga lævi, 
skín af sverði sól valtíva, 
grjótbjörg gnata, en gifr rata, 
troða halir helveg en himinn klofnar.

Surt fares from the south with the bane of branches. 
The sun of the slaughter Tivar shines from his sword. 
Crags shake, and fiends reel. 
Heroes walk the Hel-road. Heaven is cloven.

53. Pá kemr Hlínar harmr annarr fram, 
er Óðinn ferr við úlf veka, 
en bani Belja bjarrat at Surti; 
þá mun Friggjar falla angan.

Another sort of grief comes to Hlin 
when Odin fares to fight the wolf 
and the illustrious Bane of Beli to battle with Surt. 
Frigg's lover will then fall.

54. Pá kemr inn mikli mögr Sigföður, 
Víðarr, vega at valdýri. 
Lætr hann megi Hveðrungs mundum standa 
jór til hjarta, þá er hefnt föður.

Then comes the mighty son of Victory-father, 
Vithar, to vie with the deadly beast. 
He struck the heart of Hvethrung's son 
and so his father was avenged.

55. Ginn lopt yfir lindi jarðar, 
gapa ýgs kjaptar orms í hæðom; 
mun Óðins sonr ormi mæta, 
vargs at dauða Viðard niðia.

The fierce jaws of the earth encircling worm 
gaped from the hills at the holy sky. 
Then Odin's son meets the worm, 
Vithar's kinsman slays the warg.

56. Pá kemr inn mæri mögr Hlóðynjar, 
gengr Óðins sonr við orm vega, 
drepr af móði Miðgarðs véurr, 
munu halir allir heimstöð ryðja; 
gengr fet núu Fjörgynjar burr, 
neppur frá naðri niðs ökvíðnum.

Then came the mighty son of Hloth (the earth). 
Odin's son strode to fight against the wolf. 
In rage Midgard's ward dropped him. 
All heroes shall leave the homestead. 
Fjorgyn's son strode nine steps 
back from the serpent, not worried about fame.

57. Sól tér sortna, sígr fold í mar, 
hverfa af himni heiðar stjörnur. 
Geisar eimi ok aldrnara, 
leík rár hiti við himin sjálfan.

The sun turned dark, and the land sank into the sea. 
The bright stars fell from heaven. 
Steam and fire ferment. 
Flames leap high to heaven itself.
58. Geyr nú Garmr mjök for Gnipahelli, The bonds are sheared and he runs hungry.
festr mun slitna en freki renna, She knows much lore, but I see more
fjöll veit ek fræða fram sé ek lengra
um ragna rök römm sigtíva about Ragnarok and the Powerful Victory Tivar.

59. Sér hon upp koma öðru sinni
jörð ór ægi íðjagræna.
Falla fossar, flýgr örn yfir, She sees another rise up, earth from the ocean,
sá er á fjalli fiska veiðir. and the eagle flies above
scanning the fells and hunting fish.

60. Finnask æsir á Iðavelli
ok um moldþinur máttkan dæma
ok minnask þar á megindómá
ok á Fimbultýs fornar rúnir.
The Aesir meet in Ida-Vale
and talk of the mighty Midgard worm,
recalling the mighty doom
and Fimbulty’s ancient runes.

61. Þar munu eftir undursamligar
gullnar töflur í grasi finnask,
þærs í árdaga áttar höfðu.
They will again find the wondrous
gold chess pieces in the grass,
those they had owned in the days of yore.

62. Munu ósánir akar vaxa,
böls mun alls batna, Baldr mun koma,
búa þeir Höðr ok Baldr Hrofts sigtóftir
vé valtívar. Vituð ér enn - eða hvat?
The unsown acres will then grow. Evil will turn
better, Baldr will return. Both Baldr and Hoth
shall live in Hropt’s victory hall, the work of the gods.
Do you want to know more, or what?

63. Þá kná Hænir hlautvið kjósa
ok burir byggja braðra tveggja
vindheim viðan. Vituð ér enn - eða hvat?
Hoenir will then handle the lot wood, his brother’s
two sons will live there in the wide wind home.
Do you want to know more, or what?

64. Sal sér hon standa sólu fekra,
gulli þakðan á Gimléi.
Þar skulu dyggvar dróttir byggja
ok um aldrdaga ynðís njóta.
She sees a hall, standing fairer than the sun,
thatched with gold in Gimle.
The worthy drightens
shall dwell, forever in happiness.

65. Þá kemr inn ríki at regindómi
öflugr ofan, sá er öllu ráðr.
Then comes the strong one, to the doom of the gods,
the awesome one from above who rules all.

66. Þar kemr inn dimmi dreki fljúgandi,
að frá Niðafjöllum;
berr sér í fjöðrum, - flýgr völl yfir, -
Niðhöggr nái. Nú mun hon sökkvask.
The dark drake comes flying,
the flashing viper from under Nitha-Fells
She sees Nithogg carrying corpses in his feathers
as he flies over the valley. Now she shall sink down.
The Spae of the Volva: Notes

Volvas were seeresses who travelled about the countryside performing acts of wizardry for the locals. The word volva means “one who carries a rod (volr)”. A volr was a cylindrical rod of about a foot and a half in length that was rounded or pointed at one end, perhaps in phallic shape. The root vol is found in the word volsi which refers to a phallic image made from the phallus of a horse.

Wise women such as the volva held a high and honored place in Teutonic society from the beginning of recorded Germanic history. They practiced various divinatory, healing and cursing arts known as spae, seith, galdar and gand.

Spae wives would travel the country side and attend sacrificial feasts after which they would ascend wooden platforms to perform magical, especially divinatory, rites. They chanted and went into trances in which they could see more deeply into the ways of Gods and men. They answered questions about crops, the coming years, and young couples.

1. Odin (Valfather=Father of the Slain) has awakened an ancient and renowned volva from the dead to ply her for knowledge, just as he wakes another such woman before the gates of Hel in The Dreams of Baldr. So also does Svipdag awaken his dead mother for magical knowledge.

The spells of the Volva are perhaps the most powerful in the Edda. Like Odin, the modern seeker may fathom the mysteries of Volva’s words, if he knows how to ask and how to understand. The “holy kind” are the Gods and “Heimdal’s children” are men. Mankind was created from two trees by Odin, Hoenir, and Lodur, but the social classes were created by Heimdall. Between creation by Odin and the creation of social order by Heimdall, mankind experienced a liminal period of Chaos.

On the God Heimdall, see the glossary and index.

2. The “Glorious Meting Wood” is the world tree, especially as it is associated with the God Tyr who is the judge who metes out dooms (judgements) and measures. This is the tree as the universal column or Irminsul. Meter is here the same as the English word “mete” (measure). “Beneath the ground” refers to the world tree as a seed. The volva was fostered by ettins in ancient times.

The nine worlds are ordered about the meeting tree or world ash whose roots and branches connect the outer realms to Midgard, our Middle Earth, which is the center of the universe.

3. A magically charged cosmic void called “Ginnungagap” existed before creation. It may have been that the magical stuff of this gap was Ginn. The word Ginnungagap (The gap of Ginnung) is formed of the words Ginnung and Gap. Gap is the same as our word “Gap.” Ginn refers to magical forces that pervade the universe. Ginn is the magical stuff of which the world is wrought. Ginn is a prefix found joined with words that signify the names of beings and objects that are high and holy. The gods Odin, Vili and Ve are sometimes called the Ginnregin. Ginn is a pantheistic magical stuff that flows through the universe. It is numinous and holy. Ginn is the root word in our word “beginning.” The verb Ginna can mean to delude or to intoxicate. It is found in one of Odin’s names, and “Ginn-fire” is a name sometimes given to the smith’s fire. Ginn is the magical stuff of the cosmic void in the beginning. A more complete description of the meeting of fire and ice in Ginnungagap may be found in Gylfaginning 6.

The noun ginnung can mean deceit, trickery or illusion. The verb ginna means to delude or to intoxicate. In Swedish, the verb ginna can mean both to deceive, and to perform magic. The title of the first part of the Prose Edda is Gylfaginning, which means the deluding of Gylfi. The gunnungar is the magical stuff of the world, the illusion that is the fabric of human consciousness. Human society operates by accepting shared
illusions (cultural conceptual constructs) as truths. Each society and members within a society are sometimes said to have their own way of looking at things or to see things differently. If the members of a society cannot agree to share certain basic assumptions about the world, there will be chaos which must again be fashioned in a way that seems real. Our languages are our most basic tools for articulating and ordering our assumptions into a seemingly coherent whole. Each society has its own outlook that makes sense in its own context, but may seem insane seen from the point of view of another cultural system. Much of our own elder lore is difficult to understand because we have adopted alien cultural constructs. Those who understand ginnung understand that the world is a tricky place and that things are not what they seem. It is especially the job of the Ginnregin (Odin, Vili, and Ve) to understand the world’s mysteries and to see beyond the illusions and handle the magical essence of the universe.

4. The sons of Borr committed the first great cosmic sin in by killing their own ancestor Ymir to reshape the universe. The greatest deeds often require such an act.

6. The Regin are the Aesir Gods Odin, Vili and Ve in their capacity as advisors. The word Regin is found especially associated with the words Ginn and Rok. Rok means judgement and Ragnarok means “Judgement of the Regin.”

7. When they built the first temple they were able to begin ordering their world by fashioning the tools of their conscious minds and the tools of science that are their extensions by the creative fires they stoked in their forges.

Ida Vale is the plain upon which the Gods dwelled before the raising of the walls of Asgard. Hof and harrow refer to temple and alter. See glossary. The Gods themselves established the first blessings, holy feasts, and sumbles.

8. It is sometimes thought that these maidens were Norns, but it is also possible that they were just ettins who assaulted the heavens and wreaked havoc before the Gods had built the walls of Asgard. These maidens could include Gullveig and Heith.

When the Gods had ordered their world and were enjoying the fruits of their efforts in paradise, they began to know the power of the Norns. Three maidens (possibly the Norns) arrived from Ettinhome and their days of ease were over.

The creation of the world was at the expense of the ettin race, and ever after the forces of Ettinhome were at war with the Gods and Men. Hence the need for Thor’s vigilance. By shaping the world of the first primal giant, the sons of Bor brought about the pattern by which the world would function and fall again to ruin and disorder and by which it would be reshaped. By this first cosmic act, the first great layer of Orlog (sometimes mistranslated “fate”) was lain. Orlog does not refer to fate or predestination, but is the idea that actions have consequences that shape possibilities and limitations for the actions that may be taken, the events that may occur, in the present. Actions taken in the present will shape the possibilities of the future and must be based on possibilities created by past actions. The circumstances into which you are born shape the kinds of lifestyles you may lead. In this way, the actions of your parents and ancestors have already determined much of your destiny. The longer you live, the more you lose some kinds of opportunities, while you make others available. All important choices involve sacrificing one set of options for another and commitment to the chosen options.

The act of creation set the processes in motion that would ultimately lead to the destruction of the world. The three maidens may well be the Norns themselves bringing the unpleasant results of the Gods’ work into the world. The three maidens could as well be interpreted as the three lives of Gullveig.
9. The original dwarves were shaped by the Ases and these dwarves then created others by shaping manlike bodies from the earth.

10. Another Odinic triad, Odin, Hoenir and Lodur created mankind from two trees just as they ordered the cosmos and their own consciousness about a tree. Odin gave them the breath of life, Hoenir gave them inspired mental activity, and Lodur gave them physical characteristics. Hoenir was given as a hostage to the Vanir.

19-20. From Urth’s Well the Norns come and there is soon war. The Norns are not conscious beings who plan the destinies of men and Gods by their own whim. Rather they are the forces that mechanically process the actions of the world’s wights to turn the shape of the world. The three great Norns are Urth (what has been) Verthandi (what is becoming) and Skuld (what shall become). There are also many lesser Norns walking the world.

Yggdrasil means Odin’s steed. He rides through the nine worlds by hanging from this steed.

21. Gullveig (the power of Gold) is the cause of war among the Gods. While the Gods were blissful on Ida Vale, they felt no lack of Gold, but Gullveig introduced lust and greed so that soon they found themselves in competition for the fires of life of which gold is a symbol.

The Aesir could not kill Gullveig with fire or iron, for she would be reborn each time she was destroyed. Lust could not be killed with material weapons. It is presumably on account of Gullveig that the Aesir found themselves in a stalemate with the Vanir.

These three stanzas may also be keys to magical initiation into women’s mysteries and magical practices. After her ordeals she is reborn and emerges in stanza 22 with another name (Heith) and with the powers of spae, gand and seith magic. Like a volva, she is said to visit homesteads. Her initiation by fire recalls Odin’s ordeal in The Lay of Grim.

In the context of war between the Aesir and Vanir, Gullveig is usually thought to be Freya. Freya is the goddess who discovered the magical practices typical of the Vanir and it was she who taught these to Odin.

23. Rather than give in to the demands of the Vanir, the Aesir started the first war. Casting the first spear over or into the enemy host was a way of sacrificing the fallen to Odin.

25. The Vanes destroyed their fence, so the Aesir decided to build a fortification. They struck a deal with a master builder from Ettinhome who was to receive the sun, the moon and Freya in payment if he completed the project in one winter. Perhaps this is why the skies were mingled with venom.

26. Oaths were made to insure the safety of the ettin and that he was allowed the help of his horse. Loki cheated the ettin out of his horse just before the project was completed. Thor was called on to kill the giant when the project was completed and the Gods thereby broke another oath.

27. Heimdall sacrificed his ordinary hearing in Mim’s well to gain supernatural hearing, just as Odin pledged an eye to Mim’s well to gain supernatural sight. Valfather’s pledge is the eye Odin left in the well in exchange for a drink of its waters or mead. Odin still sees through this eye. When he looks over the worlds from his seat in Asgard, he has a view from the top and another from below in Mim’s well.

28. “Sitting Out” is the practice of meditating at a holy site, especially at a howe, in order to obtain visions or knowledge.
29. Odin takes every opportunity to master forms of magic with which he is unfamiliar. The spells of spae are the stanzas of the *Voluspa*, while “gand” refers to the methods by which spae is practiced.

33. When Mim’s (memory’s) sons deceive, mental activity goes awry.

35. Loki was bound in a cave in the guts of his son, though it is not known where.

36. Nitha vales=Dark Vales. Sindra is the dwarven smith who made Gullinbursti, Draupnir, and Mjolnir. This golden hall of Sindra is in Dwarflhome.

38-39. Nastrond=Shore of the Dead. It is located in Niflheim with Hverglmir and Nithogg. Slith, the river of knives which originates from Hverglmir, may be one of those which is here waded.

The Germanic place of torments is not permanent. Nothing is static where life is concerned, and especially not where spirit is concerned. There is no one final resting place. After death the soul may stay relatively intact and move to one of the heavenly halls for a time, or it may fall to more unpleasant places and may even be dissolved. The parts of the soul may be sundered from the individual and wend their ways back to their source of origin. The place of torments may be seen as places of shamanic type initiation as well as of death. If the soul withstands the knives of Slith and wades its waters, it may emerge strengthened. The components of a shredded soul may be dissolved, or some of them may find their way to another being.

40. Ironwood, like Mirkwood, is a great forest in Ettinhome that is full of trolls and troll-wives who ride wargs. This is one of the barriers between Midgard and the depths of Ettinhome. Skoll and Hati are the wolves who chase the sun and the moon across the heavens.

The being who takes the sun is Hati, who is here described as “having the shape of a troll.” *Hamr* is the word used for shape, and this is the word found *Hamingja*. The Old Norse phrase *Hamr Trollz* refers to faring forth in animal shape. The word *Hamr* is often found in soul travel contexts. When Loki travels to Ettinhome, he sometimes borrows the falcon or hawk shapes (Hamr) of Freya or Frigg. Hati may be a fetch soul of Fenrir faring forth to chase the sun while the wolf himself remains bound in Asgard. The word *troll* does not refer to the giants of later folklore, but rather to magical beings of Ettinhome. In some Scandinavian languages the word simply means magic. The word appears infrequently in the Elder Edda, but in Snorri and in HH 30 we find Troll-wives riding wargs in Ironwood. These beings are called Ironwooders. Ironwooders may be manifestations of the fetch souls of those faring forth into Ettinhome. Troll magic in the case of Hati and that of the Ironwooders is that of faring forth as wolves. Troll magic is the magic of changing into a wolf, a warrior magic par-excellence. The Ironwooders are said to ride their wargs, but the term “ride” can refer to taking possession of a wolf or its skin for the purpose of faring forth.

42. This could be the abode of a giantess such as Mengloth or Gerth, for the garths of both are warded by herdsmen on Howe-Hills. The tree upon which the cock sits is Yggdrasil. In Mengloth’s garth a cock is to be seen sitting in the branches of Yggdrasil.

43. The rooster crows at twilight, the liminal period between day and night which is neither the one nor the other. The rooster is a symbol of change and awakening.

44. Garm runs hungry with Freki. Freki is the name of one of Odin’s wolves.

45. As the forces of destruction overwhelm the world the social order crumbles into chaos and even the holiest bonds of kinship dissolve. It is an age ruled by outlaws and outdwellers.

46. The Meter is the world tree, see note 2 above. The sons of Mim play about the tree while Odin speaks with the head of their father. Mim’s head is likely the same as Mimir’s. According to Snorri’s *Yngling Saga* c. 4,
the Vanir cut off the head of Mimir and returned it to Odin after Mimir had been sent to them as a hostage. The Vanir felt cheated when they discovered that Mimir was incapable of giving advice when not in the presence of Hoenir, who was also sent as a hostage by the Aesir. Mimir means memory and Hoenir and Mimir function together like the ravens thought and memory. Neither can form good plans without working in conjunction with the other. When Odin received the head, he embalmed it and sang spells over it. This may be seen as another means of moving beyond his own personal memory to that of the collective cultural unconsciousness.

48. Stone gates are the gates between Dark-Elf home and Midgard. The gates may be any stone formation sacred to dwarves. The terms “stone door” is the dwarven equivalent of the “doors of the dead” by which ancestors may be contacted from Midgard. These stones are portals between living and dead at grave sites. Such stones may be used to cross over into Dark-Elf home when faring forth, or as a point at which dwarves may be called forth into Midgard.

50. Jormungand, the Midgard serpent, means “great gand” or great magical staff. Its counterpart is Irminsul (great column) which forms the vertical axis of the cosmos while the serpent forms the horizontal axis.


54. Vithar is the son of Odin and Grith. Grith is the giantess who granted Thor iron gauntlets and a belt of might on his voyage to Geirroth’s hall.

56. Hljoth and Fjorgyn are names for Earth, the mother of Thor.

57. The heavenly and earthly bodies fall back into the chaos of stanza 5, to be formed anew. See 59.

61. As figures were part of one’s own self and psychology. As they reorder the game pieces, so they reorder the world for the next phase, and the games begin anew.

66. Nithogg and the forces of the next Ragnarok are already present in the newly created paradise. The Voluspa and the myth of Ragnarok can be taken as model for change and creation. A world is created, it is destroyed and it is created anew, and presumably better. The venom of Hvergelmir and its serpents is essential to the process of creation. In order to create, it is necessary to destroy. If no wood is cut, no boats are built. So it is in the process of self transformation and self development.

Think of the poems as a dream and interpret them as if they were dreams, as if the events and figures were part of one’s own self and psychology.
Hávamál

1.
Gáttir allar áðr gangi fram
um skoðask skyli,
um skyggnast skyli,
því at óvíst er at vita hvar óvinir
sitja á fleti fyrir.

2.
Gefendr heilir! Gestr er inn kominn,
hvar skal sitja sjá?
Mjök er bráðr sá er á bröndum skal
síns um freista frama.

3.
Elds er þörf þeims inn er kominn
ok á kné kalinn.
Matar ok váða er manni þörf,
þeim er hefr um fjall farit.

4.
Vatns er þörf þeim er til verðar kemr,
þerru ok þjóðlaðar,
góðs um æðis ef sér geta mætti
orðs ok endrþögu.

5.
Vits er þörf þeim er víða ratar;
delt er heima hvat;
at augabragði verðr sá er ekki kann
ok með snotrum sitr.

6.
At hyggjandi sinni skylit maðr hræsinn vera,
heldur getinn at geði;
þá er horskur ok þögull kemr heimisgarða til,
sjaldan verðr víti vörum,
því at óbrigðra vin far maðr aldregi
en mannvit mikit.

7.
Inn vari gestr er til verðar kemr
Þunnu hljóði þegir,
eyrum hlýðr, en augum skoðar;
svá nýsisk fróðra hverr fyrir.

The Words of Har

1.
Watch out and check all gates before faring forth.
One should spy around,
one should pry around.
Hard to know what foe
sits before you in the next room.

2.
Hail the givers! A guest has come
where shall he sit?
Hard pressed is he,
who tests his luck by the fire.

3.
Fire is needful for those who arrive
with cold knees.
Food and clothing is needful
to men who have fared over the fells.

4.
Water is needful, for he who comes for a meal,
drying and friendly words as well,
and, if he can get them, kindness, good words,
and welcome again.

5.
Wits are needful to he who travels far.
The dull should stay home.
He will be mocked,
who cannot sit with sages.

6.
Let a man not be boastful about his wisdom,
but watchful instead. The wise and silent
are seldom harmed when wary in the hall.
A more trustworthy friend,
a man cannot have,
than understanding.

7.
The wary guest who comes to the feast
listens in silence, casts his eyes about
and pricks up his ears.
Thus the wise ward their ways.
8. Happy is he who gets praise and knows liking staves. He has it hard, who must get these things by the help of another.

9. Happy is he who gets praise and has wit throughout his life. A man often gets evil counsel from the heart of another.

10. A man bears no better burden on the wilderness ways than great wisdom. It will prove better than wealth in an unknown homestead.

11. A man bears no better burden, when on the wilderness ways than great wisdom. One can have no worse fare, on road or field, than too much ale.

12. Ale is not so good as they say for the sons of men. A man’s mind knows less, the more he drinks.

13. The heron is called mindlessness who hovers over men stealing their minds I was bound by that fowl’s feathers when I was in Gunnloth’s garth.

14. I became drunk, roaring drunk, with wise Fjalar. The best wassail is that which a man leaves with his wits.

15. Silent and attentive, and battle bold should a chieftain’s son be. A man should be glad and happy until defeated by death.
16. Ösnjallr maðr hyggsk munu ey lifa,
ef hann við vig varask;
en elli gefr hánnum engi frið,
þótt hánnum geirar gefi.

17. Kópir aflapi er til kynnis kemr,
þylsk hann um eða þrumir;
allt er senn, ef hann sylg um getr,
uppi er þá geð guma.

18. Sá einn veit er víða ratar
ok hefr fjöld um farit,
hverju geði stýrir guðna hverr,
sá er vitandi er vits.

19. Haldit maðr á keri, drekki þó at hófi mjöð,
þæli þarf eða þegi,
ókynnis þess vár þik engi maðr
at þá gangir snemma at sofa.

20. Gráðugr halr, nema geðs viti,
etr sér aldtrrega;
oft fær hlægis, er með horskum kemr
manni heimskum magi.

21. Hjarðir þat vitu nær þær heim skulu
ok ganga þá af grasi;
en ósviðr maðr kann avagi
þins um mál maga.

22. Vesall maðr ok illa skapi
hlær at hvívetna;
hittki hann veit, er hann vita þyrfi
at hann era vamma vanr.

23. Ósviðr maðr vakir um allar nætr
ok hyggr at hvívetna;
þá er móðr er at morgni kemr,
allt er vil sem var.

16. The unwise man thinks he will live forever
by avoiding battle
But old age will give him no rest
though he be spared from spears.

17. The fool gapes when among the folk.
He mutters and mopes,
and soon it is seen, when he gets drunk,
what his mind is like.

18. He alone knows, who has wandered widely
and has fared over the fells
what mind stirs in each man
if he himself has wits.

19. A man should not refrain form the cup
though he drink mead in the hof let him say
what is needful or be silent. No man
shall call you ignorant if you go to bed early.

20. The greedy man, without mind’s wits
eats himself in sorrow. Often he brings
ridicule on himself when he is among
wise men who mock the man’s belly.

21. The herd knows when to go home
and leave the grazing ground behind.
The unwise man never knows
how much to eat.

22. Ill tempered the wretch,
who laughs at everyone.
He cannot recognize, as he should,
that he is not without faults.

23. The stupid man lies awake all night
and thinks about everything
and is tired in the morning
though all is as it was.
24. Ósnotr maðr hyggr sér alla vera viðhlæjendir vini.
   Hittki hann fiðr, þótt þeir um hann fár lesi, ef hann með snotrum sitr.

25. Ósnotr maðr hyggr sér alla vera viðhlæjendir vini;
   þá þat finnr er at þingi kemr, at hann á formælendr fáa.

26. Ósnotr maðr þykkisk allt vita, ef hann á sér í vá veru;
   hittki hann veit, hvat hann skal við kveða, ef hans freista fírar.

27. Ósnotr maðr er með aldir kemr, þat er bæzt, at hann þegi;
   engi þat veit, at hann ekki kann, nema hann mæli til margt.

28. Fróðr sá þykkisk, er fregna kann ok segja it sama,
   eyvitu leyna megu ýta synir, því er gengr um guma.

29. Ærna mælir, sá er æva þegir,
   staðlausu stafi;
   hraðmælt tunga, nema haldendur eigi,
   oft sér ógött um gelr.

30. At augabragði skala maðr annan hafa, þótt til kynnis komi;
    margr þá fróðr þykkisk, ef hann freginn erat ok nái hann þurrfjallr þruma.

31. Fróðr þykkisk, sá er flóta tekr,
    gestr at gest hæðinn;
    veita görla sá er um verði glissir, þótt hann með grómumi glami.

24. The stupid man thinks that all who laugh at him are friends.
   He does not notice how the talk goes when he sits with wise men.

25. The unwise man thinks that all who laugh at him are friends.
   But when he is at the thing he finds few spokesmen.

26. The stupid man thinks he knows all when he is at home.
   But he does not know what to say when men test him.

27. When the fool fares among folk it is best he stay quiet.
   No one knows that he knows nothing unless he talks too much.

28. Wise seems he who knows how to ask and answer.
   What goes about among men, cannot be hidden from men.

29. He who never shuts up blathers powerless staves.
   The speedy tongue that never stops often brings itself harm.

30. Do not ridicule another man, though he is kin. He oft seems wise who is not questioned,
    and leaves dry skinned.

31. He is wise who leaves the flying when guest mocks guest.
   He who grins at the feast does not know that he chatters among foes.
32. Gumnar margir erusk gagnhollir en at vírði vrekask; aldar róg þat mun æ vera, órír gestr við gest.

33. Árliga verðar skyli maðr oft fáa, nema til kynnis komi. Sitr ok snópir, lætr sem sólginn sé ok kann fregna at fáu.

34. Afhvarf mikit er til ills vinar, þótt á brautu búi, en til góðs vinarlíggja gagnvegir, þótt hann sé fírr farinn.

35. Ganga skal, skala gestr vera ey í eimnum stað; ljúfur verðr leiðr, ef lengi sitr annars fletjum á.

36. Bú er betra, þótt lítit sé, halr er heima hverr; þótt tvær geitr eigi ok taugreftan sal, þat er þó betra en ben.

37. Bú er betra, þótt lítit sé, halr er heima hverr; blóðugt er hjarta þeim er bídja skal sér í mál hvert matar.

38. Vápnum sínum skala maðr velli á feti gana framar, því at óvíst er at vita nær verðr á vegum úti geirs um þörf guma.


32. Many a man is being friendly when he teases at the table. There is always strife when guest clashes with guest.

33. A man should often get his meal early. When he visits friends. Otherwise he sits and idles, eats like he were starving without even asking.

34. It is a long way to the false friend though he dwell by the road. But a straight way lies to the good friend, though he lives far away.

35. Then the guest should go. He should not stay too long in one stead. When one stays too long in another’s house, love turns to loathing.

36. One’s home is better though it be small. To each, home is hall. Though he owns but two goats, and a thatched roof, it is better than begging.

37. One’s own home is best, though it is small. To each, home is hall. His heart will bleed who has to ask for each meal’s meat.

38. A man should not step one foot forth in the field without weapons. One cannot know, when on the road, when he will need his spear.

39. I never found a generous man who was so free with his food, that he would turn it down, or so generous as to loath a gift were it given.
40. Féar síns er fengit hefr skylit maðr þöf þola;
oft sparir leiðum þats hefr ljúfum hugat;
margt gengr verr en varir.

41. Vápnum ok váðum skulu vinir gleðjask;
þat er á sjálfum sýn;
viðurgefendr ok endrgefendr erusk lengst vinir,
ef þat bîðr at verða vel.

42. Vin sínum skal maðr vinr vera
ok gjalda gjöf við gjöf;
hlátr við hlátri skyli hölðar taka
en lausung við lygi.

43. Vin sínum skal maðr vinr vera,
þeim ok þess vin;
en óvinar síns skyli engi maðr
vinar vinr vera.

44. Veiztu, ef þú vin átt, þann er þú vel trúir,
ok vilt þú af hánum gótt geta,
geði skaltu við þann blanda
ok gjöfum skipta,
fara at finna oft.

45. Ef þú átt annan, þanns þú illa trúir,
vildu af hánum þó gótt geta,
fagrt skaltu við þann mæla
en flátt hyggja
ok gjalda lausung við lygi.

46. Það er enn of þann er þú illa trúir
ok þér er grunr at hans geði:
hlæja skaltu við þeim
ok um hug mæla;
glík skulu gjöld gjöfum.

47. Ungr var ek forðum, før ek einn saman:
þá varð ek villr vega;
auðgr þóttumk, er ek annan fann;
Maðr er manns gaman.

40. One should not have too much need of the goods he has gotten. Often one squanders on enemies what was intended for loved ones. Many affairs go awry.

41. Friends should share joy in weapons and clothes that are evident to one another. Those who share gifts stay the fastest friends, when things go well.

42. A man shall ever be a friend to his friends and give gift for gift, laughter for laughter, but give lies for lies.

43. A man shall always be a friend to friends and to the friend of a friend but never a friend to a friend’s enemies.

44. If you know that you have a friend and that he is true, and that you will get good from him, share your mind with him, exchange gifts, and visit him often.

45. If you know another and trust him not and you want to get good from him speak fair to him while thinking falsely and give him lies for lies.

46. If you do not trust a man, and he speaks his mind with you laugh with him, but speak not your mind and deal fitting rewards for his gifts.

47. When I was young, I once traveled alone and lost my way. I thought myself rich when I found another, man rejoices in man.
48. Milo, fræknir menn baðt lifa,
    sjaldan sút ala;
    en ösnjallr maðruggir hotvetna,
    sýrir æ glöggr víð gjöfum.

49. Váðir mínar gaf ek velli at
tveim trémönnum;
rekkar þat þóttusk, er þeir rift höfðu;
neiss er nökkviðr halr.

50. Hrönnar þöll sú er stendr þorpi á,
    hlýrat henni bórkr né barr;
svá er máðr, sá er manngi ann.
    Hvat skal hann lengi lifa?

51. Eldi heitari brennr með illum vinum
    friðr fimm daga,
en þá slokknar er inn sétí kemr
    ok versnar allr vinskapr.

52. Mikít eitt skala manni gefa;
    oft kaupir sér í litlu lof,
með halfum hléif ok með höllu keri
    fékk ek mér félaga.

53. Lítilla sanda lítilla sæva
    lítil eru geð guma.
Því at allir menn urðut jafnspakir;
    half er öld hvar.

54. Meðalsnotr skyli manna hverr;
    æva til snotr sé;
þeim er fyrða fegrst at lifa
    er vel margt vitu.

55. Meðalsnotr skyli manna hverr;
    æva til snotr sé,
því at snotrís manns hjarta verðr sjaldan glatt,
    ef sá er alsnotr, er á.
56. 
Meðalsnotr skyli manna hvern,  
æva til snotr sé;  
örlög sín viti engi fyrir,  
þeim er sorgalausastr sefi.  

57. 
Brandr af brandi brenn, unz brunninn er,  
funi kveikisk af funa;  
maðr af manni verðr at máli kuðr  
en til dælskr af dul.  

58. 
Ár skal rísa sá er annars vill  
félða fjör hafa;  
sjaldan liggjandi ulfr lær um getr  
né sofandi maðr sigr.  

59. 
Ár skal rísa sá er á yrkjendr fáa  
ok ganga sínss verka á vit;  
margt um dvelr þann er um morgun sefr,  
hálnur er auðr und hvötum.  

60. 
Þurra skíða ok þakinna næfra,  
þess kann maðr mjöt  
ok þess viðar er vinnask megi  
mál ok misseri.  

61. 
Þveginn ok mettr ríði maðr þingi at,  
þótt hann sét væddr til vel;  
Skúa ok bróka skammisk engi maðr  
né hests in heldr, þátt hann hafit góðan  

62. 
Snapir ok gnapir, er til sævar kemr,  
órna á aldinn mar:  
Svá er maðr er með mör gum kemr  
ok á formælendr fáa.  

63. 
Fregna ok segja skal fróðra hvern,  
sá er vill heitinn horskr,  
einn vita né annarr skal,  
þjóð veit, ef þrír ro.  

56. 
Middle wise should each man be  
and not over wise.  
He who knows not his orlog  
may sleep untroubled.  

57. 
Brand burns brand and is so burned.  
Fire is kindled from fire.  
A man is known by his talk  
and the dull man is known by his nonsense,  

58. 
He should rise early who wants to take  
the life or property of another.  
Seldom does the lying wolf get the lamb  
or the sleeping man victory.  

59. 
He should rise early who has few workers  
to see to his work himself.  
He loses much who sleeps in the morning.  
Half of wealth is gotten by initiative.  

60. 
Dry firewood and birch bark  
for roofing  
a man can measure,  
for wood to last in the winter time.  

61. 
Well fed and washed fare to the thing. A man should  
ride to the thing though his clothes are well worn.  
A man should not be ashamed of his shoes and breeks,  
or even less of his horse, though they are not the best  

62. 
The eagle snuffles and droops  
when he fares over the waves of the sea.  
So fares a man in a throng  
where few will plead his case.  

63. 
Each shall ask and answer  
who is wise and wishes to be called wise.  
Let none know, not even a second.  
All will know, if three know.
64.
Ríki sittskyli ráðsnotra
hverr í hófi hafa;
þá hann þat finnr, er með fræknum kemr
at engi er einna hvatastr.

65.
orða þeira, er maðr Óðrum segir
oft hann gjöld um getr.

66.
Mikilsti snemma kom ek í marga staði
en til síð í suma;
öl var drukkit, sumt var ólagat,
sjaldan hittir leiðr í líð.

67.
Hér ok hvar myndi mér heim of boðit,
ef þyrftak at málungi mat,
þaða tvau lær hengi at ins tryggva vinar,
þars ek hafða eitt etit.

68.
Eldr er beztr með ýta sonum
ok sólar sýn,
heilyndi sitt, ef maðr hafa náir,
án við löst at lífa.

69.
Erat maðr alls vesall, þótt hann sé illa heill;
sumr er af sonum sæll,
sumr af frændum, sumr af fé ærnu,
sumr af verkum vel.

70.
Betra er lifðum en sé ólíðum,
ey getr kvíkr kú;
eld sá ek upp brenna auðgum manni fyrir,
en úti var dauðr fyr durum.

71.
Haltr riðr hrossi, hjörd rekr handar vanr,
daftur vegr ok dugir,
blindr er betri en brenndr séi,
nýtr manngi nás.

72.
Sonr er betri, þótt sé síð of alinn
eftir genginn guma;
sjaldan bautarsteinar standa brautu nær,
nema reisi niðr at nið.
73. Two take on one. The tongue is the head’s bane. I expect fists under every fur coat.

74. Night is joyful if provisions are adequate. The cabins of ships are cramped. Fall nights pass and weather changes many times in five days, even more in a month.

75. He who knows nothing does not know that many men become apes. One man is rich and another poor. There is no blame in that.

76. Cattle die, kinsmen die, and you yourself shall die. But fair fame never dies for the one who wins it.

77. Cattle die and kinsmen die and you yourself shall die. But I know one that never dies that is the doom of each one dead.

78. The store rooms of Fitjung’s sons were full. Now they bear the beggar’s staff. Thus flies wealth in the twinkling of an eye, the falsest of friends.

79. The unwise man only grows arrogant when he wins himself wealth or a woman’s love. His wisdom never increases, only his pride.

80. It is found when you ask the runes which are known to the Regin made by the Ginnregin drawn by Fimbulthul, it is best to keep silent.

81. Praise the day in the evening, a torch when it is burned, a sword when it is tried, a maid when married, ice when crossed, ale when drunk.
82. Í vindi skal við höggva, veðri á sjó róa, myrkrí við man sjpalla, mörg eru dags augu; á skip skal skríðar orka, en á skjöld til hlífar, mæki höggs, en mey til kossa.

83. Við eld skal öl drekka, en á Ísi skríða, magran mar kaupa, en mæki saurgan, heima hest feita, en hund á búi.

84. Meyjar orðum skyli manngi trúár né því, er kveðr kona, því at á hverfanda hvéli váru þeim hjörtu sköpuð, brigð í brjóst um lagið.

85. Brestanda boga, brennanda loga, gínanda ulfi, galandi kráku, rýtanda svíni, röltasum viði, vaxanda vági, vellanda katli,

86. Fljúganda fleini, fallandi báru, ísi einnsettum, ormi hringlegnum, brúðar beólmánum eða brotnu sverði, bjarnar leiki eða barni konungs.

87. Sjúkum kalfi, sjalfráða þræli, völu vilmaði, val nýfellum.

88. Akri ársánunum trúí engi maðr né til snemma syni; - veðri reðr akri, en vit syni; hætt er þeira hvárt.

89. Bróðurbana sínum, þótt á brautu mæti, húsi hálfrunnu, hesti alskjórum, - þá er jör ónýtr, ef einn fótr brotnar -, verðir maðr svá tryggr at þessu trúí öllu.

90. Svá er friðr kvenna, þeira er flátta hyggja, sem aki jó óbryllum, á Ísi hállum, teitum, tvévetrum ok sé tam illa, eða í byr óðum beiti stjórnlauð, eða skyli haltr henda hrein í þáfjalli.
91. I say this openly, for I know both.
A man’s heart is false with women.
Our hearts are most false when our words roost fair,
which deceive the hearts of the wise.

92. He shall speak fairly and deal wealth
who will win a woman’s love.
Praise the looks of the bonny lass.
Win by wooing.

93. No man should ever ridicule
another’s love.
The lure of a beautiful woman often snares
the wise while leaving the fool.

94. A man should not heap abuse
on another for something
that happens to many men.
Powerful love makes fools of heroes and sages.

95. Only your own mind knows what is dearest
to your heart. Each counsels himself.
There is no worse illness for a sage
than losing love for himself.

96. I found that out, when I sat in the reeds
and waited for my heart’s delight.
The heart and body of the wise maid were dear to me,
but I had not my will with her.

97. Billing’s daughter I found on her bed.
The sun-white maid slept
and a Jarldom seemed nothing to me
if I lived without her love.

98. “Come back near evening Odin,
if you would speak with me.
It would be entirely unfitting
unless only the two of us know of this deed.”
99.
Aftr ek hvarf ok unna þóttum
visum vilja frá;
hitt ek hugða at ek hafa mynda
gøð hannar allt ok gaman.

100.
Svá kom ek næst at in nýta var
vígdrótt öll um vakin,
með brennandum ljósum ok bornum viði,
svá var mér vílístigr of vitaðr.

101.
Auk nær morgni, er ek var enn um kominn,
þá var saldrótt sofin;
grey eitt ek þá fann innar göðu konu
bundit beðjum á.

102.
Mörg er göð mær, ef görva kannar,
hugbrigð við hali.
Þá ek þat reynnda, er it ráðspaka
teygða ek á flærðir fljóð;
háðungar hverrar leitaði mér it horska man,
ok hafða ek þess vettki vífs.

103.
Heima glaðr gumi ok við gesti reifr,
sviðr skal um sig vera,
minnigr ok málugr, ef hann vill margfróðr vera.
Oft skal göðs geta;
fimbulambí heitir sá er fátt kann segja,
þat er ösnotrs aðal.

104.
Inn aldna jötun ek sótta, nú em ek aftr um kominn:
fátt gat ek þegjandi þar;
mörgum orðum melta ek í minn frama
í Suttungs söulum.

105.
Gunnlöð mér um gaf gullnum stóli á
drykk ins dyra mjaður;
il iðgjöld lét ek hana eftir hafa
síns ins heila hugur,
síns ins svára sefa.

106.
Rata munn léttumk rúms um fá
ok um grjót gnaga,
yfir ok undir stóðunk jötta vegir,
svá hætta ek hóföti til.
107. Vel keypts litar hefi ek vel notit,
   fás er fróðum vant,
því at Óðrerir er nú upp kominn
   á alda vés jaðar.

108. Ifi er mér á at ek væra enn kominn
   jötna göðum ór,
ef ek Gunnlaðar né nyta
   innar göðu konu,
   þeirar er lögðumk arm yfir.

109. Ins hindra dags gengu hrímþursar
   Háva ráðs at fregna
   Háva höllu í.
At Bölverki þeir spurðu, ef hann væri með bónum kominn
   eða hefði hánnum Suttungr of sóit.

110. Baugeið Óðinn hygg ek, at unnið hafi;
   hvat skal hans tryggðum trúða?
Suttung svikinn hann lét sumblí frá
   ok grætta Gunnlöðu.

111. Mál er at þylja þular stóli á
   Urðarbrunni at,
   ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
   njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
   þér munu göð ef þú getr •–:
   nótt þú ráðat nema á njós þeir
   eða þú leitir þér innan út staðar.

112. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
   njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
   þér munu göð ef þú getr •–:
   fjölkunnigr konu skalattu í faðmi sofa,
   svá at hon lyki þik líðum.
114.
Hon svá gerir at þú gáir eigi
þings né þjóðans máls;
mat þú villat né mannís gaman,
ferr þú sorgafullr að sofá.

115.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
þjóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu gøð ef þú getr -:
annars konu teygðu þér aldregi
eyrarúnu at.

116.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
þjóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu gøð ef þú getr -:
áfjalli eða firði, ef þik fara tíðir,
fásktu at virði vel.

117.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
þjóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu gøð ef þú getr -:
illan mann láttu aldregi
óhópp at þér vita,
því at af illum manni far þú aldregi
gjöld ins góða hugar.

118.
Ofarla bíta ek só einum hal
orð illrar konu;
flaráð tunga varð hánum at fjörlagi
ok þeygi um sanna sök.

119.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
þjóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu gøð ef þú getr -:
veistu, ef þú vin átt þann er þú vel trúir,
far þú at finna oft,
því at hrísi vex ok hávu grasi
vegr, er vættki treðr.

120.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir,
þjóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu gøð, ef þú getr -:
góðan mann teygðu þér at gamanrúnun
ok nem líknargaldr, meðan þú lifir.

114.
She will work it that you will not want
to go to the thing or care about the talk of the folk.
You will not want food or any pleasure
and you will seek your bed in sorrow.

115.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it if you learn it,
it will get you good if you understand it.
Watch that you are not lured to bed
by another’s wife.

116.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it if you learn it,
it will get you good if you understand it.
If you fare veil
on fell or fjord, bring food.

117.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it if you learn it,
it will get you good if you understand it.
Never tell your hardships to foemen,
for you will never get a reward
for your good wishes
from evil men.

118.
I saw a man sharply bitten
by the ill words of a woman,
Her false tongue brought his death,
and her attacks were unjust.

119.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it if you learn it,
it will get you good if you understand it.
If you have a true friend
fare to find him often.
Shrubs and grass grow
to cover the untrodden path.

120.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
it will get you good, if you understand it.
Draw a good man to yourself with staves of joy,
you will have healing songs while you live.
121. 
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir, -
   njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
   þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
in þínum ver þú aldregi
   fyrri at flauslslitum;
sorg etr hjarta, ef þú segja né nár
   einhverjum allan hug.

122. 
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir, -
   njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
   þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
orðum skipta þu skalt aldregi
   við ósvinna apa,

123. Því at af illum manni mundu aldregi
   góðs laun um geta,
en góðr maðr mun þik gerva mega
   liðnfastan at lofi.

124. Sifjum er þá blandat, hver er segja ræðr
   einum allan hug;
   allt er betra en sé brigðum at vera;
   era sá vinr öðrum, er vilt eitt segir.

125. Ráðumk, þér Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir, -
   njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
   þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
þrimr orðum senna skalattu þér við verra mann
   oft inn betri bilar,
   þá er inn verri vegr.

126. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir, -
   njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
   þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
skósmiðr þú verir né skeftismiðr,
   nema þu sjálfum þér séir,
   skór er skapaðr illa eða skafú sé rangt,
   þá er þér böls beðit.

127. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir, en þú ráð nemir, -
   njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
   þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
hvars þú böll kannt, kveð þú þér bólv at
   ok gefat þínum fjándum frið.
128.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfír, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
illu feginn ver þú aldrægi,
en lát þér at góðu getit.

129.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfír, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
upp líta skalattu í Orrustu,
- gjalti glíkir verða gumna synir -
síðr þitt um heilli halir.

130.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfír, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
ef þú vilt þér góða konu kveðja at gamanrúnum
ok fá fógnuð af,
fögru skaltu heita ok láta fast vera;
leiðisk manngi gótt, ef getr.

131.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfír, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
varan bið ek þik vera ok eigi ofvaran;
ver þú við öl varastr
ok við annars konu ok við þat þriðja
at þjófar né leiki.

132.
Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfír, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -:
at háði né hlátri hafðu aldrægi
gest né ganganda.

133.
Oft vitu ógörla þeir er sitja inni fyrir
hvers þeir ro kyns, er koma;
erat maðr svá góðr at galli né fylgi,
né svá illr, at einugi dugi.

128.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
and it will get you good if you understand it,
Never rejoice in evil,
but always do good.

129.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
and it will get you good if you understand it.
Do not look up in battle.
Sons of men become like hogs,
when warriors enchant you.

130.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
and it will do you good if you understand it.
If you want a good woman, speak pleasure runes to her,
Pledge your troth and hold fast to it
if you want joy from her.
None loathes good if she gets it.

131.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
and it will do you good if you understand it.
Watch yourself, but don’t be overcautious.
Be especially wary of ale
and of another man’s wife.
Thirdly, see that you are not tricked by con-men.

132.
I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!
You will use it, if you learn it,
it will get you good if you understand it.
Never make sport
of guests and travelers.

133.
Often those who sit inside
do not know the kin of those who have arrived.
No man is so good that he has no faults,
none so evil that he is not worthy in some way.
134. 
Ráðumk þér, Loddfánir, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -;
at hárum þul hlæ þú aldregi,
oft er gótt þat er gamlir kveða;
oft ór skörpum belg skilin orð koma
þeim er hangir með hám
ok skollir með skrám
ok váfir með vílmögum.

135. 
Ráðumk þér, Loddfánir, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -;
gest þú né geyjané á grínd hrekir,
get þú váludum vel.

136. 
Rammt er þat tré, er ríða skal
öllum at upploki.
Baug þú gef, eða þat biðja mun
þér læs hvers á líðu.

137. 
Ráðumk þér, Loddfánir, en þú ráð nemir, -
njóta mundu, ef þú nemr,
þér munu góð, ef þú getr -;
hvars þú öl drekkir, kjós þér jarðar megin,
því at jörð tekri við öðri,
en eldr við söttum,
eik við abbindi, ax við fjölkynngi,
höll við hýrógi, - heifum skal mána kveðja,-
beiti við bitsöttum, en við bólvi rúnar,
fold skal við flóði taka.

138. 
Veit ek, at ek hekk vindgameiði á
nætr allar núð,
geiri undaðr ok gefinn Óðni,
sjalfur sjalfum mér,
á þeim meiði er manngi veit
hvers af rótum renn.

139. 
Við hleifi mik sældu né við hornigi,
nýsta ek niðr,
nam ek upp rúnar, æpandi nam, fell ek aftir þaðan.
140. Fimbulljóð nú nam ek af inum frægja syni
   Bólþorns, Bestlu fóður,
   ok ek drykk of gat ins dýra mjáðar,
   ausin Óðreri.

141. Pá nam ek frævask ok fróðr vera
   ok vaxa ok vel hafask,
   orð mér af orði orðs leitaði,
   verk mér af verki verkis leitaði.

142. Rúnar munt þú finna ok ráðna stafi,
   mjök stóra stafi,
   mjök stinna stafi,
   er fáði fimbulþulur
   ok gerðu ginnregin
   ok reist Hrofr rógna.

143. Óðinn með ásum, en fyr alfum Dáinn,
   Dvalinn ok dvergum fyrir,
   Ásviðr jötnum fyrir,
   ek reist sjalfr sumar.

144. Veistu hvé rísta skal? Veistu hvé ráða skal?
   Veistu hvé fáa skal? Veistu hvé freista skal?
   Veistu hvé biðja skal? Veistu hvé blóta skal?
   Veistu hvé senda skal? Veistu hvé sóa skal? -

145. Betra er óbeðit en sé ofblótit,
   ey sér til gildis gjöf;
   betra er ösent en sé ofsóit.
   Svá þundr um reist fyr þjóða rök,
   þar hann upp um reis, er hann aftr of kom.

146. Ljóð ek þau kann er kannat þjóðans kona
   ok mannskis mögr.
   Hjalp heitir eitt, en þat þer hjalpa mun
   við sökum ok sorgum ok sútum görvöllum.

147. Þat kann ek annat er þurfu ýta synir,
   þeir er vilja læknar lífa.
148.
Þat kann ek þríðja: ef mér verðr þörf mikil hafts við míná heïftmögú, eggjar ek deyfi minna andskota, bítat þeim vápn né velir.

149.
Þat kann ek it fjórða: ef mér fyrðar bera bónd að boglimum, svá ek gel, at ek ganga má, spretr mér af fótum fjöturr, en af hóndum haft.

150.
Þat kann ek it fimmta: ef ek sé af fári skotinn flein í folki vaða, fýgra hann svá stíntt at ek stöðvigak, ef ek hann sjónum of sék.

151.
Þat kann ek it sóttu: ef mik særir þegn á vrótum hrás viðar, ok þann hal er mik heïfta kevðr, þann eta mein heldr en mik.

152.
Þat kann ek it sjauða: ef ek sé hávan loga sal um sessmögum, brennrat svá breitt, at ek hánum bjargigak; þann kann ek galdr at gala.

153.
Þat kann ek it áttu, er öllum er ytsamligt at nema: hvars hatr vex eð hildings sonum at má ek bæta brátt.

154.
Þat kann ek it niðnda: f mik nauðr um stendr t bjarga fari mínu á floti, vind ek kyrri ági á k svæfik allan sæ.

155.
Þat kann ek it tíunda: f ek sé túnriður eika lofti á, ek svá vinnk þær villar fara inna heimhama, inna heimhuga.
I know an eleventh: If I lead old friends into the fray, I sing under the shield and they fare into battle mighty and whole, they are whole, wherever they go.

I know a twelfth: If I see a hanged man swinging high in a tree, I can carve and stain runes, so that the man walks and speaks with me.

I know a thirteenth: If I sprinkle a young thane with water, he will not fall, though he goes to battle. He will not be cut down by swords.

I know a fourteenth: If I talk of the gods before the folk, I can speak of Ases and elves. Few of the unlearned know these things.

I know a fifteenth, which Thiodrorir the dwarf sang before Delling’s door. He sang might to the Aesir, power to the elves, and understanding to Odin.

I know a sixteenth. If I want the heart and pleasure of a winsome lass, I turn the mind of the white-armed lady to me, and wend to bed with her.

I know a Seventeenth to keep her from shirking me for any other man. Mind this Loddfafnir, long will you lack it, but it will get you good, once you learn it, it will be useful to you when you understand it, and needful if known.
163.
I know an eighteenth that none know, neither maid, nor man’s wife.
It is always better kept secret, except to the one who lies in my arms, or my sister.

164.
Now are Har’s sayings said, in Har’s hall needful for the sons of men unneeded by ettins’ sons.
Hail the one who speaks them, hail the one who knows them useful to he who gets them hail they who heed them.
The Words of Har: Notes

The Havamal is written for the wayfarer, and those who deal with wayfarers. It is for travelers of Midgard and the outer homes. Havamal is generally interpreted as practical advice for a young man on matters of life, love and travel with a little bit of magic and religion thrown in. It is actually the initiatory sequences of the winning of the runes and the poetic mead that are at the heart of the Havamal, and all the practical advice is in some way related to initiation into the runic mysteries. Many of the stanzas giving practical advice have an esoteric level of significance. These deeper levels of lore can be unlocked by the keys given in chapter 1.

Stanzas 1-4 deal with basic physical needs and the basic elements of the world and sets forth the main theme: the crossing of unknown thresholds and faring forth into strange territory. The Viking Age vitki would have found this advise useful on ventures in Midgard as well as on farings into the outer homes. Stanza 2-4 recall some of the basic elements of creation, such as fire, ice, water, and earth, and the some basic needs for survival on the road, such as food and shelter.

5-31 deal with the importance of wits and awareness for the initiate, characteristics of the wise, and admonishments against drinking too much. The first of these stanzas, #5, warns that a fool, one who has not mastered the advice that follows, should not fare forth into the worlds but should rather stay at home.

6-7 tell us to maintain high levels of awareness. When on the road, the journeyman should waken himself to a higher state of consciousness, be watchful and attentive, and maintain this state. Ritual actions and the invocation of holy names, and a variety of meditative exercises are good for waking one’s self to self-remembrance.

In such states of mind, the vitki has transcended his ordinary understanding and is able to see things from a holier point of view. In some cases, the vitki is able to transcend the mundane and to become aware of the sacred in the ordinary. This state allows one to see beyond ordinary appearances to a deeper level of reality and to see the sacred side so that one’s actions take on a sacred quality. Thereby one’s actions in the mundane world will become more effective and the quality of one’s work will increase. In such states, magical operations and divination are effectively performed.

Stanzas 8-10 recall the need for Self-reliance. One must not depend on the wit of others but must have good counsel from the Self or the fetch soul within. 8-9 tell of the need for winning ways and the use of “liking-staves” or magic and magical understanding mentioned above that allows deeper insight into ordinary events such that allows one to gain the trust and liking of others. Many of the following verses give advise for gaining liking and may be considered “liking staves.” As many strategies as one may employ, it is needful to know that fast friendship and trust are gained by demonstrating worthiness of such.

11-14 warn against ill-measured mead consumption. Mead and ale were an important part of elder Teutonic social and ritual activities. Magically, mead is a symbol of poetic inspiration or holy fury and madness. Stanzas 11-14 warn that too much ale robs men of wit and awareness. 13-14 refer directly to the episode of the rewinning of the poetic mead in stanzas 104-110 in which Odin gets back the poetic mead that was lost to ettins.

Inspiration, like alcohol itself, is not to be consumed excessively, for one’s self and awareness are easily lost in the ensuing madness. To use inspiration or madness creatively in poetry, magic, art or battle, the madness must be harnessed and channeled by an alert mind and a powerful will. There are some who give themselves over to madness and let forces beyond themselves control, though this approach is usually avoided by Odians. The Odian is the master of madness, not its slave. The stronger one’s will and awareness, the more madness one can handle. Odin was able to accomplish his goal after ingesting the world’s stock of poetic mead, of which only a few drops, known as the poet-tasters share, are available on Midgard. For most people, excessive inspiration is no more useful than drunkenness, as pleasurable as it might be.
15. Recapitulates the need for attentive awareness and vigilance in magical endeavors.

19. Again tells us that drink (inspiration) is necessary, but to avoid losing awareness.

6, 7, and 19 tell us that silence is a needful part of attentiveness. Just as it is hard to tell what lurks in the minds of strangers when you are chattering yourself, so it is hard to maintain a high level of awareness if the mind is not quiet and focused. An unfocused mind is perpetually lost in its own dreams and chatter, unable to truly know itself or others. A vitki must master the art of clearing his mind of distracting chatter. Stanza 17 points out that the fool is constantly muttering. The same idea is conveyed in 29 but warns of the harm that results of perpetual loss of self to delusions and dreams. The attentive mind (stanza 18) can discern the nature of the minds of those around him.

16-29 contrast the wise with fools by depicting the mind of the fool as inattentive and ineffectual for its unfocused dwellings on useless matters. The fool is not conscious. He merely reacts to situations rather than assessing his situations and consciously controlling his behavior to affect the outcome. For the fool, habits such as eating and drinking are guided by neither instinct nor plan, but rather by impulse. The fool is out of touch with his instincts (stanza 21) besides lacking conscious control of his own behavior. Sages will regard such ill discipline with scorn and contempt if not amusement. The ignorant are often ignorant of their own stupidity (stanza 22). Such will often see their own failings most clearly in others and make fools of themselves criticizing others for weaknesses most obvious in themselves. Because the fool will never really understand the talk and action of folk around him (stanzas 22-26) his deeds will never match his expectations and he will always fail in time of testing. For such a man, the sleeping state is not unlike the waking state (stanza 23) and is lost in agitated dreams in both. Those capable of waking to higher states will can see how much an ordinary state of awareness resembles sleep.

30-52 are a series of “liking-staves” concerned with ways of gaining trust, praise and friendship and avoiding the opposite. These passages refer not just to etiquette in mundane situations, but are valid as well in dealing with the holy powers, whether in sacrifice or faring forth. In sacrifice the Gods are invited to fare forth into Midgard, and should be treated as guests. These stanzas follow naturally from those concerning wakefulness, since the proper frame of mind is important to conducting of sacrifices in order not to sit among the Gods as a fool. The stanzas concerning gift giving are particularly applicable to sacrificial ritual practices. Besides a knowledge of sacrificial etiquette, you need inspiration, awareness, and a quiet focused mind.

54-56 warn that it is best to be wise in the ways of Midgard before faring to the outer homes. A good grasp of consensus social and physical reality is needful before one can expect to have effective dealings with metaphysical realities.

56 says a man who knows not his orlog may sleep untroubled and would seem to be an admonishment to avoid such knowledge, and so it is, for ordinary folk, but not for the Odian vitki. The vitki is not looking for sleep anyway for “the sleeping man seldom gets victory (st 58)” and “..loses much (59).”

56-57 offer more wisdom on friendship, gift giving, and wise conduct. Passages regarding gifts and friendship may be taken as comments on sacrifice.

68-72 deal with health. Fire and the sun are used as metaphors for good health.

Note that useful esoteric knowledge may be found in the stanzas from 56 on in comparing them to previous stanzas, to the Rune poems (st 138-165), and the Gunnloth episode in stanzas 104-110. These recount Odin’s winning of inspiration and discovery of the runes and are the central episodes of the Havamal. All other stanzas in the Havamal have some bearing on these episodes. Exploration by runic transliteration is appropriate for these stanzas-see chapter 1.
The stanzas 79, 81, 82, 87, and 90-102 hold lore on initiation by relations with the opposite sex and the fetch wife—see chapter 4.

104-110 tell us how Odin won for the Gods the mead of poetry and inspiration, and how he does this by breaking his oath to Gunnloth, and the oath was not to a mere ettin. This oath was made to his own fylgja, to his higher self. Thus Odin broke his highest oath of all, that made to the most sacred part of himself.

To win the poetic mead Odin breaks an oath sworn on a ring (stanza 110) to Gunnloth, who is none other than his own fetch, or higher self, in such a way that she and her wisdom are united with his conscious self creating an entity far greater than either separately. In this exalted state, contents of the personal and collective unconscious may be brought before the light of consciousness. Such states are difficult to achieve, let alone maintain, and Gunnloth returns to Ettinhome, wiser, and the mead flows back down the ettin paths. The union must occur again and the mead must be drunk again. Odin’s sexual conquests are not mere hedonism, but efforts to drastically raise his level of consciousness by welding it with supra- and sub-conscious parts of his soul. The broken oath explains Odin’s name Bolverk (Evil-Doer). Odin’s crime was all the more heinous that the oath was made to a high and holy part of himself.

The stanzas preceding the Gunnloth episode warn of the dangers of courting, the fickleness of lovers, and difficulties in winning them. Sometimes it is possible to experience intense interaction with the fetch wife during a romantic experience in which the fetch wife is projected, usually unconsciously, onto the lover. Emotional states alone that are generated by amorous experiences are a proven source of inspired madness.

Stanzas 138-161 are about the discovery of the runes.

Just as the mead was won at the roots in the darkest depths of Ettinhome, so were the runes won in the branches, where Odin sacrifices himself to himself by hanging. By an apparent act of self-betrayal in which one part of the self is sacrificed to another, as in his pledge of his eye to the well of Mimir. Actually, the part sacrificed is not destroyed, but exalted by being given and united to the part of the self to which it is sacrificed. When Odin gives his conscious self over to his higher self, or fetch, he is atoning for the broken oath, and immersing himself in the collective unconscious where he consciously grasps the runes.

Yggdrasil=Steed of Odin. Odin rides through the nine worlds by hanging to fathom its mysteries. In this case he sees the whole picture all at once.

143 Odin made some of his wisdom available to other, sentient wights.

146-146 The first 16 stanzas correspond to the first 16 runes of the younger row. They may also be taken as runic spells composed of several runes and turned into galder and sigils for the purposes of Workings. See chapter 1.
**Vafþrúðnismál**

Óðinn kvað:

1. “Ráð þú mér nú, Frigg, alls mik fara tíðir
   at vitja Vafþrúðnis;
forvitni mikla kveð ek mér á forum stöfum
   við þann inn alsvinna jötun.”

Frigg kvað:

2. “Heima letja ek mynda Herjaföðr
   í görðum goða,
þvíat engi jötun ek hugða jafnramman
   sem Vafþrúðni vera.”

Óðinn kvað:

3. “Fjölð ek fór,fjölð ek freistaða,
fjölð ek reynda regin;
hitt vil ek vita, hvé Vafþrúðnis
   salakynni sé.”

Frigg kvað:

4. “Heill þú farir,heill þú aftr komir,
   heill þú á sinnum sér!
œði þér dugi, hvars þú skalt, Aldaföðr,
orðum mæla jötun.

5. Fór þá Óðinn at freista orðspeki
   þess ins alsvinna jötuns;
at höllu hann kom, ok átti Íms faðir;
inn gekk Yggr þegar.

Óðinn kvað:

6. “Heill þú nú, Vafþrúðnir, nú em ek í höll kominn
   á þik sjálfan sjá;
hitt vil ek fyrst vita, ef þú fróðr sér
   eða alsviðr jötunn.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:

7. “Hvat er þat manna er í mínun sal
   verpunk orði á?
Út þú né komir þurum höllum frá,
   nema þu inn snotrari sér.”

**Lay of Vafthruthnir**

Odin

1. “Give me rede now Frigg, for I long to go
   to wise Vafthuthrin.
I am very eager to exchange elder stave lore
   with the all-wise ettin.”

Frigg

2. “I advise you to stay home, Warfather,
in the garth of the gods,
for I know of no ettin
   as mighty as Vafthruthnir.”

Odin

3. “I have wandered widely, dared many deeds,
   oft challenged the Regin;
now I need know
   how Vafthruthnir lives in his hall.”

Frigg

4. “Then fare forth whole and return whole,
   stay whole on the way.
May wod serve you, Life’s Father,
   when you have words with the ettin.”

5. “Odin fared forth to test the wisdom of the words
   of the all-wise ettin.
He arrived at Im’s father’s hall,
   and there Ygg strode in straightaway.”

Odin

6. “Hail Vafthruthnir! I have come into your hall now
   to see you for myself.
First of all I want to know whether you are learned,
   ettin, whether you are all-wise.”

Vafthruthnir

7. “What wight is this,
who hurls words
at me in my hall?
You will not leave unless you are wiser.”
Óðinn kvað:
8.  “Gagnráðr ek heiti; nú emk af göngu kominn þyrstr til þinna sala,
laðar þurfi - hef ek lengi farit -
ok þinna andfanga, jötunn.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
9.  “Hví þú þá, Gagnráðr, melisk af gólfí fyr?
Far þú í sess í sal!
þá skal freista, hvárr fleira viti,
gestr eða inn gamli þulr.”

Óðinn kvað:
10. “Óauðigr maðr, er til auðigs kemr,
mæli þarft eða þegi;
ofrmaðgjum mikil, hygg ek, at illa geti
hveim er við kaldrifjaðan kemr.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
11. “Seg þú mér, Gagnráðr, alls þú á gólfí vill
þíns um freista frama,
hvé sá hestr heitir er hverjan dregr
dag of dróttmögú.”

Óðinn kvað:
12. “Skinfaxi heitir, er inn skíra dregr
dag um dróttmögú;
hesta beztr þykkr hann með Hreiðgotum,
ey lýsir mön af mari.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
13. “Seg þú þat, Gagnráðr, alls þú á gólfí vill
þíns um freista frama,
hvé sá jór heitir,er austan dregr
nótt of nýt regin.”

Óðinn kvað:
14. “Hrímfaxi heitir, er hverja dregr
nótt of nýt regin;
meldropa fellir hann morgin hvern;
þaðan kemr dógg um dala.”

Odin
8.  “Gagnrath, I am called, and I come thirsty from my faring into your hall. I need a welcome, ettin, and your reception, for I have fared far.”

Vafthruthnir
9.  “Why then, Gagnrath, do you speak from the floor? Have a seat in the hall, then we shall see whether guest or aged sage has greater wit.”

Odin
10. “Let the poor man who visits the wealthy man say what is needed and not. Those who come against the cold-ribbed, bring themselves evil by bragging, I think.”

Vafthruthnir
11. “Tell me Gagnrath, since you want to test your might from the floor: what is that horse called, who draws the day over mankind?”

Odin
12. “Shining Mane”, he is called, who draws the day through the sky and over mankind each day. To the Hreithgoths he seems the finest. That mare’s mane shines.”

Vafthruthnir
13. “Tell me Gagnrath, since you want to test your might from the floor: What do they call the horse who draws night from the east to the good Regin?”

Odin
14. “Rime-Mane” he is called, who so draws. He slavers foam each morning; thence come dews to the dales.”
Vafþrúðnir kvað:
15.
Seg þú þat, Gagnráðr, alls þú á gólfí vill þíns um freista frama, hvé sú á heitir, er deilir með jötña sonum grund ok með goðum."

Óðinn kvað:
16.
"Ífingr heitir á, er deilir með jötña sonum grund ok með goðum; opin renna hon skal um aldrdaga; verðrat íss á á."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
17.
Seg þú þat, Gagnráðr, alls þú á gólfí vill þíns um freista frama, hvé sá völlr heitir er finnask vígi at Surtr ok in svásu goð.

Óðinn kvað:
18.
"Vígríðr heitir völlr, er finnask vígi at Surtr ok in svásu goð; hundrað rasta hann er á hverjan veg, sá er þeim völlr vitiðr."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
19.
"Fróðr ertu nú, gestr, far þú á bekk jötuns, ok mælumk í sessi saman, höfði veðja vit skulum höllu í, gestr, um geðspeki."

Óðinn kvað:
20.
"Seg þú þat it eina, ef þitt æði dugir ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir, hvaðan jörð um kom eða upphiminn fyrst, inn fróði jötunn."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
21.
"Ór Ymis holdivar jörð um sköpuð, en ör beiðum björg, himinn ör hausi ins хримкальд jötuns, en ör sveita sær."

Vafthruthnir
15.
“Tell me Gagnrath, since you want to test your might from the floor: What is the river called, that divides the realms of the Gods from that of the sons of ettins?”

Odin
16.
“Ifing, that river is called, that divides the realm of the ettin’s sons from that of the Gods. Forever it will run free, never iced over.”

Vafthruthnir
17.
“Tell me Gagnrath, since you want to test your might from the floor: What do they call the field, where Surt and the beloved Gods shall meet for war?”

Odin
18.
“Vigrith, they call the field, where Surt and the beloved Gods shall meet for war. The field allotted them is a hundred leagues in all directions.”

Vafthruthnir
19.
“You are quite learned, my guest. Now come to the ettin’s bench, and let us speak seated. We two shall wager our heads in the hall, my guest, over wisdom.”

Odin
20.
“Tell me this first, Vafthruthnir, if inspiration serves you, and you know; How did the earth and the heavens first come to be, oh wise ettin?”

Vafthruthnir
21.
“Earth was shaped from Ymir’s flesh, mountains from his legs, and heaven from the skull of the rime-cold ettin, and the sea from his blood.”
Óðinn kvað:
22. "Seg þú þat annat, ef þitt öði dugir ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vítur, hvaðan máni kom, sá er ferr menn yfir, eða sól it sama."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
23. "Mundilfari heitir, hann er mána faðir ok svá Sólar it sama; himin hverfa þau skulu hverjan dag öldum at ártali."

Óðinn kvað:
24. "Seg þú þat it þriðja, als þik svinnan kveða ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vítur, hvaðan dagr um kom, sá er ferr drótt yfir, eða nótt með niðum."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
25. "Dellingr heitir, hann er Dags faðir, en Nótt var Nörvi borin; ný ok nið skópu nýt regin öldum at ártali."

Óðinn kvað:
26. "Seg þú þat it fjórða, als þik fróðan kveða ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vítur, hvaðan vetr um kom eða varmt sumar fyrst með fróð regin."

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
27. "Vindsvalr heitir, hann er Vetrar faðir, en Svásuðr sumars."

Óðinn kvað:
28. "Seg þú þat fimmta, als þik fróðan kveða ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vítur, hverr ása elzt eða Ymis niðja yrði í árdaga."
Vafþrúðnir kvað:
29.
“Örófi vetra ádr væri jörð sköpuð,
þá var Bergelmir borinn,
Þrúðgelmir var þess faðir, en Aurgelmir afi.”

Óðinn kvað:
30.
“Seg þú þat it sétta, alls þik svinnan kveða,
ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir,
hvaðan Aurgelmir kom með jötta sonum
fyrst, inn fróði jötunn.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
31.
“Ór Élivagum stukku eitrdropar,
svá óx, unz varð ór jötunn;
þar eru órar ættir kómnar allar saman;
því er þat æ allt til atalt.”

Óðinn kvað:
32.
“Seg þú þat it sjaunda, alls þik svinnan kveða
ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir,
hvé sá börn gat, inn baldni jötunn,
er hann hafðit gýgjar gaman.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
33.
“Undir hendi vaxa kváðu hrímþursi
mey ok móg saman;
fótr við fœti gat ins fróða jötuns
sexhöfðaðan son.”

Óðinn kvað:
34.
“Seg þú þat it átta, alls þik svinnan kveða
ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vitir,
hvat þú fyrst of mant eða fremst um veitzt,
þú ert alsviðr, jötunn.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
35.
Örófi vetra ádr væri jörð um sköpuð,
þá var Bergelmir borinn;
þat ek fyrst of man, er sá inn fróði jötunn
á var lúðr um lagiðr.”

Vafthruthnir
29.
“During the countless winters,
before the earth was shaped,’
Bergelmir was born, his father was Thruthgelmir,
and his father was Aurgelmir.”

Odin
30.
“Tell me the sixth, Vafthruthnir,
since you say you are wise, and that you know:
from whence came Aurgelmir and the sons of ettins
in the beginning, oh wise ettin?”

Vafthruthnir
31.
“Drops of venom sprang from Eliveg
and increased until an ettin arose.
Therefrom comes our entire tribe,
and our fierceness.”

Odin
32.
“Tell me a seventh, Vafthruthnir,
since they say you are wise, and that you know:
how did the unruly ettin beget children
when he had not the pleasure of an ogress?”

Vafthruthnir
33.
“Under the hands of the Rime-thurs
they say a daughter and son grew together.
Foot with foot, the wise ettin
begat a six-headed son.”

Odin
34.
“Tell me an eighth, Vafthruthnir,
since they say you are wise, and that you know:
what is your first memory, your earliest knowledge,
since you are wise, ettin?”

Vafthruthnir
35.
“In the endless winter,
before the shaping of the world,
Bergelmir was born. First thing I can recall
is the wise ettin being set in a flour-bin.”
Óðinn kvað:
36.  
“Seg þú þat it núnda, alls þik svinnan kveða
     ok þú, Vafþrúðnir, vírir,
     hvaðan vindr um kemr, svá at ferr vág yfir;
     æ menn han sjálfan um sjá.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
37.  
“Hræsvelgr heitir, er sitr á himins enda,
     jötunn í arnar ham;
     af hans vængjum kvaða vind koma
     alla menn yfir.”

Óðinn kvað:
38.  
“Seg þú þat it tíunda, alls þú tíva rök
     öll, Vafþrúðnir, vírir,
     hvaðan Njörðr um kom með ása sonum
     - hofum ok hörgum hann ræðr hunnmörgum
       - ok varðat hann ásum alinn.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
39.  
“Í Vanaheimi skópu hann víis regin
     ok seldu at gíslingu goðum;
     í aldar rök hann mun aftr koma
     heim með vísum vönum.”

Óðinn kvað:
40.  
“Seg þú þat et ellifta hvar ytar túnum í
     höggvask hverjan dag;
     val þeir kjósa ok ríða vígi frá,
     sitja meirr um sáttir saman.”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
41.  
“Allir einherjar Óðins túnum í
     höggvask hverjan dag;
     val þeir kjósa ok ríða vígi frá,
     sitja meirr um sáttir saman.”

Óðinn kvað:
42.  
“Seg þú þat it tölfta, hví þú tíva rök
     öll, Vafþrúðnir, vírir;
     frá jötma ránum ok allra goða
     segir þú it sannasta,
     inn alsvinni jötunn.”

Odin
36.  
“Tell me a ninth Vafthruthnir, since they say
     you are wise, and that you know,
     where does the wind come from which wends
     over waves, but is itself unseen by men?”

Vafthruthnir
37.  
“He is called Hraesvelg, who sits at heaven’s end,
     an ettin in eagle’s shape.
     They say the wind wafts from his
     wings and over mankind.”

Odin
38.  
“Tell me a tenth, Vafthruthnir,
     since you know the deeds of all the gods:
     how did Njorth come to be among the sons of Ases?
     His hofs and harrows are innumerable,
     but he was not begotten by the Ases.”

Vafthruthnir
39.  
“He was shaped in Vanaheim by wise Regin
     who gave him as hostage to the gods.
     In the last age he will return
     home to the wise Vanir.”

Odin
40.  
“Tell me an eleventh:
     What men fare
     into the field to kill
     each other each day.”

Vafthruthnir
41.  
“All the einherjar slay one another
     in Odin’s field each day.
     They choose the slain, then ride from the fight,
     and sit as friends.”

Odin
42.  
“Tell me the twelfth, how you know, the deeds
     of all the Gods, Vafthruthnir, since you know.
     Since say you are the wisest in the runes
     of the ettins and all the Gods,
     oh all-wise ettin.”
Vafþrúðnir kvað:
43.
“Frá jötna rúnum ok allra göda
ek kann segja satt,
þvíat hvern hefi ek heim um komit;
nú kom ek heima fyr Níflhel neðan;
hinig deyja þó helju halir.”

Óðinn kvað:
44.
“Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
fjölð ek reynda regin:
Hvat lifir manna, þá er inn mæra líðr
fimbulvetr með fírum?”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
45.
“Líf ok Lifþrasir, en þau leynask munu
í holti Hoddmímis;
morgindöggvar þau sér at mat hafa;
en þaðan af aldir alask.”

Óðinn kvað:
46.
“Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
fjölð ek reynda regin:
Hvaðan kemr sól á inn slétta himin,
er þessa hefir Fenrir farit?”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
47.
“Eina dóttur berr alfröðull,
áðr hana Fenrir fari;
sú skal riða, þá er regin deyja,
móður brautir, mær.”

Óðinn kvað:
48.
“Fjölð ek fór, fjölð ek freistaðak,
fjölð ek reynda regin:
Hverjar ro þær meyjar, er líða mar yfir,
fróðgeðjaðar fara?”

Vafþrúðnir kvað:
49.
“Þríar þjóðárfalla þorp yfir
meyja Móðgrasis,
hamingjur einar þeira í heimi eru
þó þær með jötnum alask.”

Vafthruthnir
43.
“From the runes of ettins and all the Gods
I can speak the truth,
for I have been about in the world.
I wandered the nine worlds, and way down in Niflhel
to where the heroes of Hel die.”

Odin
44.
“Far have I fared, much have I dared,
oft have I tested the Regin.
What man will live, when the great fimbulvetr
comes to mankind?”

Vafthruthnir
45.
“Lif and Lifthrasir, they shall hide
Hoddmimir in the woods.
They shall have the morning dews as their meat.
So shall mankind be nourished.”

Odin
46.
“Far have I fared, much have I dared,
oft have I tested the Regin.
How comes the sun to smooth heaven
once it is killed by Fenrir?”

Vafthruthnir
47.
“Alfróthul will bear one daughter
before she is killed by Fenrir.
When the Regin die, that maid will ride
the wilderness ways of her mother.”

Odin
48.
“Far have I fared, much have I dared,
oft have I tested the Regin.
Who are the wise minded maidens
who fare over the sea?”

Vafthruthnir
49.
“Three tribes of maidens descended
over Mothgras’ village.
They bring hamingja to their homes,
though they are ettin’s ilk.”
“Far have I fared, much have I dared, oft have I tested the Regin. Which Ases shall rule the land when the fire of Surt is slaked?”

“Vithar and Vali shall dwell in the ve of the Gods when the fire of Surt is slaked. Mothi and Magni shall have Mjolnir to wield after the battle.”

“Far have I fared, much have I dared, oft have I tried the Regin. Who shall bring death to Odin when the Regin are ruined?”

“Then the wolves will gulp down Allfather, but Vithar will venge him. He shall cleave the cold jaws of the wolf in combat.”

“No man knows that which you spoke to your son in the days of yore. It was with a doomed mouth that I told old staves and spoke of Ragnarok. Now I have exchanged my wisdom in words with Odin. You are the wisest.”
Lay of Vafthruthnir: Notes

1. Vafthruthnir=powerful in weaving or entangling.

2. Herfather=Warfather=Odin

4. Odin is the father of madness or inspiration. The word oth in Odin’s name or wod in Woden’s name means madness or fury which were considered the essence of inspired mental activity.

5. Ygg is a name for Odin meaning “awesome.”

11. The concept of the sun as a shining disc drawn on a cart has existed in Europe at least since the Bronze Age as evidenced by the Trundhome Chariot which is a bronze statue of a horse drawn chariot bearing a gold covered disc.

12. It is not known who the Hreith-Goths were.

16. Because it is never iced over it is never easily crossed. This may be the same as the sound in the Harbarth’s Lioth which also separates Gods and ettins.

17. Vigrith is mentioned in Gylf. 51.

18. Gylf. 11 and Skd 26 both have Mundilfari as the father of the sun and the moon.

19. On Delling see Gylf. 10 and Hav. 160.

29. Aurgelmir is Ymir.

31. Elivag=Ice-Waves is the name of the primal stream that flowed from the north and met with fire in Ginnungagap to form Ymir. In Hym. 5 Hymir is said to dwell east of Elivag. This is likely one of the rivers that separates cosmic realms and empties into one of the seas that separate the worlds. If Hymir dwells to the east of it, Elivag must flow between Ettinhome and Midgard.

35. This passage is not entirely clear and we can not be certain that it was a flour bin that Bergelmir is set in here. The flour bin may be the same as the millstone described in Gylf on which Bergelmir floated to safety when the rest of his kin was drowned in the blood of Ymir.

39. Regin must refer to an Odinic trinity here since the Ases as a whole are mentioned in the next line.

   Njorth was given to the Ases as a hostage after the war between the Vanes and the Aesir. See Gylf. 23 and Yng. 4

41. Einherjar-see glossary.

42. The ettins and elves have some runic knowledge as indicated by Hav. 143.

43. Like Odin, Vafthruthnir fares forth into the nine worlds in search of wisdom.

44. Fimbulvetr=Great Winter is a severe winter that lasts three years that lasts three years and precedes Ragnarok.

45. Hoddmimir may be a name for Yggdrasil.
49. On Hamingja, see glossary. The identity of these three maidens cannot be established. They may be Norns, Dises, or beings similar to the nine maidens of Lyfjaberg.

51. On Ve, see glossary.
Lay of Grimnir

King Hrauthung had two sons, one was called Agnar and the other Geirroth. Agnar was ten years old and Geirroth eight. The two rowed out on a boat with tackle to angle for small fish. The wind blew them into the ocean. In the murk of the night they were wrecked on a shore. They walked inland, where they found a farmer and spent the winter. The woman fostered Agnar and the man raised Geirroth and gave him rede.

In the spring the man got a ship for them. When the farmers led them to the shore, the man spoke alone with Geirroth. They took a fair wind and arrived at their father’s harbor. Geirroth was at the bow of the ship and leapt ashore and pushed the ship back shouting “Go now! Go out into the sea and be taken by Smyl.” The boat drifted away and Geirroth strode up to the town where he was well received, although his father had died. Geirroth became king quite famous.

Odin and Frigg sat on Hlithskjalf and looked over all the worlds. Odin spoke: “Do you see Agnar your foster son, how he begets children with a giantess in a cave, while Geirroth, my foster son, sits as king of the land.” Frigg said: “He is so stingy with food that he starves his guests if he thinks that there are too many.” Odin said that was a huge lie. They made a wager on this matter.

Frigg sent her maid servant, Fulla, to Geirroth. She bade the king watch himself lest a man cunning in sorcery bewitch him. She said he was coming to his land and would be marked out in that no hound was so savage as to attack him. It was a great falsehood that Geirroth was not generous with his food. Nevertheless, he had bound the man whom the dogs would not attack. The man wore a blue cloak and called himself Grimnir but would say no more about himself even though he was asked. He tortured him to make him talk and then set him between two fires where he stayed for eight nights.

King Geirroth had a son who was ten winters old whom he named Agnar after his brother. Agnar walked over to Grim and gave him a full horn to drink from and said that it was wrong for the king to torture him since he was innocent. Grim drank and the fire flared up and burned his cloak. He said:
1. Heitr ertu, hripuðr ok heldr til mikill; 
göngumk firr, funi! 
Loði sviðnar, þott ek á loft berak, 
brennumk feldr fyr.

2. Átta nætr sat ek milli elda hér, 
svá at mér manngi mat né bauð, 
nema einn Agnarr, er einn skal ráða, 
Geirrōðar sonr, gotna landi.

3. Heill skaltu, Agnarr, alls þik heilan biðr 
Veratýr vera; 
eins drykkjar þú skalt aldri 
betri gjöld geta.

4. Land er heilagtt, er ek liggja sé 
ásum ok álflum nær 
en í Þrúðheimi skal Þór vera, 
unz um rjúfask regin.

5. Ýdalir heita þar er Ullur hefir 
sér um görva sali 
Álfheim Frey gáfu í árdaga 
tívar at tannféi.

6. Bær er sá inn þriði er blíð regin 
silfri þökðu sali; 
Valaskjálf heitir, er vélti sér 
áss í árdaga.

7. Sökkvabekkr heitir inn fjórði, en þar svalar knegu 
unnir yfir glymja; 
þar þau Óðinn ok Sága drekka um alla daga 
glöð ör gullnum kerum.

8. Glaðsheimir heitir inn fimmti, þar er in gullbjarta 
Valhöll við of þrumir; 
en þar Hroftir kýss hverjan dag 
váþndauða vera.

1. ‘You are a hot fire, and way too big. 
I drive you far away, Fire! 
The cloak is singed. Though I cast it aloft, 
the cloak burns before me.

2. Eight nights I sat between the fires. 
No man dealt me food, except for Agnar alone, 
the son of Geirroth 
he alone shall rule the land of the Goths.

3. Hail Agnar! Veratyr 
bids you greetings. 
You will never get 
better payment for a single drink.

4. The land I see lying 
near the Ases and the elves is holy. 
In Thruthheim Thor shall dwell until 
the ruin of the Regin.

5. Yew Dales is the place where Ull 
has made himself a hall. 
The Gods gave Elfhome to Frey, 
in the days of yore, as a tooth fee.

6. The third hall, built by the blithe Regin, 
thatched with silver, 
is called Valaskjalf, and was founded 
by the Ases in the days of yore.

7. Cold waves crash around the fourth 
which is called Sokkvabekkk. 
Odin and Saga drink there gladly 
all their days from golden vessels.

8. The fifth is called Gladhome. 
There stands Valhalla fast and wide, 
where Hropt chooses 
the weapon slain each day.
9. It is well known to those who come to Odin and see his hall that it is roofed with spear shafts and shingled with shields and the benches are strewn with mail.

10. It is well known to those who come to Odin to see his hall that a warg hangs before the west door and an eagle hovers above.

11. The sixth is called Thrymheim, where the terrible ettin Thiazi dwelled. Now Skathi, bright bride of the gods, lives there in the former abode of her father.

12. Breithablik is the Seventh, and that is where Baldr built himself a hall. I know that the fewest of evils abide there.

13. Heavencrag is the eighth. They say Heimdall wards the holy steads there. The God’s warder drinks in that tranquil hall, glad in good mead.

14. The ninth is Folkvang, and there Freya assigns seats in the hall. She chooses half the slain each day and Odin has half.

15. Glitnir is the tenth. Its studs are of gold and the roof was shingled in silver. Forseti sits there most of the day and puts all strife to rest.

16. Noatun is the eleventh, and that is where Njorth built himself a hall. The thingruler of men presides without crime in the high-timbered hall.
17. Brushwood grows, and high grass in  
   Vithi, Vithar’s land.  
   There the son, the stout one,  
   leapt from horseback eager to venge his father.

18. Andhrímnir boils Saehrimnir in Eldhrímnir.  
   Seahrimnir is the best of meats,  
   though not well known,  
   which the einherjar eat.

19. Wise and battle-accustomed, famous warfather  
   feeds that to Geri and Freki,  
   but Odin the weapon-father  
   always lives on wine alone.

20. Huginn and Muninn  
    fly over the earth each day.  
    I dread that Huginn may not come back,  
    though I fear more for Muninn.

21. Thund roars and fish live  
   in the flood of Thiothvitnir.  
   That river’s current seems too strong  
   for the throng of the slaughtered to wade.

22. The gate that stands in the field  
    near the holy doors, is called Valgrind.  
    That gate is old and few know  
    what latch locks it.

23. I think there are five-hundred  
    and forty doors in Valhalla.  
    Eight hundred einherjar shall sally forth  
    from a single door when they fight the wolf.

24. I think there are five hundred and forty rooms  
    with rings in Bilskirni.  
    Of all the halls I know, the greatest ever built  
    was that of my son.
25. Heiðrún heitir geit, er stendr höllu á ok bítr af Læraðs limum; skapker fylla hon skal ins skíra mjaðar; kná at sú veig vanask.

26. Eikþyrnir heitir hjörtr, er stendr höllu á ok bítr af Læraðs limum; en af hans hornum drýpr í Hvergelmi, þaðan eiga vötn öll vega:

27. Síð ok Víð, Sækin ok Eikin, Svöl ok Gunnþró, Fjörðm ok Fimbulþul, Rín on Rennandi, Gipul ok Gópul, Gömul ok Geirvimul, þær hverfa um hodd goða, Þyn ok Vín, Pöll ok Höll, Gráð ok Gunnþorin.

28. Vína heitir ein, önnur Vegsvinn, þriðja þjóðnuma, Nyt ok Nöt, Nonn ok Hrön, Slíð ok Hríð, Sylgr ok Ylg, Við ok Ván, Vond ok Strönd, Gjöll ok Leifr, þær falla gumnum nær, er falla til Heljar héðan.

29. Körmt ok Örmt ok Kerlaugar tvær, þær skal Þórr vaða dag hvern, er hann dæma ferr at aski Yggdrasils, því at ásbrú brenn öll loga, heilög vötn hlóa.

30. Glaðr ok Gyllir, Gler ok Skeiðbrimir, Silfrintoppr ok Sinir, Gísl ok Falhofnir, Gulltoppr ok Léttfeti, þeim riða æsir jóm dag hvern, er þeir dæma fara at aski Yggdrasils.
31. Three roots spread three ways
under the ash Yggdrasil.
Hel dwells beneath one, Rime Thurses
beneath another, and human beings under the third.

32. Ratatoshk the squirrel is called
who runs on the Yggdrasil ash.
He bares the words of the eagle above
and tells them to Nithogg beneath.

33. There are four harts who gnaw
with their necks thrown back.
These are Dain and Dvalinn
Duneyr and Durathror.

34. More worms lie under the Yggdrasil ash
than unwise apes can imagine;
Goinn and Moinn, the sons of Grafvitnir,
Grabak and Grafvolluth, Ofnir and Svafnir.
They shall always tear
the twigs from that tree.

35. The distress endured by the Yggdrasil ash
is more than men know.
The hart bites from above, its side is rotting
and Nithogg gnaws its roots from below.

36. Hrist and Mist will bare me the horn.
Skeggjold and Skogul,
Hildr and Thruth, Hlok and Herfjotur,
Goll and Geironul,
Randgrith and Rathgrith, and Reginleif.
These bear the ale
to the einherjar.

37. Arvakr and Alsvith
hungry shall draw up the sun.
Under their bellies the blithe Regin,
The Aesir, hid cold iron.

38. Svol he is called who stands before the sun.
He is a shield for the shining Goddess.
I know that mountain and Ocean would burn
if he ever fell from there.
39. The wolf is called Skoll who follows the shining God to the wood of warning.
But Hati is the other, and he is the son of Hrothvitni, and he shall follow the bright bride of heaven.

40. The earth was shaped from Ymir’s flesh, from his blood the sea, hills from his bones, trees from his hair, the sky from his skull.

41. From his brow the blithe Regin made Midgard for the sons of men. From his brain they shaped all the angry clouds.

42. Ull and all the Gods will befriend him who first takes it off the fire, for the worlds are opened to the sons of Ases when they heave off the kettle.

43. The sons of Ivaldi went forth in the days of yore to shape Skithblathni the best of ships for Frey, the noble son of Njorth.

44. The Yggdrasil ash is the best of trees, Skithblathnir of ships, Odin of Ases, Sleipnir of Horses, Bifrost of Bridges, Bragi of Skalds, Habrok of hawks and Garm of hounds.

45. Now I look up to the sons of the victory gods and thereby awaken help from all the Aesir who come to Aegir’s bench for Aegir’s drink.

46. I am called Grim, and Gangleri, Herjan and Hjalmberi, Thekk and Thrithi, Thuth and Uth, Helblindi and Har.
47.
Sath and Svipal and Sangetal,
Herteit and Hnikar,
Bileyg, Báleyg, Bölverk, Fjölñir,
Grímr ok Grímnir, Glapsviðr ok Fjólsviðr;

48.
Síðhöttr, Síðskeggr, Sigfðór, Hnikuðr,
Alföðr, Valföðr, Atríðr ok Farmatýr.
Eiu nafni héttumk aldregi,
síz ek með fólkum fór;

49.
Grímní mik hétu at Geirröðar,
en Jálk at Ásmundar,
en þá Kjalar, er ek kjálka dró;
þró þingum at,
Viðurr at vígum,
Óski ok Ómi, Jafnhár ok Biflindi,
Göndlir ok Hárbarðr með goðum.

50.
Sviðurr ok Sviðrir er ek hét at Sokkmímís,
ok dulóak ek þann inn aldna jötun,
þá er ek Miðvitnis vark ins mæra burar
ordinn einbani.

51.
Ólr ertu, Geirröðr, hefr þú ofdrukkit;
miklu ertu hnugginn, er þú eft mínu gengi,
oðllum Einherjum ok Óðins hylli.

52.
Fjölð ek þér sagðak, en þú fátt um mant,
of þik véla vinir;
ækki liggja ek sé míns vinar
allan í dreyra drifinn.

53.
Eggmóðan val nú mun Yggr hafa,
þitt veit ek líf um líði;
úfar ro ðísir, nú knáttu Óðin sjá,
nálgestu mik eft þu megir.

54.
Óðinn ek nú heiti, Yggr ek áðan hét,
Hétumk Lundr fyr þat,
Vakr ok Skilfingr, Váfuðr ok Hroftatýr,
Gaurt ok Jálkur með goðum,
Ófnir og Sváfur, er ek hygg at orðnir sé
allir af einum mér.
Geirröðr konungr sat ok hafði sverð um kné sér, ok brugðit til miðs. En er hann heyrði at Óðinn var þar kominn, stóð hann upp ok vildi taka Óðinn frá eldinum. Sverðit slapp ór hendi honum ok vissu hjöltin niðr. Konungr drap fæti ok steypist á fram, en sverðit stóð í gögnum hann, ok fékk hann bana. Óðinn hvarf þá. En Agnarr var þar konungr lengi síðan.

King Geirroth sat with his sword on his knees half unsheathed. When he heard that it was Odin who had come, he stood up to try to take Odin from the fire. The sword fell forward and stood against him and took his life. Odin disappeared, but Agnar was king in the land for a long time.
Lay of Grimnir: Notes

Prose: Hlíðskjálf is the high seat in Odin’s hall from which Odin looks over the nine worlds. See SK Prose Introduction and the note to the prose introduction.

1. When Grim takes the drink the fire flares up and burned his cloak when the fire met the magically charged liquid in a magically charged space. As in Ginnungagap, this reaction brings about the shaping of a new being. Grim becomes more powerful at the end of the ordeal. After consuming the drink, which may be seen as the waters of Hvergelmir from which change is brought about when it meets the fires of Muspell, Grim has power over fire.

2. In the winning of the Runes (Hav. 138-139) Odin hangs for nine nights and dealt neither bread nor drinking horn. Grim’s casting off of the old cloak is symbolic of his casting off of his old identity to enter into a new level of being. Agnar’s role is also that of an initiate. He is cast out -to the sea, away from human company, to live in an island in Ettinhome where he lives and has sexual union with a giantess. Just as he is fostered by a woman (Frigg) on the farm in Midgard, so he is fostered by a giantess in outgard. On the initiatory significance of union with women of outgard, see chapter 4. The cave is a symbol of the womb of the mother earth, into which he descends to undergo initiatory ordeals and to be reborn from the cave after union with the fetch soul in its contrasexual form as a giantess. Agnar begets progeny by the giantess in order to be reborn in the company of his brother Geirroth for the purpose of vengeance, just as Odin bears Vali to venge Baldr and Vithar as a means of surviving Ragnarok. See Voluspa and Baldr’s Dream. Geirroth has a son whom he names Agnar who rescues Grim and thereby brings about the death of his father. The second Agnar is a rebirth of the first. After undergoing the transformation and reaching an important level of maturity, the younger Agnar passes an initiatory test by helping Grim and then receives priestly and kingly lore so that he can replace Geirroth as king.

3. Veratyr is a name for Odin and means “God of Mankind.”

4. Elfhome is the heavenly abode of the Light Elves that is just beneath Asgard.

8. Gladhome is where the Gods first set up their judgement seats after they ordered the world. See Gylf. 14. This is where Asgard and Valhalla were established. The Gods meet at Urth’s well beneath the world tree each day to give judgement. Hropt is one of Odin’s names.

10. On wargs (ON vargr) see index.

11. The story of the slaying of Skathi’s father Thiazi and Skathi’s marriage to Njorth is told in detail in SKP 1.

12. These Ves (holy steads) are in Asgard.

14. Freya is more similar to Odin than are many of the Aesir. She not only takes half the slain each day, but she also seeks inspiration and wields magic. It was she who taught Odin Seith.

15. According to Gylf. 32. Forseti is the son of Baldr and Nanna. Forseti may be the same as the God Fosites, the Frisian God whose sanctuary on the island Helgoland is mentioned in the Life of Willibrord. This passage is translated in Grove and Gallows by James Chisholm.

18. Andhrimnir is the fire that boils the sacred boar meat (Saehrimnir) in the kettle Eldhrimnir. Saehrimnir is eaten by the warriors in Valhalla, and like Thor’s goats, is always whole again the next day.
19. Wine, like mead, is a metaphor for inspiration. Odin needs only inspiration. The rest of the wights must sustain themselves on meat, material of the manifest universe, as well as on spirit.

20. Huginn=thought and Muninn=memory. Odin fears most for memory because thought can not work effectively without it. Thought can be improved and developed with a good foundation in memory. These may be seen as the cognitive and creative sides of the brain. One who experiences only memory without thought finds himself in states of awe and terror at the chaotic and uncontrolled contents of his imagination. One with thought only is likely to experience only the present, unable to make connections between the present and the past.

21. Those who seek Valhalla but are not strong enough are swept away by the current of Thund. This is the flood of Thjodvitnir (ON Great Wolf) who may be Fenrir. Thund may be the river in Asgard that separates the abode of Fenrir from the Gods and may be one of the difficult barriers on the way to Valhalla. By means of Thund, the weaker souls are unable to gain entry into Valhalla. Since fish is a common skaldic kenning for sword, the fish may be taken as swords swimming in the blood they are drawing from Fenrir.

25-26. The waters drawn up by the roots of Yggdrasil are released by the harts and the goat Heithrun whose udders release the liquids in rivers back to the seas and wells that sustain the tree. These liquids are drawn back into Asgard by the tree to the leaves where they are again consumed and processed by the harts and goat.

26. Hvergelmir (roaring kettle) is the pool in Niflheim from which the primal waters that met with fire in Ginnungagap flowed. It is the source of numerous rivers that flow throughout the multiverse. It is clear that the lore of the rivers and waters of the multiverse was once part of body of lore concerning travel through the nine worlds. The rivers served both as boundaries between the worlds and as well as means of travel between the worlds. It is impossible to reconstruct this lore purely from the written record. Those who would know must seek in the nine-worlds.

27. Sith=slow; Vith=broad; Soken=rushing forth; Eiken=raging; Svol=cold; Gunthro=battle brave; Fjorm=hasty; Fimbultul=greatly roaring; Rin=Rhein; Geirvimol=teeming with serpents; Groth=greedy; Tholl=swelling; Thyn=roaring; Gunnthorn=battle-lusty.

27-28. The rivers in 27 flow to heaven while the rivers in 28 flow through Midgard and wind their ways to Hel.

28. These rivers are definitely from Hvergelmir. According to Gylf. 4, Svol, Gunnthra, Fjorm, Fimbultul, Slith, Hrith, Sylg, Ylg, Vith, Leipt and Gjoll run from Hvergelmir to Hel. The Gods ride magical steeds capable of leaping the fierce cosmic rivers which Thor wades. The Gods established twelve seats for moot in Gladhome at Ida-Dale near Urth’s well.

29. The Bifrost Bridge meets Asgard at the well of Urth, from whence these rivers flow, which seem to separate Urth’s Well from the rest of Asgard. These waters boil and steam at this meeting place beneath the flaming rainbow bridge. 28 Vino=Wine Stream; Thiothunna=people swallower; Nyth=milk; Not=burning; Nonn=bold; Slioth=fearful; Hrith=storming; Sylg=swallower; Ylgr=wolf; Vond=difficult; Gjoll=frenzied; Leipt=lightening.

31. Each root may be thought to bind three worlds and ends at one of the three cosmic wells. Urth’s well is in Asgard; Mimir’s well is in Ettinhome, and Hvergelmir is in Niflheim.

The worlds bound by the three main roots include A) Asgard, Light-Elfhome, and Midgard B) Hel, Muspelheim and Niflheim C) Vanahem, Dwarfhome and Ettinhome. The roots binding the nine worlds may be visualized as the triangles of the valknut (knot of the slain).

32. Nithogg=The One Who Strikes Down.
34. Likely the serpents of Hverglmir.

36. Mist=misty; Skeggold=battle age; Hild=battle; Thruth=The Strong; Hlok=battling; Herfjotur=warfetter; Goll=Shrieking; Geironal=spear storming; Randgrith=shield fierce; Rathgrith=planwrecker.

37. Arvkr=Early Waker; Alsvith=Very Swift

39. Skoll pursues the sun and Hati pursues the moon.

42. This stanza speaks of sacrifice. In this context Odin is a sacrifice waiting to be heaved from the flames and the wisdom of Odin is thereby opened to Agnar.

43. The sons of Ivaldi are the dwarves who made some of the God’s most powerful tools and weapons, including Sif’s hair, Skithblathnir, and Gungnir. See Gylf. 35.

44. Skithblathnir is a ship given to Frey by dwarves known as the sons of Ivaldi that always has a fair wind, sails over land and sea, carries all of the Gods in all of their armor, and can be folded up like a piece of cloth.

48-54 is a list of some of the many names of Odin. The following is a list of translations for those that are translatable. Grim=mask; Gangleri=Wayweary; Herrjan=Warrior; Hjalmeri=Helmbearer; Thekk=Welcomed one; Thrithi=Third; Thuth=Thin; Uth=Wave; Har=One-eyed; Sath=Truthful; Svipal=Changeable; Sanngetal=Truthfinder; Herteit=Glad in Battle; Hnikar=Thruster; Bileyg=One-Eyed; Baleyg=Fiery-Eyed; Bolverk=Worker of bale; Fjolnir=One who Hides in Furs; Grim=Hood; Fjolsvith=Shape-shifter?; Sithott=Long-Hood; Sithskegg=Long-Beard; Sigfathir=Victory-Father; Hnikuth=Thruster; Atrith-One who charges by horse-back; Harbarth=Grey-Beard; Gondlir=Gand-Wielder; Svithrir=The Wise Svithat=Sage.

54. Vak=Wakeful; Ofnir=Weaver; Svafrnir=One who puts to sleep.
Skírnismál


Pá mælti Skáði:
1. “Rístu nú, Skírnir, ok gakk skjótt at beiða okkarn mála mög ok þess at fregna, hveim inn fróði sé ofreiði afi.”

Skírnir kvað:
2. “Illra orða er mér ón at ykkrum syni, ef ek geng at mæla við mög ok þess at fregna, hveim inn fróði sé ofreiði afi.”
3. “Segðu mér þat, Freyr, fólkvaldi goða, ok ek vilja vita: Hví þú einn sitr endlanga sali, minn dróttinn, um daga?”

Freyr kvað:
4. “Hví um segjak þér, seggr inn ungi, mikinn móðtrega? Því at álfröðull ýsir um alla daga ok þeygi at mínun munum.”

Skírnir kvað:
5. “Muni þína hykka ek svá mikla vera, at þú mér, seggr, né segir, því at ungrir saman várum í árdaga; vel mættim tveir trúask.”

Freyr kvað:
6. “Í Gymis görðum ek ganga sá mér tíða mey; armar lýstu, en af þaðan allt loft ok lègr.”

Lay of Skirnir

Frey, the son of Njorth, had sat in Hlithskjalf, and saw over all the worlds. He looked into Ettinhome, and there he saw a beautiful maid going out of her father’s hall and into her bower. From this he fell to a deep depression. Frey’s servant was called Skirnir. Njorth bade him to ask Frey to speak.

Skathi said:
1. “Rise now Skirnir and go and bid my son to speak. Ask the wise one with whom he is angry.”

Skirnir said:
2. “Evil words will I have from your son if I go to speak with the lad and ask the wise one with whom he is angry.”
3. “Tell me Frey, warleader of the gods, what I wish to know. Why do you sit alone, sad in the hall, all day long my dritizen.”

Frey said:
4. “How do I tell you, oh young hero, of my heartache? It is because the elfbeam shines all day and yet not on my heart.”

Skirnir said:
5. “I do not think that your love is so very great that you cannot tell me about it, hero, for when we were young in days of yore well could we trust each other.”

Frey said:
6. “In Gymir’s halls I saw the beloved maid walk before me and from there her arms brightened the sky and the sea.”
7.
"Mær er mér tíðari en manna hveim ungum í árdaga; ása ok álfa þat vill engi maðr at vit samt séim."

Skírnir kvað:
8.
"Mar gefðu mér þá þann er mik um myrkvan beri visan vafrolga, ok þat sverð, er sjálft vegisk við jötna ætt."

Freyr kvað:
9.
"Mar ek þér þann gef, er þik um myrkvan berr visan vafrolga, ok þat sverð, er sjálft mun vegask ef só er hóskr, er hefr"

Skírnir mælti við hestinn:
10.
"Myrkt er úti, mál kveð ek okkr fara úrig fjöll yfir, þursa bjóð yfir; báðir við komumsk, eða okkr báða tekr só inn ámáttki jötunn."

Skírnir reið í Jötunheima til Gymisgarða. Þar váru hundar ólmir, ok bundnir fyrir skíðgarðs hliði, þess er um sal Gerðar var. Hann reið at þar, er féhirðir sat á haugi, og kvaddi hann:
11.
"Segðu þat, hirðir, er þú á haugi sitr ok varðar alla vega: Hvé ek at andspilli komumk ins unga mans fyr greyjum Gymis?"

Hirðir kvað:
12.
"Hvárt ertu feigr, eða ertu framgenginn? Andspillis vanr þú skalt æ vera góðrar meyjar Gymis."

Skírnir kvað:
13.
"Kostir ro betri heldr en at klókkva sé, hveim er fúss er fara; einu dægri mér var aldr um skapaðr ok allt líf um lagit."

Skírnir said:
7.
"The maid is more beloved to me than maid has been to any man in elder days. Neither Ase nor elf nor any man desires that we have this arrangement."

Skirnir said:
8.
"Give me the steed then, that can bear me through the darkness and the famous flickering flame and give me the sword that swings itself against the tribe of ettins."

Frey said:
9.
"I give you the horse to bear you over the darkness and the famous flickering flame, and the sword that swings itself if wise the wielder."

Skirnir spoke to his horse:
10.
"It is dark outside. Now I say, let us fare forth over the wet fell over the tribe of thurses. Both of us shall arrive or the great ettin will take the two of us."

Skirnir rode into Ettinhome until he came to the yard of Gymir where there were savage hounds tied to the wooden posts of the gate that stood before Gerth’s hall. He rode up to the shepherd sitting on the howe and spoke to him:
11.
"Tell me herdsman, you who sits on the howe hill, who wards all the ways, how we may come to speak with the young maid beyond the grey hounds of Gymir."

Hirthir said:
12.
"Are you death bound or are you dead? You shall always lack the company of the good maid of Gymir."

Skirnir said:
13.
"It is better to be a hero than to whine for he who wishes to travel. My age was shaped to the day and a long life was allotted me."
Gerðr kvað:

Ambátt kvað:
15. “Máðr er hér útistíginn af mars baki jó lætr til jarðar taka.”

Gerðr kvað:
16. “Inn bið þú hann ganga í okkarn sal ok drekka inn trúra mjöð; þó ek hitt dýmnk, at hér úti sé minn bróðurbani.”

17. “Hvat er þat álfa né ása sona né víssa vana? Hví þú einn um komt eikinn fyr ör salkynni at séa?”

Skírnir kvað:
18. “Emkat ek álfa né ása sona né víssa vana; þó ek einn um komt eikinn fyr ör yður salkynni at séa.”


Gerðr kvað:
20. “Epli ellifu ek þigg aldregi at mannskis munum, né vit Freyr, meðan okkart fjör lifir, byggjum bæði saman.”

Gerth said:
14. “What is that din I now hear in our hall? The earth shakes and everything before the hold of Gymir trembles.”

Ambot said:
15. “There is a man out here who stepped off the back of his steed. Let him bring his horse into the garth. In need of company the young man comes for the good maid of Gymir.”

Gerth said:
16. “Bid him come into our hall and drink the maid’s mead! Though I fear that outside waits my brother’s slayer.”

17. “Are you an elf or an Ase’s son or a wise Van? Why do you come alone over wild fire to see our halls.”

Skirmir said:
18. “I am not an elf or an Ase’s son nor a wise Van, though I come alone over wild fire to see your halls.”

19. “I have here eleven apples all golden that I will give to you, Gerth, to strike a deal such that you say that Frey is to you the most beloved man who lives.”

Gerth said:
20. “I shall never accept your eleven golden apples for the love of any man, and not with Frey. For as long as we both shall live, we shall not live together.”
Skírnir kvað:
21. 
“Baug ek þér þá gef, þann er brenndr var með ungum Óðins syni; átta eru jafnhöfðir, er af drjúpa ina núndu hverja nót.”

Gerðr kvað:
22. 
“Baug ek þikkak, þótt brenndr sé með ungum Óðins syni; era mér gulls vant í góðum Gymis, at deila fé fôður.”

Skírnir kvað:
23. 
“Sér þú þenna mæki, mær, mjóvan, málfáan, er ek hef í hendi hér? Höfuð höggva ek mun þér hälsi af, nema þú mér sætt segir.”

Gerðr kvað:
24. 
“Ánauð þolaek vil aldregi at mannskis munum; þó ek hins get, ef þe Gymir finnizk, vígs ótrauðir, at ykkr vega tíði.”

Skírnir kvað:
25. 
“Maiden, do you see this narrow inlaid sword that I have in my hand, maid? Before these edges will the old ettin fall, your father will be a dead man.

26. 
“I smite you with a taming wand and I shall break you, maiden, to do my will. You shall go to where the sons of men will never see you again.

27. 
“You shall sit forever on the eagle’s mound. You will turn away from home and towards Hel. Man will be more loathsome to you than the shining snake to men.

28. 
“You will become a spectacle when you go out. Hrimnir will stare at you and every wight will stare at you. You will be well known when the guard of the Gods gapes through the gates.
29.
“Tópi ok ópi, tjósull ok óþoli,
vaxi þér tár með trega.
Sezk þú niðr, en ek mun segja þér
svárán súsbreka
ok tvennan trega:

30.
“Tramar gneypañík skulu gerstan dag
jötna gördum í;
til hrímþursa hallar þú skalt hverjan dag
kranga kostalaus,
kranga kostavön;
grát at gamni skaltu í gógn hafa
ok leiða með tárum trega.

31.
“Með þursi þríhöfðudum þú skalt æ nara,
eða verlaus vera;
þitt geð grípi,
þik morn morni;
ver þú sem þistill, sá er var þrunginn
í önn ofanverða.

32.
“Til holts ek gekk ok til hrás viðar,
gambantein at geta,
gambantein ek gat.

33.
“Reiðr er þér Óðinn, reiðr er þér Ásabrágr,
þik skal Freyr fíask,
in firinilla mær, en þú fengit hefr
gambarreiði goða.

34.
“Heyri jötnar, heyri hrímþursar,
synir Suttungs, sjálfir áslíðar,
hvé ek fyrbýð, hvé ek fyrírbanna
manna glaum mani,
manna nyt mani.

35.
“Hrímgrímnir heitir þurs, er þik hafa skal
fyr nágrindr neðan;
þar þér vílmegírá viðarrótum
geitahland gefi;
æðri drykkju fá þu aldregi,
mær, af þún munum mær,
mær, at mínun munum.

29.
“Madness and howling
shall increase in you.
You shall sit below and I shall dictate
great hardship
and twofold grief.

30.
“Fiends shall bend you through the dismal day
and in the garth of ettins you shall creep
without choice
or hope of choice,
into the halls of rime thurses everyday.
You shall have weeping for amusement,
and you shall know grief and tears.

31.
“Ever shall you dwell with three headed thurses
or be without husband.
Your mind will be dull
and your grief shall waste you.
May you be as a thistle thrust
into the top of the harvest.

32.
“I walked to the woods, to the sappy woods
to get a power-teinn
and I got a power-teinn.

33.
“Odin is angered with you the highest God
is angered with you. Frey shall hate you
you criminal maiden, you have incurred
the costly wrath of the Gods.

34.
“Hear me now ettins! Hear me now rime thurses!
Sons of Suttung, and the champion of the Ases himself!
Hear how I forbid, how I forbid
the joy of mankind to the maid
and the company of men to the maid.

35.
“The thurs called Hrimgrimmir shall have you
beneath the door of the dead.
Beneath the roots of trees
you shall never
take another drink.
This by your own will, maid
by my own will, maid.
36.
“Purs ríst ek þérok þríá stafi,
ergi ok æði ok óþola;
svá ek þat af ríst, sem ek þat á reist,
ef gerask þarfar þess.”

Gerðr kvað:
37.
“Heill ver þú nú heldr, sveinn, ok tak við hrímkáliki,
fullum forns mjaðar;
þó hafðak ek þat ætlat, at myndak aldregi
unna vaningja vel.”

Skírnir kvað:
38.
“Örendi mín vil ek öll vita,
áðr ek ríða heim héðan,
nær þú á þingi munt inum þroska
nenna Njarðar syni.”

Gerðr kvað:
39.
“Barri heitir, er vit bæði vitum,
lundr lognfara;
en eft nærr nú þar mun Njarðar syni
Gerður unna gamans.”

Þá reið Skírnir heim. Freyr stóð úti ok kvaddi hann ok
spurði tíðenda:
40.
“Segðu mér þat, Skírnir, aðr þú verpir söðli af mar
ok þú stígir fetti framar:
Hvat þú árnanir í Jötunheima
þíns eða míns munar?”

Skírnir kvað:
41.
“Barri heitir, er vit báði vitum,
lundr lognfara;
en eft nærr nú þar mun Njarðar syni
Gerðr unna gamans.”

Freyr kvað:
42.
“Löng er nótt, langar ro tvær,
hvé um þreyjak þrjár?
Oft mér mánaðr minni þótti
en sjá hálfr hýnótt.”

36.
“I carve a thurs rune for you and three staves
-ergi, madness, and impatience-
I can scratch them off just as I scratch them on
if need arises.”

Gerth said:
37.
“Welcome now heroic lad and take this rime cup
full of hoary mead,
though I never thought that I would ever
love a Van’s son.”

Skirnir said:
38.
“I want to know all my errand done
before I ride away from here.
When will you meet in tryst
the strong son of Njorth.”

Gerth said:
39.
“We both know there is a quiet grove called Barri.
After nine nights, then
will Gerth give her love
to the son of Njorth.”

Then Skirnir rode home. Frey stood outside and spoke
with him asking tidings.
40.
“Tell me Skirnir, before you unsaddle the steed,
and before you take a step,
what you gained in Ettinhome
that was to either your or my liking.”

Skirnir said:
41.
“We both know a quiet grove called Barri.
After nine nights
Gerth will give her love
to the son of Njorth.”

Frey said:
42.
“A night is long. Two are longer.
How shall I endure three?
Often a month seemed less to me
than waiting half a wedding night.”
Lay of Skirnir: Notes

Prose Introduction. Hlíðskjálf is Odin’s seat in Valhalla. From on high Odin looks out over the nine worlds. He watches the nine worlds from the nethermost regions by means of the eye he sacrificed and left in Mimir’s well as pledge in exchange for a drink from this well of mead. Frey ascended the throne and looked out over the world and saw sights he was not prepared for, including the giantess Gerth. Though this poem is the telling of a spring renewal myth, it has an initiatory meaning.

Frey is not an initiate of Odian magic and so unprepared to see so widely and deeply. As a result he became so disoriented and depressed that he was unable or unwilling to speak. We might say that he was unable to handle the powerful visions, the inspiration, and the madness that came to him on that seat, and went mad. Those who use Odinic magical techniques, including true Odisans, risk going completely insane. There is a fine line between inspiration and madness. When an Odian fails to wield his inspiration or madness, it wields him, hence the warnings against too much mead (inspiration) in the Havamal.

The Odian should master and understand the lore of the nine-worlds, not only for his own initiation but to act as a technician of the sacred or the soul on behalf of his folk. Skirnir may be seen as a shaman who fares forth into the outer realms to help Frey recover his soul, in this case in the form of his fetch wife. Until Frey is united with his fetch soul, or his higher self, he is incapacitated. For more on the esoteric significance of union with the fetch wife, see chapter 4.

On the natural interpretation of Skrnismal, see chapter 3. In this context Frey’s moodiness is symbolic of winter dormancy.

5-14. On flickering flame, guardian hounds, herdsmen who sit on mounds, and shaking earth, see chapters 4.

8. The sword that swings itself is a fairy-tale motif. (J. Grimm, Myth. II 725).

9. Frey is not a God known for faring into Ettinhome. When a journey into an outer realm is made, Frey is never involved. Frey had a steed capable of leaping the flames of Ettinhome, and a sword that excelled in ettin fights, but lacked the sort of magical skills by which Odin and Loki fare, and the ettin-like strength by which Thor gets along in the eastern realm. Frey was a powerful God of war and magic, but his activities were confined to Vanahem, Asgard, and Midgard. His father Njorth once tried to live with Frey’s mother Skathi in her father’s hall in the mountains of Ettinhome, but could not tolerate the environment any more than Skathi could tolerate Njorth’s abode.

The Vanic myths are bound up closely with spring and winter rites and dramas, hence the theme of periodic separation and reunion of Vanic couples. Every year the rescue of a spring queen from the underworld and her marriage to a spring God is celebrated.

32. Magic-Tefinn or “Gamban Tefinn”, see Glossary.

36. Skirnir scratches cursing staves on a teinn, including the Thurs rune, which the Old Norwegian Runic Poem calls “the torture of women.”
The Lay of Harbarth:

Thor was travelling out along the eastern road when he came to a sound. A ferryman with a ship stood on the other side.

Thor hailed him:
1.
“Who is that lad of lads who stands across the sound?”

The Ferryman answered:
2.
“Who is that churl of churls who calls across the waves?”

Thor said:
3.
“Ferry me over the sound! I will feed you in the morning. I have a basket on my back with the best meal. Before heading home I ate my fill and am sated by herring and goat.”

The Ferryman said:
4.
“You boast your meal a morning deed but you know not all. The folks at home are downcast. I think your mother is dead.”

Thor said:
5.
“Now you are telling me the thing that seems heaviest that any may know when you say my mother is dead.”

The Ferryman said:
6.
“Although it is not likely that you own even three good steads, bare legged you stand in beggar’s gear not even wearing your breeches.”

Thor said:
7.
“Steer that ferry boat over here and I will show you the steady. But who owns that boat you’ve got on the other bank.”

The Ferryman said:
8.
“Hildolf he is called who gave me custody of the craft. A warrior wise in rede he and lives by Rathsey sound. He bade me ferry no robbers or horse thieves only good men and those whose deeds I know. Tell me your name if you want to cross the sound!”
Þórr kvað:
9.
“Segja mun ek til nafns míns, þótt ek sekr séak,
ok til alls eðlis; ek em Óðins sonr
Meila bróðir, en Magna faðir,
þrúðvaldr goða, við þór knáttu hér deima;
hins vil ek nú spyrra, hvat heitir þú.”

Ferjukarlinn kvað:
10.
“Hárbarðr ek heiti, hylk um nafn sjaldan.”

Þórr kvað:
11.
“Hvat skaltu of nafn hylja, nema þú sakar eigir?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
12.
“En þótt ek sakar eiga, þá mun ek forða fjörvi mínu
fyr slíkum sem þú ert, nema ek feigr sé.”

Þórr kvað:
13.
“Harm ljótanmér þykkir í því
at vaða um váginn til þín ok væta ögur minn;
skylda ek launa kögurseini þínun
kanginýrði, ef ek koæmunk yfir sundit.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
14.
“Hér mun ek standa ok þín heðan bída,
fannta þú mann in harðara at Hrungni dauðan.”

Þórr kvað:
15.
“Hins viltu nú geta, er vit Hrungni deildum,
sá inn stórúðgi jötunn, er ör steini var höfuðit à;
þó lét ek hann falla ok fyrir hníga.
Hvat vanntu þá meðan, Háðarðr?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
16.
“Var ek með Fjölvari fimm vetr alla
í ey þeiri, er Algrœn heitir;
vega vér þar knáttum ok val fella,
margs at freista, mans at kosta.”

Þórr kvað:
17.
“Hversu snúnuðu yðr konur yðrar?”

Thor said:
9.
“I would tell you my name and that of all my kin
even if I was outlawed. I am Odin’s son,
the brother of Meili, the father of Magni.
I am a powerful God! It is with Thor
you are chattering. Now I want to know your name.”

The Ferryman said:
10.
“I am called Harbarth, I hide my name seldom.”

Thor said:
11.
“Unless you have a reason,
why should you hide your name?”

Harbarth said:
12.
“Though I had a reason, I would ward my life
against the likes of you unless I were doomed.”

Thor said:
13.
“It would seem an awful shame to me
if I were to get my gear all sopping wet
wading over the river to you. You will be well rewarded
for your mockery if I wade over the sound.”

Harbarth said:
14.
“Here I stand awaiting your arrival. You will not find
a tougher man now that Hrungnir is dead.”

Thor said:
15.
“Now you recall how I fought with Hrungnir
the tall and arrogant ettin. His head was of stone,
but I felled him and he died.
What were you doing then Harbarth?”

Harbarth said:
16.
“I was with Fjolvari for five entire winters
on the island of Allgreen
where we fought and slaughtered,
dared many deeds, seduced maidens.”

Thor said:
17.
“How were the women with you?”
Hárbarðr kvað:
18.
“Sparkar áttu vér konur, ef oss at spökum yrði;
horskar áttu vér konur, ef oss hollar væri;
þær ór sandi síma undu,
ok ór dali djúpum
grund um grófu;
varð ek þeim einn öllumefri at ráðum;
hvílda ek hjá þeim systrum sjau,
ok hafða ek geð þeira alt ok gaman.
Hvat vanntu þá meðan Þórr?”

Þórr kvað:
19.
“Ek drap Þjaza, inn þrúðmóðga jötun;
upp ek varp augum Alvalda sonar
á þann inn heiða himin,
þau eru merki mest minna verka,
þau er allir menn síðan um sé.
Hvat vanntu þá meðan, Hárbarðr?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
20.
“Miklar manvélar ek hafða við myrkríður,
þá er ek vélta þær frá verum;
hardan jötun ek hugða Hlébarð vera;
gaf hann mér gambantein,
en ek vélta hann ór viti.”

Þórr kvað:
21.
“Illum huga launaðir þú þá góðar gjafar.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
22.
“Þat hafr eik, er af annarri skefr,
um sik er hvern í slíku.
Hvat vanntu þá meðan Þórr?”

Þórr kvað:
23.
“Ek var austrok jötna barðak
brúðir bólvísar, er til bjargs gengu;
mikil myndi ætt jötna, ef allir lífði
vætr myndi manna und Midgardi.
Hvat vanntu þá meðan, Hárbarðr?”

Harbarth said:
18.
“We had some lively ladies
if only they had been gentle,
they were wise, if only they had been loyal.
They wound rope out of sand
dug the ground out of deep dales
but I was too wise for all of them.
I slept with those seven sisters
and had my way with them all.
What were you doing then Thor?”

Thor said:
19.
“I dropped Thiazi the hardy ettin.
I cast the eyes of the sons of Alvald
up into the cloudless sky.
Those mighty marks of my work
have all men seen since.
What were you doing then Harbarth?”

Harbarth said:
20.
“I worked powerful love spells on Mirk-riders.
I turned them from their husbands.
I deemed Hlebarth one tough ettin.
He gave me a magic teinn and I drove him
out of his mind.”

Thor said:
21.
“I think you payed evil to a giver of good.”

Harbarth said:
22.
“The oak gets that which falls from another.
Each for himself in such affairs.
What were you doing then Thor?”

Thor said:
23.
“I was in the east smiting ettins,
those baleful brides who walk the crags.
The ettin tribes would be strong had they lived.
Mankind and Midgard would have been naught.
What were you doing then Harbarth?”
Hárbarðr kvað:
24. “Var ek á Vallandi ok vígum fylgðak, atta ek jöfrum, en aldri sættak; Óðinn á jarla, þá er í val falla, en Þórr á þrælakyn.”

Þórr kvað:
25. “Ójafnt skipta er þú myndir með ásum líði, ef þú ættir vilgi mikils vald.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
26. “Þórr á afl œrit, en ekki hjarta; af hræzlu ok hugbleyði þér var í hanzka troðit ok þottiska þú þá Þórr vera; hvári þú þá þórðir fyr hræzlu þinni hnýosa né físa, svá at Fjalarr heyrði.”

Þórr kvað:
27. “Hárbarðr inn ragi, ek mynda þik í hel drepa, ef ek mætta seilask um sund.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
28. “Hvat skyldir um sund seilask, er sakir ro alls engar? Hvat vanntu þá, Þórr?”

Þórr kvað:
29. “Ek var austr ok ánna vardak, þá er mik sóttu þeir Svárangs synir, grjóti þeir mik börðu, gagni urðu þó lítt fegnir, þó urðu þeir mik fyrri friðar at biðja. Hvatal vanntu þá meðan, Hárbarðr?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
30. “Ek var austr ok við einhverja dœmdak, lék ek við ina línhvítu ok launþing háðak; gladdak ina gullbjörtu, gamni mær unði.”

Þórr kvað:
31. “Góð átt þú þér mankynni þar þá.”

Harbarth said:
24. “I was in Valland waging wars. I goaded wild boars and never made peace. Odin takes the earls who fall in the slaughter but Thor takes the kin of thralls.”

Thor said:
25. “You unevenly divide the folk with the Ases if you had much power.”

Harbarth said:
26. “Thor has plenty of strength but no heart. In fear and cowardice you stood in a glove. Then you did not seem much like Thor! You dared neither to sneeze nor fart for fear that Fjalar hear you.”

Thor said:
27. “You coward, Harbarth! I would drop you straight to Hel, if I could reach across the sound!”

Harbarth said:
28. “Why should you reach over the sound when there is no reason? What were you doing then Thor?”

Thor said:
29. “I was in the east warding the river where Svarung’s sons sought me. They hurled boulders at me but it availed them not. They came before me suing for peace. What were you doing then Harbarth?”

Harbarth said:
30. “I was in the east talking to a woman. With that linen white lady I played we had a secret meeting where I gladdened the gold bright one. That maid liked to play.”

Thor said:
31. “Then your dealings went well, eh?”
Hárbarðr kvað:
32. "Liðs þíns vara ek þá þurfi, Þórr, at ek helda þeiri inni línhvítu mey."

Þórr kvað:
33. "Ek munda þér þá þat veita, ef ek viðr of kœmumk."

Hárbarðr kvað:
34. "Ek munda þér þá trúa, nema þú mik í trygð véltir."

Þórr kvað:
35. "Emkat ek sá hælbítr sem húðskór forn á vár."

Hárbarðr kvað:
36. "Hvat vanntu þá meðan, Þórr?

Þórr kvað:
37. "Brúðir berserkja barðak í Hléseyju, þær höfðu verst unnit, vélt ðjóð alla."

Hárbarðr kvað:
38. "Klæki vanntu þá, Þórr, er þú á konum barðir."

Þórr kvað:
39. "Vargynjur þat váru, en varla konur; skelldu skip mitt, er ek skorðat hafðak, oegðu mér jámlurki en eltu ðjalfa. Hvat vanntu meðan, Hárbarðr?"

Hárbarðr kvað:
40. "Ek vark í hernum, er hingat gerðisk gnæfa gunnfana, geir at rjóða."

Þórr kvað:
41. "Þess viltu nú geta, er þú fórt oss óljúfan at bjóða."

Hárbarðr kvað:
42. "Bœta skal þér þat þámunda baugi, sem jafnendr unnu, þeir er okkr vilja sætt."
Þórr kvað:
43. “Hvar namtu þessi in hncefiligu orð, er ek heyrða aldregi in hncefiligri?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
44. “Nam ek at mönnum þeim inum aldrœnum, er búa í heimishauga.”

Þórr kvað:
45. “Þó gefr þú gott nafn dysjum, er þú kallar þær heimishauga.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
46. “Svá dœmi ek um slíkt far.”

Þórr kvað:
47. “Orðkringi þín mun þér illa koma, ef ek rað á vág at vaða, ulfi hæra hygg ek þik óepa munu, ef þú hlýtr af hamri högg.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
48. “Sif á hó heima, hans muntu fund vilja, þann muntu þrek drýgja, þat er þér skyldara.”

Þórr kvað:
49. “Mælir þú at munns rÆði, svá at mér skyldi verst þykka, halr inn hugblauði, hygg ek, at þú ljúgir.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
50. “Satt hygg ek mik segja, seinn ertu at för þinni, langt myndir þú nú kominn, þórr, ef þú litum fœrir.”

Þórr kvað:
51. “Hárbarðr inn ragi, heldr hefr þú nú mik dvalðan.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
52. “Ásaþórs hugða ek aldregi mundu glepja fêhirði farar.”

Thor said:
43. “Whence come your spiteful words. Never have I heard anything more hateful.”

Harbarth said:
44. “I took them from men, very old men, who dwell in the wood of the home.”

Thor said:
45. “You give a very good name to graves, calling them wood of the home.”

Harbarth said:
46. “So I deem such things.”

Thor said:
47. “Your glib tongue would bring you ill if I decided to wade the waves. You would howl louder than a wolf if I smote your head with my hammer.”

Harbarth said:
48. “Sif is at home in whoredom. You should want a meeting with him and there prove your might, for that is you duty.”

Thor said:
49. “You tell me what seems the worst to me! You are a craven man! I think you are a liar.”

Harbarth said:
50. “I think that I speak the truth. You are late on your journey. You would be far by now had you been travelling.”

Thor said:
51. “Harbarth you coward! You have been delaying me.”

Harbarth said:
52. “Asa-Thor! I never thought you would let a ferryman beguile you.”
Þórr kvað:
53.
“Ráð mun ek þér nú ráða, ró þú hingat bátinum, hættum hætingi, hittu föður Magna.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
54.
“Farðu firr sundi, þér skal fars synja.”

Þórr kvað:
55.
“Vísa þú mér nú leiðina, alls þú vill mik eigi um váginn ferja.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
56.
Lítit er at synja, langt er at fara, stund er til stokksins, önnur til steinsins, halu svá til vinstra vegsins, unz þú hittir Verland; þar mun Fjörgyn hitta Þór son sinn, ok mun hon kenna hánum áttunga brautir til Óðins landa.”

Þórr kvað:
57.
“Mun ek taka þangat í dag?”

Hárbarðr kvað:
58.
“Taka við vil ok erfiði, at upprennandi sólu, er ek get þána.”

Þórr kvað:
59.
“Skammt mun nú mál okkat, alls þú mér sköetingu einni svarar; launa mun ek þér farsynjun, ef vit funnumk í sinn annat.”

Hárbarðr kvað:
60.
“Far þú nú, þars þik hafi allan gramir.”

Thor said:
53
“I will now give you some advice. Row that boat over here and let us stop squabbling. Come here to Magni’s father!”

Harbarth said:
54.
“Get away from this sound! I won’t let you cross!”

Thor said:
55.
“Then show me the way if you will not ferry me over the waves.”

Harbarth said:
56.
“It is easy to deny but far to travel. There is an hour to the stock, another to the stone. Hold to the road to the left until you reach Vesland. There Fjörgyn will meet Thor, her son, and show her kinsman the wilderness way to Odin’s land.”

Thor said:
57.
“Will I get there within the day?”

Harbarth said:
58.
“I guess that you will have misery and hardship when the sun rises.”

Thor said:
59.
“Shorten your talk then, if you will answer only with insults. I will pay you back for denying me a crossing if we ever meet again at another time.”

Harbarth said:
60.
“Go away! Go to where all demons may have you.”
Lay of Harbarth: Notes

Introductory Prose: Thor is returning from an expedition to Ettinhome and has arrived at a river that separates Ettinhome from either Midgard or Asgard, warded by a seemingly unfamiliar ferryman (actually Odin) who calls himself Harbarth. The realms of Ettinhome and Helhome are realms to which the dead fare. These realms are separated from Midgard by great rivers and even oceans. The souls of the dead are admitted to and led to the appropriate realms by ferrymen and herdsman. Herdsman who ward specific regions of Ettinhome may be seen in SK, and SD and Hervor's Saga.

3. That Thor offers to feed the ferryman in the morning, and that he asks the ferryman if they will get there within the day, tells us that it is late in the afternoon and that Thor has a long day’s trek behind him. Thor is wandering on foot, instead of by wane, and is therefore without his goats and must cross the sound by boat or by wading. Thor normally has little trouble wading waters that separate the worlds. As much as he clearly desires to cross the stream, Thor is unable in this instance. Because he is without his goats, it is possible that the O.N. word hafra refers to oats rather than to goat. The O.N. word can mean either, though it rarely means “oats” in early literature. For this reason I am inclined to think that Thor is carrying the meat of his two goats who were left behind when they were lamed in a culinary accident. It seems that his goats could be sacrificed, eaten, and the skin and bones hollowed so that the goats became whole again. According to Snorri a farmer with whom Thor shared his feast broke the bone to get marrow. The bone did not heal.

There is some inconsistency in the stories of the loss of Thor’s goats. According to Snorri, Thor lost his goats on his voyage to Utgarth and later visited Hymir on foot. But according to the HM, Thor and Tyr ventured out to Hymir’s hold in Thor’s wane but had to return on foot because the goats were incapacitated by the deceit of Loki. That the episode appears in two different tales of Thor’s eastern voyages suggests that it is independent and more important than the individual stories to which the episode was attached. This episode was perhaps incorporated into a tale for specific cultic purposes. Likely the variations occurred along regional lines. The significance of the story of the laming of the goats is yet to be fathomed and incorporated into modern Thoric cultic practices.

4. The motif of the death of Thor’s mother may be the survival of a winter myth since Thor’s mother was Fjorgyn or Jorth, the mother earth. Stanza 56 shows that Harbarth is lying in order to shock Thor. This may be taken as a survival of initiation lore. Thor finds himself in a strange land, as indicated by his asking of the ferryman for directions in stanza 55. At the river which separates Ettinhome from Midgard, Thor meets Harbarth who could help him, but hinders him instead. Harbarth’s first words are intended to shock. This recalls the first spell that Svipdag learned from his mother which allowed him to shake form his shoulders what seemed shocking or demoralizing, see GG. 6. This spell was intended for use in an initiatory journey into Ettinhome. Note that Thor is instructed to get help from his mother, just as Svipdag obtained help from his mother on his initiatory quest. The Lay of Harbarth may be a myth associated with initiatory practices in which young men were left in unknown wilderness to find their ways back and tested by elders.

6. Thor is known to have one hall, Bilskirnir, though two steads are mentioned, including Thruthheim and Thruthvanger mentioned in GM and Gylf 21.


10. Harbarth is one of Odin’s names, see GM 49. Even as Harbarth speaks he is disguising his identity. He is Thor’s own father, though Thor can not recognize him.

15. On Thor’s fight with Hrungrir see Skd 17.
17. Although these ettin maids were physically and magically powerful and unwilling, Odin had his way with them.

19. On Thiazi see Gylf. 56.

20. Mirk-riders are likely the wolf or warg riding troll maidens who ride about in one of the forests of Ettinhome called Mirkwood, and perhaps also in Iron wood. See VSP note 40.

26. In Gylf. which tells of Thor’s journey to Utgarth, this ettin is called Skrymer rather than Fjalar. Fjalar is a dwarf name in VSP 10 and LS 60 and 62. In Skd I and Hav 14. Fjalar is the name of one of the dwarves who killed Kvasir.

29. Svarung’s sons are giants.

30. Odin is here meeting a giant maiden such as Gunnloth for purposes of the kind of magical initiation discussed in chapter 4. The adjective Gold-Bright is fitting for these beautiful ettin women whose abodes are rich and splendid.

37. On Berserkers, see glossary. Thor and Odin both recount their encounters with powerful sorceresses in Ettinhome. Consistently, Thor crushes them while Odin seduces them. Likewise, in dealings with other ettinkind, Thor smashes them with Mjolnir asking questions later, while Odin interrogates them. Odin’s seductions of giant maids are not mere hedonism, but part of his initiatory work as explained more fully in chapter 4.

39. One such she wolf was the mother of King Siggeir who fares forth into the night as a wolf to devour the nine brothers of Sigmund in the Volsung Saga. The baleful brides of stanza 23 may be similar beings.

56. Harbarth may be seen here as the ferryman who wards the way between the worlds, conveying souls to their appropriate place in Ettinhome or beyond. Odin appears in this capacity in the Volsung Saga as well.

If the river runs north and south, dividing Ettinhome in the east, and Asgard or Midgard in the west, and Harbarth is giving Thor good directions, then it is likely that Thor takes a path to the north so that when he takes a road that bares to the left he will cross the river or sound and arrive in Midgard where he meets his mother Fjorgyn who tells him how to get to Asgard. If he travelled south and turned left, he would be travelling east and wind up deep in Ettinhome.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hymiskviða</th>
<th>Lay of Hymir</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Ár valtívar veiðar námu, ok sumblsamir áðr saðir yrði, hrístu teina ok á hlaut sáu, fundu þeir at Ægis örkost hvera.</td>
<td>1. Of yore the Tivar of the slain hunted game, gathered in sumble and before they were sated they shook teinns and looked on lots. They found Aegir had plenty of everything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sat bergbúi barnteitr fyr mjök glíkr megi miskorblinda; leit í augu Yggs barn í þrá, “Þú skalt ásum oft sumbl gera.”</td>
<td>2. The fell-dweller sat happy as a child, much like a kinsman of Misterblindi. Ygg’s son spitefully looked him in the eye: “You shall often make sumble for the Ases.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Önn fekk jötni orðbæginn halr, hugði at hefnðum hann næst við goð; bað hann Sifjar ver sér fœra hver, - “þanns ek öllum öl ørð of heita.”</td>
<td>3. The taunting hero had troublesome work for the ettin, who thought next of venging himself on the God. He bade Sif’s man fetch a fit kettle: “Then I shall heat up some ale for you all.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Né þat máttu mærir tívar ok ginnregin of geta hvergi, unz af tryggðum Týr Hlórríða ástráð mikit einum sagði:</td>
<td>4. But the great Gods and the Ginnregin were unable to get one at all, Until Tyr spoke truly giving Hlórrítha good rede.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. “Býr fyr austan Élivága hundvíss Hymir at himins enda; á minn faðir móðugr ketil, rúmbrugðinn hver, rastar djúpan.”</td>
<td>5. “Wise Hymir dwells eastward of Elivagar My fierce father has a kettle there. That roomy vessel is a mile deep.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Þórr kvað: Thor said:</td>
<td>6. “Do you know if we can get that boiler?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. “Veiztu ef þiggjum þann lögvelli?”</td>
<td>Tyr said: “If, my friend, our work is wily.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Týr kvað:</td>
<td>7. They then fared forth from Asgard for most all of the day until they came to the stead of Egil who herded the horn-glorious goats. Then they turned to the hall of Hymir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fóru drjúgum dag þann fram Ásgarði frá, unz til Egils kvámu; hirði hann hafra horngóðasta; hurfu at höllu, er Hymir átti.</td>
<td>8. Grandson met grandmother and they loathed one another greatly. She had nine hundred heads. But another came forth all in gold and white of brow. She bore strong brew to her son.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mögr fann ömmu mjök leiða sér, hafði höfða hundruð nú, en önnur gekk algullin fram brúnhvíð bera bjórveig syni:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. “Áttnið jötna, hugfulla tvá er minn frí glöggri við gesti, ek viljak ykkki und hverja setja; mörgu sinni gørr ills hugar.”

9. “Kin of ettins, I will put you two under the cauldron, though you are strong of spirit. My lover is quite often stingy with guests, greedy, and wicked of mind.”

10. En váskapaðr varð síðbúinn harðráðr Hymir gekk inn í sal, var karls, en kom varð síðbúinn heim af veiðum, glumðu jöklar, kinnskógr frópin.

10. But then the terrible one, the hard-reding Hymir, came home heavy laden from hunting. He strode into the hall with icicles a jangling, the churl returned with a frozen beard.

Frilla kvað:

11. “Ver þú heill, Hymir, í hugum góðum, nú er sonr kominn til sala þinna, sá er vit vættum af vegi lóngum; fylgir hánum hróðrs andskoti, vinr verliða; Véurr heitir sá.”

11. Frilla said:

11. “Hail thou Hymir, oh glad-minded one! Your son has come to your hall. He for whom we waited is back in your hall after a long trek. Hroth’s enemy follows him, a friend of men called Veorr.”

12. Sé þú, hvar sitja und salar gafli, svá forða sér, stendr súl fyrir.” Sundr stökk súla fyr sjón jötuns, áss brotnaði.

12. “See where they sit under the gable hall. They stand before a pillar to protect themselves.” The pillar sprung asunder.

13. Stukku átta, en einn af þeim hverr harðsleginn heill af þolli; fram gengu þeir, sjónum leiddi sinn andskota.

13. Eight were shattered, but one cauldron, hard-hammered, stayed whole when it fell from the post. Then they stepped forward. The old ettin beheld his foes.

14. Saðgít hánunum hugr vel þá, er hann sá gýgjar greuti á golf kominn, þar váru þjórar þrír of tekínr, bað senn jótunn sjóða ganga.

14. He was uneasy when he saw the sorrow of giants walking on his floor. Soon the ettin bade three bulls be taken for boiling.

15. Hvern létu þeir höfði skemmra ok á seyði síðan báru, át Sifjar verr örðr sofa lengi, einn með öllu öxn tvá Hymis.

15. Each was shortened by a head and they bore them to the roasting pit. But the husband of Sif had all of two oxen himself before going to sleep.

16. Þótti hárum Hrungni spjalla verðr Hlóriða vel fullmiðill: “ Munum at aftni við veiðimat vér þrír lifa.”

16. The meal of Hlorritha seemed very great indeed to the friend of Hrungrir. “In the evening, we three must live by another meal, but of meat from the hunt.”
17. Véurr kvaðzk vilja á vág róa, ef ballr jötunn beitr gæfi.

Hymir kvað:
“Hverf þú til hjarðar, ef þú hug trúir, brjótr berg - Dana, beitur sökja.

18. Þess vænti ek, at þér mynit ögn af uxa auðfeng vera.”
Sveinn sýsliga sveif til skógar, þar er uxi stóð alsvartr fyrr.

Hymir kvað:
“Hverf þú til hjarðar, ef þú hug trúir, brjótr berg - Dana, beitur sökja.


Hymir kvað:
“Verk þykkja þín verri miklu kjóla valdi en þú kyrr sitir.”

20. Bað hlunngota hafra drótinn útar fœra, átrunn apa útar fora, en sá jötunn sina talði.

Hymir kvað:
“Hverf þú til hjarðar, ef þú hug trúir, brjótr berg - Dana, beitur sökja.

21. Dró meir Hymir móðugr hvali einn á öngli upp senn tváa, en aft í skut Óðni sífjaðr
Véurr við vélar vað gerði sér.

22. Egnði á öngul, sór er öldum bergr, orms einbani uxa höfði; gein við agni, sú er goð fía, umgjörð neðan allra landa.

23. Dró darfliga dáðrakkr Þórr orm eitrfráan upp at borði; hamri kníði háfjall skarar ofljót ofan ulfs hnitbróður.

24. Hraungalkn hlumðu, en hölkn þutu, för in forna fold öll saman; sökkðisk síðan sá fiskr í mar.

17. Veorr said he wanted to row out onto the sea if the stubborn giant would give him bait.

Hymir said:
“Turn to the herd if you trust your mind, and seek bait, breaker of mountain-Danes.”

18. “This is what I think - I think it would be very easy for you to get crap from my oxen.”
The warrior went quickly to the wood where a black ox stood.

19. The thurs-slayer ripped from the bull the high two horned hill.

Hymir said:
“Your work seems much worse, keel-wielder, than when you were sitting.”

20. The lord of goats bade the kinsman of apes steer the roller-horse outward, but the ettin had little desire to row out any further.

21. Famous Hymir, moody, soon drew up two whales on a single hook. But in the aft of the craft, Odin’s kin, Veorr, craftily fixed his tackle.

22. The warden of men, bane of worms, fastened the ox-head to the hook. He who hates the god and lays below encircling all the lands of the earth gaped on the hook.

23. Daring and bold, Thor drew the venomous worm up onto the gunwale and struck the high head-hill of the hideous brother of the wolf from above with the hammer.

24. Fiends of the woods shrieked the crag hills roared, all together on the ancient earth. That fish sank back into the sea.
25. Öteitr jötunn, er aftur r eru,
svá at ár Hymir ekki mælti,
veifði hann reði veðrs annars til.

Hymir kvað: 26.
"Mundu um vinna verk halft við mik,
at þú heim hvali haf til bœjar
eða flotbrúsa festir okkarn."

27. Gekk Hlórriði, greip á stafni
vatt með austri upp lögfáki,
einn með árum ok með austskotu
bar hann til bœjar brimsvín jötuns,
ok holtriða hver í gegnum.

28. Ok enn jötunn um afrendi,
þrágrirn vanr, við Þór sennti,
kvaðat mann ramman, þótt róa kynni,
kröfturligan, nema kálk bryti.

29. En Hlórriði, er at höndum kom,
brátt lét bresta brattstein gleri,
sló hann sitjandi súlur í gögnum;
báru þó heilan fyr Hymi síðan.

30. Unz þat in fríða friðla kenndi
ástráð mikit,
"drep við haus Hymis, hann er hardari, kostmóðs jötuns,
kálki hverjum."

31. Harðr reis á kné
færðisk allra
heill var karli
en vínferill
hafra dróttinn,
f í ásmegin;
hjalmstofn ofan,
valr rifnaði.

32. "Mörg veit ek meti
er ek kálki sé
— karl orð um kvað:
"knákati ek segja
þú ert, ólør, of heitt.

The ettin was not glad. When they rowed back,
Hymir spoke not while at the oar. He turned
the steering board until the wind came the other way.

Hymir said:
"Would you share half the work with me?
Why don’t you haul the whales home to town,
or make fast our sailing-goat."

Hlorritha stepped out and grabbed the stem
and hoisted the water-horse up by the bilge.
Alone he hefted both boat and oars,
he carried that ocean-boar over wooded ridge
and hot spring to the ettin’s hall.

But the ettin, who was want to be obstinate
bandied words with Thor about strength. He said
that although a man could row, he was neither
strong nor mighty unless he could break the chalice.

When he had it in his hand he let fly
while still sitting. He shattered a stone wall
and drove it through a pillar,
yet they bore the chalice back to Hymir whole.

Then the lovely lady taught him
one good bit of advise that she knew.
“Strike Hymir in the skull
for this part of the ettin is stronger than any cup.”

The stern goat-lord rose on his knees
and strove with all his godly might.
The churl’s headpiece stayed whole,
but the round wine-cup was shattered asunder.

“A very dear thing is gone from me
now that my chalice lays in ruin before me
The karl said: “I can never again say:
“Brew me some beer!”
33.
Þat er til kostar, ef koma mættið út ýr óru
Tyr leitaði tysvar hrœra; stóð at hváru
ef koma mættið ölkjól hofi.”
hverr kyr fyrir.

34.
Fåðir Móða fekk á þremi
ok í gegnum sté golf niðr í sal;
hóf sér á höfuð upp hver Sifjar verr,
en á hælum hringar skullu.
The father of Mothi seized the rim and strode
across the floor down through the hall.
The husband of Sif heaved the boiler up
over his head and the ring handles rang on his heels.

35.
Fórut lengi,
aftr Óðins sonr einu sinni;
sá hann ór hreysum með Hymi austan
folkdrótt fara fjölhöfðaða.
They travelled far before they looked.
After Odin’s son was back on the road
he saw a many headed folk-host
fare from the crags with Hymir.

36.
Hóf hann sér af herðum hver standanda,
veifði hann Mjöllni morðgjörnum fram,
ok hraunhvala hann alla drap.
Standing he heaved the cauldron off his shoulders
and swung murderous Mjolnir before him and
dropped the entire throng of those whales-of-the-rocks.

37.
Fórut lengi, áðr lítta nam
hafr Hlórriða halfdauðr fyrrir;
var skær skökuls skakkr á beini,
en því inn lævísi Loki um olli.
They did not travel far before they saw
one of Hlorritha’s goats lying half dead,
the harness-horse was lame of leg,
and all because of baleful Loki.

38.
En ér heyrt hafið, hverr kann um þat
goðmálugra gørr at skilja? -
hver af hraunbúa hann laun um fekk,
er hann bæði galt börn sín fyrir.
You have heard, who know the lore of the Gods,
what happened next, how the crag dweller
was rewarded for that, when he payed
with both his children.

39.
Próttöflur kom á þing goða
ok hafið hver, þanns Hymir átti;
en véar hverjan vel skulu drekka
ölðr at Ægis eitt hörmeitið.
The mighty one came to the thing of the gods
with the cauldron that Hymir once owned,
and the Gods shall drink ale with Aegir.
Lay of Hymir: Notes

1. The Gods are gathered at a sacred feast and for sumble (ritual drinking) and engaged in divinatory magic using rune teinns. The runes on the lots would have been colored with blood from the animals sacrificed for the feast. The use of cauldrons is important in sacrifice; there are usually three; one to boil the meat of the sacrificial animal, one for its blood, and another for the mead or ale.

There is debate over the meaning of the phrase orkost hvera which is sometimes translated “a lack of kettles” and at others “an abundance of everything.” Since they were having a feast it is likely that they did have the kettles needed for boiling the meat and holding the blood, but lacked a kettle suitable for ale.

5. Eliveg is the venomous river that flowed from the well Hvergelmir into Ginnungagap where Aurgelmir, the first ettin, was created. See Gylf. 4.

Hymir is also mentioned in LS 34. In this instance, Hymir is said to be Tyr’s father, though in SK 9 it is said that he is Odin’s son. Variants on the traditions of the Gods are numerous and the stories varied according to the regions or even hearths over which they were told. Our purpose is to understand the logic of the Elder Edda, so we will accept the Eddic version. To reconcile the two traditions, we might say that Odin was the father of Hymir, so that Tyr was the grandson of Odin. The wagon by which Thor travels to Ettinghome when he has company on a journey is drawn by two goats. See also Gylf. 21. The word “fierce” is used to translate the word mothugr, the root of which is moth, cognate to our word mood. See FS note 21.

9. Thor and Tyr stood behind a pillar in the gable-hall on which the nine cauldrons were hung.

10. “Heavy laden” is a conjectural translation of sithbuinn.

30-31. In Germanic myth and folklore, giants are reputed to have skulls harder than stone, which is befitting of large crag-dwellers. Heroes descended from giants, such as Egil Skallagrimson, sometimes have especially hard heads.

32. The last line of this stanza is not clear.

37. The story of the laming of Thor’s goats is told in Gylf. 44.
Lokasenna

Ægir, er öðru nafni hét Gymir, hann hafði búit ásum öl, þá er hann hafði fengit ketil in mikla, sem nú er sagt. Til þeirar veizlu kom Óðinn ok Frigg kona hans. Þórr kom eigi, því at hann var í austre og. Sif var þar, kona Þórs, Bragi ok Iðunn kona hans. Týr var þar, hann var einhendr, - Fenrisúlfr sleit hönd af hánum þá er hann var bundinn. Þar var Njörðr ok kona hans Skaði, Freyr ok Freyja, Víðarr son Óðins; Loki var þar ok þjónustumenn Freys, Byggvir ok Beyla. Margt var þar ása ok álfa. Ægir átti tvá þjónustumenn, Fimafengr ok Eldir. Þar var lýsigull haft fyrir elts ljós. Sjálft barsk þar öl; þar var gríðastaðr mikill. Menn lofuðu mjök hversu göðir þjónustumenn Ægis váru. Loki mátti eigi heyra þat, ok drap hann Fimafeng. Þá skóku æsir skjöldu sína ok æpðu at Loka, ok eltu hann braut til skógar, en þeir fórut at drekka. Loki hvarf aftr ok hitti úti Eldi; Loki kvaddi hann:

1. “Segðu þat, Eldir, svá at þú einugi feti gangir framarr, hvat hér inni hafa at ölmálum sigtíva synir.”

Eldir kvað:

2. “Of vápn sín dæma ok um vígrisni sína sigtíva synir; ása ok álfa er hér inni eru, manngi er þér í orði vinr.”

Loki kvað:

3. “Inn skal ganga Ægis hallir í, á þat sumbl at sjá; jöll ok áfu fari ek ása sonum, ok blend ek þeim svá meini mjöð.”

Eldir kvað:

4. “Veiztu, ef þú inn gengr Ægis hallir í, á þat sumbl at sjá, hrópi ok rógi ef þú eyss á holl regin: á þér munu þau þerra þat.”

The Flying of Loki

Aegir, who was also called Gymir, brewed ale for the Gods when he acquired the great kettle that was just described. Odin and his wife Frigg came to the feast. Thor did not come because he was in the east. Thor’s wife Sif was there, along with Bragi and his wife, Idunna. Tyr, who was one-handed, was there. When the Fenrir wolf was bound it had bitten off Tyr’s hand. Njorth and his wife Skathí were there, and also Frey and Freya, and Odin’s son Vithar. Loki was there, and also Frey’s attendants, Byggvir and Beyla. There were many Ases and elves. Aegir had two attendants, Fimafeng and Eldir. They had gleaming gold for firelight and the ale served itself. It was a great ve. People praised highly the good attendants of Aegir and oft said how good they were. Loki could not stand hearing all this praise, so he slew Fimafeng. The Aesir shook their shields and began shouting at him. They drove him away into the woods and went back to drinking. Loki turned back and hit upon Eldir and spoke to him:

1. “Tell me Eldir, before you walk a single step away, what the gods here within are saying over their ale.”

Eldir said:

2. “The sons of Victory-Tivar speak of their weapons and their deeds in war. From the Ases and elves within, there are few kind words for you.”

Loki said:

3. “I shall go in to Aegir’s hall to see that sumble. Hate and evil, I will bring to the sons of Ases, and blend this venom into their mead.”

Eldir said:

4. “Bear in mind that if you go into Aegir’s hall to see the sumble, and bespatter the Regin in the hall with reproach and abuse, they will smear it on you.”
Loki kvað:
5. “Veiztu þat, Eldir, ef vit einir skulum sáryrðum sakask,
audiðr verða mun ek í andsvörum, ef þú mælir til mart.”

Síðan gekk Loki inn í höllina. En er þeir sá, er fyrir váru, hvert inn var kominn, þögnuðu þeir allir.

Loki kvað:
6. “Þyrstr ek komþessar hallar til, Loptr, um langan veg,
ásu at biðja at mér eðl afum mæran drykk mjaðar.”

7. “Hví þegið ér svá, þrungin goð,
at þér mæla né meguð?
Sessa ok staði velið mér sumblati at,
eda heitið mik héðan.”

Bragi kvað:
8. “Sessa ok staði velja þér suml at
æsir aldregi,
þvát æsir vitu hveim þeir alda skulu
gambansumbl um geta.”

Loki kvað:
9. “Mantu þat, Óðinn, er vit í árdaga
blendum blóði saman?
Ölvi bergja lézktu eigi mundu,
nema okkr væri báðum borit.”

Óðinn kvað:
10. “Rístu þá, Viðarr, ok lát úlfís fóður sitja sumblati at,
síðr oss Loki kveði lastastöfum
Ægis höllu í.”

Þá stóð Viðarr upp ok skenkti Loka, en áðr hann drykki, kvaddi hann ásuna:
11. “Heilir æsir, heilar ánynjur
ok öll ginnheilög goð
nema sá einn áss er innar sitr,
Bragi, bekkjum á.”

Loki said:
5. “Bear in mind Eldir,
that if we should bandy words,
I will have cogent retorts
when you talk too much.”

Then Loki strode into the hall. When the Gods saw who stood before them, they fell silent.

Loki said:
6. “I, Lopt, come thirsty to this hall from a long trip
and bid the Aesir grant me
one more drink of mead.”

7. “Why be so quiet, stifled God,
that you are unable to speak?
Choose a place and seat for me
at the sumble, or ask me to leave.”

Bragi said:
8. “The Aesir will never choose you
a place and a seat at the sumble,
for they know which wights
they ought to have at fair feasts.”

Loki said:
9. “Remember this Odin, that we blended
our blood together in days of yore.
You said you would not taste ale,
unless it were born to both of us.”

Odin said:
10. “Rise Vithar, and let the wolf’s father
sit at the sumble,
lest Loki speak flying staves
to us in Aegir’s hall.”

Then Vithar stood up and filled Loki’s cup.
Before drinking Loki spoke:
11. “Hail the Aesir! Hail the Asynjur,
and all the Ginn-Holy Gods,
except for this one Ase, Bragi,
who sits inside on this bench.”
Bragi kvað:
12.
"Mar ok mæki gef ek þér míns féar,
ok bettir þér svá baugi Bragi,
 síðr þú ásum öfund um gjaldir;
grem þú eigi goð at þér!"

Loki kvað:
13.
"Jós ok armbauga mundu æ vera
beggja vanr, Bragi;
ása ok álfa, er hér inni eru,
þú ert við víg varastr
ok skjarrastr við skot."

Bragi kvað:
14.
"Veit ek, ef fyr útan værak, svá sem fyr innan emk
Ægis höll um kominn,
höfuð þitt bera ek í hendi mér;
lykak þér þat fyr lygi."

Loki kvað:
15.
"Snjallr ertu í sessi, skalattu svá gera,
Bragi bekkskrautuðr!
vega þú gakk, ef þú vreiðr séir,
hyggsk vætr hvatr fyrir."

Iðunn kvað:
16.
"Bið ek, Bragi, barna síjfjar duga
ok allra óskmaga,
at þú Loka kveðira lastastöfum
Ægis höllu í."

Loki kvað:
17.
"Þegi þú, Íðunn, þik kveð ek allra kvenna
vergjarnasta vera,
síþtu arma þína lagðir ítrþvegna
um þinn bróðurbana."

Iðunn kvað:
18.
"Loka ek kveðka lastastöfum
Ægis höllu í;
Braga ek kyrri þjóðreifan,
vilkat ek at ì vreiðir vegizk."

Bragi said:
12.
“I give you my sword and my horse, my wealth,
and bid you have Bragi’s arm ring,
lest you deal bale to the Ases.
Do not anger the Gods with you!”

Loki said:
13.
“You shall always be lacking
in both horse and arm-ring, Bragi,
for of all the Ases and elves, who are
gathered herein, you are the most wary in war,
and the shyest in shooting.”

Bragi said:
14.
“I know that if I was outside,
just as I am now inside Aegir’s hall,
I would have your head in my hand.
I would spare you little for your lies.”

Loki said:
15.
“You are clever on the bench, but won’t do anything.
Bragi, you are a bench ornament.
If you are so offended, and fancy yourself so bold,
then come outside and fight!”

Idunna spoke:
16.
“I bid you think of our children, Bragi,
of all our dear sons,
and not to bandy bale staves
with Loki in Aegir’s hall.”

Loki said:
17.
“Silence Idunna! I say that of all wives,
you are the most wanton.
Clean-washed, you wrapped your arms
about your brother’s slayer.”

Idunna said:
18.
“I will not bandy bale staves with Loki
in Aegir’s hall. I calm Bragi,
who is drunk on beer, so that you two
do not do battle in rage.”
Gefjun kvað:
19.
“Hví it æsir tveir skuluð inni hér
sáryðum sakask?
Lofski þat veit, at hann leikinn er
ok hann fjörg òll fíá.”

Loki kvað:
20.
“Þegi þú, Gefjun, þess mun ek nú geta,
er þik glapði at geði:
sveinn inn hvíti, er þér sigli gaf
ok þú lagðir lær yfir.”

Óðinn kvað:
21.
“Ærr ertu, Loki, ok örviti,
er þú fer þér Gefjun at greimi,
því at aldar órlög hygg ek, at hon öll um viti
jafngörla sem ek.”

Loki kvað:
22.
“Þegi þú, Óðinn, þú kunnir aldregi
dela víg með verum;
oft þú gaft þeim er þú gefa skyldira,
inum slævurum, sigr.”

Óðinn kvað:
23.
“Veiztu, ef ek gaf þeim er ek gefa né skylda,
inum slævurom, sigr,
átta vetrvaru fyr jörð neðan
kýr mólkandi ok kona,
ok hefr þú þar börn borit,
ok hugða ek þat args aðal.”

Loki kvað:
24.
“En þik síða kóðu Sámseyu í,
ok draptu á vétt sem völur,
vitka líki fórtu verþjóð yfir,
ok hugða ek þat args aðal.”

Frigg kvað:
25.
“Órlögum ykkrum skylíð aldregi
segja seggum frá,
hvat it æsir tveir drýgðuð í árdaga;
firrisk æ forn rök firar.”

Gefjon said:
19.
“Why are you two Aesir attacking one another
with wounding words.
Loki knows he is a joker
and that he loathes the Gods.”

Loki said:
20.
“Silence Gefjon! Now I shall tell,
who beguiled you to merriment.
The white youth gave you a ring
and you laid your thighs over him.”

Odin said:
21.
“You are mad Loki, out of your mind,
to provoke Gefjon’s anger,
for I think she knows the orlog of all men,
just as well as I.”

Loki said:
22.
“Silence Odin! You never could
deal victory to men.
Often you did not grant victory to him
whom you should have, but to duller men.”

Odin said:
23.
“If I have given victory to those to whom
I should not have, to lesser men,
you know that for eight winters
you were under the earth giving milk as a cow
or a woman, and you bore babies.
I think that these were womanish ways.”

Loki said:
24.
“But they say you worked seith magic on Sam’s Isle,
that you plied magic like a volva,
that you fared among men in the form of a vitki.
I think that those were womanish ways.”

Frigg said:
25.
“You two should never tell tales of your orlog,
of the deeds you two Aes
did in days of yore, those deeds of old
that you keep hidden.”
Loki kvað: 
26. 
“Þegi þú, Frigg, þú ert fjörgyns mær
ok hefr æ vergjörn verit,
er þá Véa ok Vilja lêztu þér, Viðris kvæn,
báða í baðm um tekit.”

Frigg kvað: 
27. 
“Veiztu, ef ek inni ættakÆgis höllum i
Baldri líkan bur,
út þú né kvæmirfrá ása sonum,
ok væri þá at þér vreiðum vegit.”

Loki kvað: 
28. 
“Enn vill þú, Frigg, at ek fleiri telja
mína meinstafi;
ek því réði, er þú riða sérat
síðan Baldr at sölum.”

Freyja kvað: 
29. 
“Ærr ertu, Loki, er þú yðra telr
ljóta leiðstafi;
örlög Frigg hygg ek at öll viti,
þótt hon sjálfgi segi.”

Loki kvað: 
30. 
“Þegi þú, Freyja, þik kann ek fullgörva;
era þér vamma vant;
ása ok álfa, er hér inni eru,
hverr hefir þinn hór verit.”

Freyja kvað: 
31. 
“Flá er þér tunga, hygg ek at þér fremr myni
ógott um gala;
reiðir ro þér æsir ok ásynjur,
hryggr muntu heim fara.”

Loki kvað: 
32. 
“Þegi þú, Freyja, þú ert fordæða
ok meini blandin mjök,
síz þik at bræðr þínnum stóðu blíð regin,
ok myndir þú þá, Freyja, frata.”

Loki said: 
26. 
“Silence Frigg! You are Fjorgyn’s daughter
and have always been the most lustful; ever since
the time that you, as Vithri’s wife did not hinder
Vili and Ve, but took them both to your bosom.”

Frigg said: 
27. 
“You know that if I had a son like Baldr
in Aegir’s hall, you would not leave
the sons of Ases,
before he had battled you in rage.”

Loki said: 
28. 
“If you like, Frigg, I shall speak
more of my harm-staves.
I planned it such that you
do not ride behind Baldr to the halls.”

Freyja spoke: 
29. 
“You are raving Loki,
telling twisted bale staves.
I think that Frigg knows all orlog,
though she does not say so herself.”

Loki said: 
30. 
“Silence Freya! I know well that you
are not lacking faults.
Of the Ases and elves who sit herein,
to each you have been a whore.”

Freyja said: 
31. 
“Your tongue is false. I think that you
shall sing some evil to yourself.
The Aesir and the Asynjur are wroth with you.
You will fare home grieving.”

Loki said: 
32. 
“Shut up Freya! You are a fordaetha
and have done much evil. Do you remember,
Freya, how the blithe Regin caught you,
in bed with your brother, when you farted?”
Njörðr kvað:
33.
“Þat er válítit, þótt sér varðir vers fái, hós eða hvárs;
hitt er undr, er áss ragr er hér inn of kominn,
ok hefir sá bôrn of borit.”

Loki kvað:
34.
“Þegi þú, Njörðr, þú vart austr heðan
gíls um sendr at goðum;
Hymis meyjar hófðu þik at hlandtrogi
ok þér i munn migu.”

Njörðr kvað:
35.
“Sú erumk líkn, er ek vark langt heðan
gist um sendr at goðum,
þá ek mög gat, þann er mangi fiár,
ok þikkir sá ása jaðarr.”

Loki kvað:
36.
“Hættu nú, Njörðr, haf þú á hófi þik!
munka ek því leyna lengr:
við systur þinni gaztu slikan mög,
ok era þó vánu verr.”

Týr kvað:
37.
“Freyr er beztr allra ballriða
ása görðum í;
mey hann né grætir né manns konu,
ok leysir ór höptum hvern.”

Loki kvað:
38.
“Þegi þú, Týr, þú kunnir aldregi
bera tílt með tveim;
handar innar hægri mun ek hinnar geta,
er þér sleit Fenrir frá.”

Týr kvað:
39.
“Handar em ek vanr, en þú hróðsvitnis;
böl er beggja þrá;
úlfgi hefir ok vel, er í böndum skal
bíða ragnarókrs.”

Njorth said:
33.
“It is no crime that a woman have
both a husband and lover.
It is, however, a scandal that the womanish Ase
who came here has born babies.”

Loki Said:
34.
“Silence Njorth! You were sent from the east
as a hostage to the Gods.
The maids of Hymir had you for a piss-hole,
and made water in your mouth.”

Njorth said:
35.
“I had my consolation: long ago
I was sent as a hostage to the Gods,
and since have begotten a son
whom no one hates, and seems the best of Gods.”

Loki said:
36.
“Stop it Njorth! Show some moderation!
I will no longer hide
that you begot such a son with your sister.
He was worse than expected.”

Tyr spoke:
37.
“Frey is the best of all
the bold riders in Asgard.
He brings no sorrow to maids or men’s wives,
and loosens each from fetters.”

Loki said:
38.
“Silence Tyr! You never could bring
justice between two men.
I also know that Fenrir
chewed off your right hand.”

Tyr said:
39.
“I may be missing a hand,
but you lost Hrothvitnir,
who is an evil pain to us both,
that wolf who bides Ragnarok in bonds.”
Loki kvað: 40. “Þegi þú, Týr, þat varð þinni konu, at hon átti mög við mér; òln né penning hafðir þú þess aldregi vanréttis, vesall.”

Freyr kvað: 41. “Úlfr sé ek liggja árósi fyrir, unz rjúfask regin; því mundu næst, nema þú nú þegir, bundinn, bölvasmiðr!”

Loki kvað: 42. “Gulli keyptaléztu Gymis dóttur ok seldir þitt svá sverð; en er Muspells synir ríða Myrkvið yfir, veizta þú þá, vesall, hvé þú vegr.”

Byggvir kvað: 43. “Veiztu, ef ek eðli ættaksem Ingunar-Freyr, ok svá sælligt setr, mergi smæra mölda ek þá meinkráku ok lemða alla í liðu.”

Loki kvað: 44. “Hvat er þat it litla er ek þat löggra sék, ok snapvíst snapir? at eyrum Freys mundu æ vera ok und kvernum klaka.”

Byggvir kvað: 45. “Byggvir ek heiti, en mik bráðan kveða god òll ok gumar; því em ek hér hróðugr, at drekka Hrofts megir allir öl saman.”

Loki kvað: 46. “Þegi þú, Byggvir, þú kunnir aldregi deila með mönnum mat; ok þik í flets strái finna né máttu, þá er vágu verar.”

Loki said: 40. “Silence Tyr! It happens that your wife bore a son by me. You have never gotten even a penny, you wretch, for that injury.”

Frey said: 41. “I see a wolf lying before the mouth of a river until the ruin of the Regin. Unless you shut up, you will next be bound, you forger of bale.”

Loki said: 42. “You bought Gymir’s daughter with gold and so sold your sword. But when the sons of Muspell ride through Mirkwood, wretch, you will not know how to fight.”

Byggvir said: 43. “If I had the lineage of Ingunar-Frey, and such a blessed seat, I would crush the marrow of this evil crow and smash all his limbs.”

Loki said: 44. “Who is this tiny thing that crouches abjectly and snuffles like a dog? You shall always be about Frey’s ears and chattering at the mills.”

Byggvir spoke: 45. “I am called Byggvir, and the Gods and men say I am fast. I am triumphant here, with the sons of Hropt gathered together drinking ale.”

Loki said: 46. “Silence Byggvir! You never could deal meat to men. Nor could they find you in the straw of the floor when men waged war.”
Heimdallr kvað:
47.
“Ólr ertu, Loki, svá at þú ert örviti,
-hví né lezkaðu, Loki? -
því at ofdrykka veldr alda hveim,
er sína mælgi né manat.”

Loki kvað:
48.
“Þegi þú, Heimdallr, þér var í árdaga
it ljóta líf um lagit:
örgu baki þú munt æ vera
ok vaka vörðr goða.”

Skaði kvað:
49.
“Létt er þér, Loki; munattu lengi svá
leika lausum hala,
því at þik á hjörvi skulu ins hrímkalda magar
görnum binda goð.”

Loki kvað:
50.
“Veiztu, ef mik á hjörvi skulu ens hrímkalda magar
görnum binda goð,
fyrstr ok efstr var ek at fjörlagi,
þars vér á Þjaza þrifum.”

Skaði kvað:
51.
“Veiztu, ef fyrstr ok efstr vartu at fjörlagi,
þá er ér á Þjaza þrifuð
frá mínun véum ok vöngum skulu
þér æ köld ráð koma.”

Loki kvað:
52.
“Léttari í málum vartu við Laufeyjar son,
þá er þú létz mér á beð þinn boði;
getit verðr oss slíks, ef vér göra skulum
telja vömmin vár.”

Þá gekk Sif fram ok byrlaði Loka í hrímkálki mjöð ok
mælti:
53.
“Heill ver þú nú, Loki, ok tak við hrímkálki
fullum fors mjaðar,
heldr þú hana eina látir með ása sonum
vamalauða vera.”

Heimdall said:
47.
“Loki is drunk and out of his mind. Why not leave him alone? Too much drink will rule any man such that he minds not his speech.”

Loki said:
48.
“Silence Heimdall! In days of yore, a hateful life was allotted you. With a wet back you shall ever stay awake as the watchman of the Gods.”

Skathi said:
49.
“You are happy now Loki, but your tail will not wag so loosely for long, for the Gods will bind you to a sword with the rime-cold guts of your son.”

Loki said:
50.
“Though the Gods will bind me to a sword with the rime-cold guts of my son, know that I was first and foremost among the slaughter when we seized Thiazi.”

Skathi said:
51.
“Though you were first and foremost among the gods at the slaughter when you took Thiazi, know that you will have cold rede from my vés and fields.”

Loki said:
52.
“You were lighter when with Laufey’s son, when you bade me share your bed. Such tales are told when we reveal our blemishes.”

Then Sif walked forward and poured mead for Loki into a rimy cup and said:
53.
“We hail you Loki! Take this goblet full of mead, and let myself alone among the Ases, remain without stain.”
Hann tók við horni ok drakk af:
54.
“Ein þú værir, ef þú svá værir,
vör ok gróm at veri;
einn ek veit, svá at ek vita þíkkjumk,
hór ok af Hlórriða,
ok var þat sát inn lævísi Loki.”

Beyla kvað:
55.
“Fjöll öll skjálfa; hygg ek á för vera
heiman Hlórriða;
han raðr ró þeim er raðir hér
göð öll ok guma.”

Loki kvað:
56.
“Þegi þú, Beyla, þú ert Byggvis kvæn
ok meini blandinn mjök;
ókynjan meira koma med ása sonum;
öll ertu, deigja, dritin.”

Þó kom Þórr at ok kvað:
57.
“Þegi þú, rög vætr, þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, málfyrnema:
herða klett drep ek þér hálsi af,
ok verðr þá þínú fjörvi um farit.”

Loki kvað:
58.
“Jarðar burr er hér nú inn kominn;
hví þrasir þú svá, Þórr?
en þá þórir þú ekki er þú skalt við úlfinn vega,
ok svelgr hann allan Sigfóður.”

Þórr kvað:
59.
“Þegi þú, rög vætr, þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,
Mjöllnir, málfyrnema:
upp ek þér verp ok á austvega,
síðan þík mangi sér.”

Loki kvað:
60.
“Austrfórum þínú skaltu aldregi
segja seggjum frá,
síz í hanska þumlungi þúkóðir þú, einheri,
ok þóttiska þú þá Þórr vera.”

Loki took the horn and drank:
54.
“You would be the one if you were careful
and true to your husband.
But I know of one, he I know well,
who had Hlorritha’s wife for a whore,
and that was hateful Loki.”

Beyla said:
55.
“All the fells shiver.
I think Hlorritha is on the way home.
He will bring to rest
he who slanders the Gods and heroes.”

Loki said:
56.
“Silence Beyla! You are Byggvir’s woman
and stir much evil, and are one
of the more shamed to come among the Gods.
You are all damp and dirty.”

Then Thor came and said:
57.
“Shut up you wretched wight, or my mighty hammer
Mjolnir will take away your talk.
I will drop your shoulder-cliff out from under
your neck and send you to your doom.”

Loki said:
58.
“Son of Jorth, who has just now arrived!
Why are you so feisty Thor?
You won’t be so feisty when you fight the wolf, Thor,
and he swallows Victory-Father whole.”

Thor spoke:
59.
“Shut up you wretched wight! My hammer of might,
Mjolnir will take away your talk.
I will cast you into the east
where no one will ever see you again!”

Loki said:
60.
“You should never tell to warriors of your voyage
to the east. There you crouched, cowering,
in the thumb of a glove, oh champion!
You did not seem like Thor then.”
Þórr kvað:  
61.  
“Þegi þú, rög vættr, þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,  
    Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema:  
    hendi inni hægri drep ek þik Hrungnis bana,  
    svá at þér brotnar beina hvat.”

Loki kvað:  
62.  
“Lifa ætla ek mér langan aldr,  
    þóttú hætir hamri mér;  
    skarpar álir þóttu þér Skrýmis vera,  
    ok máttira þú þá nesti ná,  
    ok svaltz þú þá hungri heill.”

Þórr kvað:  
63.  
“Þegi þú, rög vættr, þér skal minn þrúðhamarr,  
    Mjöllnir, mál fyrnema:  
    Hrungnis bani mun þér í hel koma  
    fyr nágrindr neðan.”

Loki kvað:  
64.  
“Kvað ek fyr ásum, kvað ek fyr ása sonum,  
    þaz mik hvatti hugr,  
    en fyr þér einum mun ek út ganga,  
    þvi at ek veit at þú vegr.”

65.  
“Ól görðir þú, Ægir, en þú aldri munt  
    síðan sumbl um gera;  
    eiga þín öll, er hér inni er,  
    leiki yfir logi,  
    ok brenni þér á baki.”

En eftir þetta falst Loki í Fránangrsforsi í lax líki. Þar tóku æsir hann. Hann var bundinn með þörmum sonar síns Vála, en Narfi sonnr hans varð at vargi. Skaði tók eitorm ok festi upp yfir annlit Loka; draup þar ór eitir. Sigyn kona Loka sat þar ok helt munnaug undir eitrit. En er munnaugin var full, bar hón út eitir; en meðan draup eitrit á Loka. Þá kippðist hann svá hart við, at þaðan af skalf jórð öll; þat eru nú kallaðir landsskjálftar.

After that, Loki concealed himself in Frangang falls in the shape of a salmon. There the Gods took him. He was bound with the bowels of his son Narfi, but his son Vali turned into a wolf. Skathi took a viper and fastened it over Loki’s face. Venom dripped down. Sigyn, Loki’s wife, sat there and held a basin under the poison. When the basin was full, she bore the poison away, venom dropped on him and he struggled so hard that the entire earth shook. These are what men now call earthquakes.
The Flyting of Loki: Notes

1. Some have suggested that this poem is late and that the bitter exchanges between the Gods and Loki are mainly lies and the poem was a Christian effort at defamation and blasphemy. There is no real evidence to support this view, and much of the lore revealed in the flyting is corroborated by other Eddic lore. Many scholars would have us believe that much Eddic lore is actually Christian in origin based on a few shallow parallels between Christian and Eddic myth. That some mixing did occur in the late viking age is likely, and Christian interpretations can be seen in Snorri Sturluson’s Younger Edda, but the elder poems are clearly of heathen origin. There are no lies in the Elder Edda, only our own inability to understand the lore. Of course there were many regional variations on the myths and their meanings, and in their contexts, these were true as well. It is our task first to understand the Eddic myths on their own terms, and then to realize the truths that are discovered in our own souls, and then to apply these truths to our daily lives.

9. The rite of blending blood is described Saxo Grammaticus’ account of Hadingus in which an earthen chamber is dug and the blood of the parties is mingled on the ground. The two emerge reborn as brothers and the earthen chamber may be seen as symbolizing the womb of mother earth.

11. Lines 3 and 4 may be taken as a general invocation of the Aesir.

16. Idunna is the Goddess who holds the apples that sustain the youth and vigor of the Gods.

Bale staves are curses.

17. See chapter 3 for the mythic significance of a union between a maid and her brother’s slayer in the spring drama myths.

20 In the Saga of Bosi and Heraud, Bosi gives a ring to a woman before seducing her on three different occasions.

22. Odin takes the best at the peak of their abilities for service in Valhalla. While on Midgard they are often confronted with great adversity and losses in order that they will be strengthened.

23. Ergi refers to shameful sexual acts, especially passive sodomy by a male.

24. Odin learned Seith from Freya. See YS.

25. Frigg here confirms the accusations of both Loki and Odin.

26. On the meaning of brothers marrying the same woman in turn, see chapter 3.

28. Loki engineered the death of Frigg and Odin’s son Baldr. See BD.

32. Among the Vanir, marriage between brother and sister was permitted, though it was forbidden to all others.

48. Heimdall waits for Ragnarok in a hall before the rainbow bridge Bifrost in order to warn the Gods of the approach of the hosts of Hel and Muspell.

49. Skathi’s father Thiazi was destroyed by the wiles of Loki. See SKd 1. It was Skathi who fastened the venomous snake over Loki’s face when he was bound.

60. On Thor’s voyage to Utgarth, see SKd 45.
Þrymskviða

1. Reiðr var þá Vingbórr er hann vaknaði ok sínshamars um saknati, skegg nam at hrista, skör nam at dýja, réð Jarðar burr um at þreifask.

2. Ok hann þat orða alls fyrst um kvað: “Heyrðu nú, Loki, hvat ek nú mæli er eigi veit Jarðar hvergi né upphimins: áss er stolinn hamri”.

Freyja kvað:

4. “Þó munda ek gefa þérþótt ór gulli væri ok þó selja, at væri ór silfri.”

5. Fló þá Loki, - fjatrhamr dunði, - unz fyr útan kom ása garða ok fyr innan kom jótna heima.

6. Þrymr sat á haugi, þursa dróttinn, greyjum sínum gullbónd snøri ok mörum sínum mön jafnaði.

Þrymr kvað:


Loki kvað:

8. “Illt er með ásum, illt er með álhum; hefr þú Hlórriða hamar um folginn?”

Þrymr kvað:

8. “Ek hefu Hlórriða. hamar um fólginng áta röstum fyr jórð neðan, hann engi maðr aftir um heimtir nema færi mér Freyju at kvæn.”

Lay of Thrym

1. Ving-Thor was wroth. On waking his hammer was gone. His beard shook and his hair tossed. Jorth’s son began groping about.

2. These words he spoke first: “Listen up Loki, to what I’m going to tell you. No one yet knows anywhere on heaven or earth that this Ase’s hammer has been stolen.”

3. They went to Freya’s fair home: and first spoke to her with these words: “Would you loan me your feather skin, Freya, so that I might find my hammer.”

Freyja said:

4. “I would give it to you even if it were made of gold or silver.”

5. Then the feather skin whirred and Loki flew until he got out of Asgard and came to Ettinhome.

6. Thrym the lord of thurses sat on a howe twisting golden collars for his grey dogs and evened the manes of his horses.

Thrym said:

7. “How fare the Aesir? How fare the elves? Why have you come to Ettinhome?”

Loki said:

8. “Ill fare the Aesir, ill fare the elves. Have you hidden the hammer of Hlorritha?”

Thrym said:

8. “I have hidden Hlorritha’s hammer eight leagues beneath the earth. No one shall get it back, unless he brings me Freya as queen.”
9. Fló þá Loki, - fjatrhamr dundi, -
unz fyr útan kom jötna heima
ok fyr innan kom ása garða.
Mætti hann Bór miðra garða
ok þat hann orða alls fyrist um kvað:

10. “Hefir þú erindi? sem erfiði?
Segðu á lofti lóng tíøendi,
oft sitjanda sögur um fallask
ok liggjandi lygi um bellir.”

Loki kvað:
11. “Hef ek erfiði ok erendi.
Þrymr hefir þinn hamar, þursa dróttinn,
hann engi maðr aft um heimtír
nema hánum færi Freyju at kván.

12. Ganga þeir fagra Freyju at hitta
ok hann þat orða alls fyrist um kvað:
“Bittu þik, Freyja, brúðar líni;
vit skulum aka tvau í Jötunheim.”

13. Reið varð þá Freyja ok fnasaði,
allr ása salr undir bifðisk,
stök þat ít mikla men Brísinga:
“Mik veiztu verða vergjarnasta
ef ek ek með þér í Jötunheim.”

14. Senn váru æsir allir á þingi
ok ásynjur allar á málí
ok um þat réðu ríkar tívar
hvé þeir Hlórríða hamar um sætti.

15. Þá kvað þat Heimdallr, hvítastr ása,
vissi hann vel fram sem vanir aðrir:
“Bindum vör Þór þá
hafi hann ít mikla men Brísinga.

16. Látum und honum hrynya lukla
ok kvenváðir um kné falla
en á brjósti breiða steina
ok hagliga um hófuð typpum.”

9. The feather skin whirred and Loki Flew
until he got out of Ettinhome
and into Asgard.
He met Thor in Midgard
who first spoke to him with these words.

10. “Have you tidings as well as trouble?
Tell me, while still in the air,
the lengthy news. While sitting a story may fail,
while lying it may become a lie.”

Loki said:
11. “I have trouble and tidings.
Thrym the lord of thurses has your hammer,
and no one can get it back
unless he brings him Freya as a bride.”

12. They went to the fair hall of Freya
and Thor first spoke these words:
“Freya, don bridal linen,
for together we shall drive to Ettinhome.”

13. Freya was wroth and snorted with rage.
The whole hall of the Ases trembled,
and the great Brising necklace was broken asunder.
“I will be thought a whore
if I go to Ettinhome with you.”

14. Then all the Aesir and Asynjur
fared to thing for moot.
The ruling Tivar reded
on how to get Hlorritha’s hammer back.

15. Heimdall, the whitest of Ases,
who, like a Vane, could see far ahead, spoke:
“Let us gird Thor in bridal linen
and in the great Brising necklace.”

16. “Let keys dangle from him
and let women’s weeds fall about his knees
let bridal stones bedeck his breast
and his head be properly hooded.”
17. Þá kvað þat Þór
"Mik munu æsir
ef ek bindask læt
brúðugr áss:
argan kalla
brúðar líni."
18. Þá kvað þat Loki
Þegi þú, Þórr,
Þegar munu jötnar
þén þú þinn hamar
brúðar líni.
19. Bundu þeir Þór þá
ok inu mikla
létu und hánun
ok kvenváðir
en á brjóstí
ok hagliga
brúðar líni
meni Brísinga,
hrynja lukla
um kné falla
breiða steina
um hófuð typpðu.
20. Þá kvað Loki Laufeyjar sonr:
"Mun ek ok með þér ambótt vera,
þit skulum aka tvær í Jötunheima."
21. Senn váru hafrar
skyndir at sköklum,
Björg brotnuðu,
ók Óðins sonr
heim um reknir,
skyldu vel rena.
brann jörð loga,
i Jötunheima.
22. Þá kvað þat Þrymr,
"Standið upp, jötnar,
nú færa mér
Njarðar dóttur
þursa dróttinn:
ok straißi bekki,
fjöld á ek meiðma,
einnar mér Freyju
ór Nóatúnúm.
23. Ganga hér at garði
öxn alsvarðir
fjöld á ek meðna,
einnar mér Freyju
þriðar dróttin:
gullhýrnðar kýr,
jöttni at ganni;
fjöld ða ek menja,
ávant þykir."
24. Var þar at kveldi
ok fyr jötna
einn át oxa
krásir allar
drakk Sifjar verr
um komit snemma
öl fram borit;
þær er konur skyldu,
sáld þrjú mjöðar.
17. Thor, the mighty Ase, spoke:
“The Aesir will call me a queer if I allow
myself to be dressed in bridal linen.”
18. Then spoke Loki, Laufey’s son:
“Silence Thor! Say no more!
Unless you get your hammer back,
the ettins will soon dwell in Asgard.”
19. They clothed Thor in bridal linen
and the great brising necklace
and let keys dangle on him.
Women’s wear fell about his knees,
bridal stones were on his breast,
and they fit his head with a hood.
20. Then spoke Loki Laufey’s son:
“I will go with you and be the handmaid.
The two of us shall drive to Ettinhome.”
21. Soon the goats were driven home.
They hastened to the harness and ran well.
The mountains broke and flames scorched the earth
as Odin’s son fared into Ettinhome.
22. Then spoke Thrym, lord of thurses:
“Stand up you ettins, and strew the benches with straw!
Now they are bringing Freya, daughter of Njorth
of Noatun here to me as a bride.”
23. “Golden horned cows and oxen all ablack
graze here in the garth for the pleasure of ettins.
I own many treasures and have many jewels.
It seems I lack Freya alone.”
24. Evening soon came and ale
was born to the ettins.
The husband of Sif ate one ox, eight salmon,
and all the womens’ delicacies,
and drank three measures of mead.
25. Þá kvat þat Þrymr, þursa dróttinn:  þursa dróttinn:  
“Hvar sáttu brúðir  bíta hvassara?  bíta hvassara?  
Sáka ek brúðir  bíta breiðara  bíta breiðara  
né inn meira mjöð  mey um drekka.”  mey um drekka.”

26. Sat in alsnotra  ambótt fýr  
er orð um fann  við jötns máli:  
“Át vætr Freyja  átta nóttum,  
svá var hon öðfús  í Jötunheima.”

27. Laut und línu,  lysti at kyssa,  
en hann útan stökk  endlangan sal:  
“Hví eru öndótt augu Freyju?  
Þykki mér ör augum  eldri um brenna.”

28. Sat in alsnotra  ambótt fýr  
er orð um fann  við jötns máli:  
“Svaf vætr Freyja  átta nóttum,  
svá var hon öðfús  í Jötunheima.”

29. Inn kom in arma  jötna systir,  
hin er brúðféar  bíðja þorði:  
“Láttu þér af höndum  hringa rauða,  
ef þú öðlask vill  ástir mínar,  
ástir mínar,  allta hylly.”

30. Þá kvað þat Þrymr,  þursa dróttinn:  
“Berið inn hamar  brúði at vígja,  
lekkid Mjöllinni  í meyjar kné,  
vígið okkr saman.  Várar hendri.”

31. Hló Hlórriða  hugr í brjósti  
er harðhugaðr  hamar um þekkði;  
Þrym drap hann fyrstan, þursa dróttin,  
ok ætt jötnuns  alla lamði.

32. Drap hann ina öldnu  jötna sysstr,  
hin er brúðféar  um beðið hafði,  
hon skell um hlaut  fyr skillinga,  
en högg hamars  fyr hringa fjöldi.  
Svá kom Óðins sonr  endri at hamri.

25. Then spoke Thrym, lord of thurses:  
“Where have you ever seen a bride bite more sharply?  
I have not seen a bride bite as broadly  
or drink as much mead.”

26. The knowing handmaid sat there  
and found words to speak to the ettin:  
“Freya fasted eight nights,  
so madly eager was she for Ettinhome.”

27. He pulled the linen, lusting for kissing,  
but sprang back to the other end of the hall.  
“How terrible are Freya’s eyes!  
Fire seems to burn in those eyes.”

28. The brides-maid sat, all-knowing,  
and found words to speak to the ettin:  
“Freya has not slept at all in eight nights,  
so madly eager she was for Ettinhome.”

29. The ettin’s baleful sister stepped in,  
daring to ask for bridal gifts:  
“Take from your hand those red rings,  
if you want to have my love,  
my love and all my friendship.”

30. Then Thrym, lord of thurses spoke:  
“Bring the hammer to hallow the bride!”  
He laid Mjolnir on the bride’s knee:  
“Hallow the two of us together by the hand of Var!”

31. Hard-minded Hlorritha laughed in his breast  
when he saw the hammer.  
First he slew Thrym, lord of thurses,  
and then crushed the ettin’s kin.

32. Then he smote the old sister of the ettins,  
who had demanded bridal gifts.  
She received a blow instead of schillings,  
a stroke of the hammer instead of a heap of rings.  
And so Odin’s son got his hammer back.
Lay of Thrym: Notes

4. Loki typically travels to Ettinhome by means of Freya’s falcon shape (ON “hamr”). In the Younger Edda Loki uses borrows Frigg’s hawk shape to fly to Geirroth’s hall and uses Freya’s falcon shape to travel to Thiazi’s garth. By this shape Loki fares forth into Ettinhome. Thor is not versed in this sort of magic.

13. The Brisingamen is the prized necklace of Freya that she acquired from the four dwarves who fashioned it. She paid for it by spending a night with each of them. It was later stolen by Loki and retrieved by Heimdall.

23. In the Gautrek’s Saga it is related that the farmer Rennir had the horns of his favorite ox gilt with gold and silver.

30. The hammer was used to hallow brides in heathen marriage ceremonies. Var is one of the Asynjur. According to Snorri in Gylf. 35., “The ninth is Var. She harkens to the oaths and compacts made between men and women; wherefore such covenants are called vows. She also takes vengeance on those who perjure themselves.”
Alvíssmál

Alvíss kvað:
1. “Bekki breiða, nú skal brúðr með mér heim í sinni snúask, hratat um mægi mun hverjum þykjka, heima skalat hvílð nema.”

Þórr kvað:

Alvíss kvað:
3. “Alvíss ek heiti, bý ek fyr jörð neðan, á ek und steini stað, vagna vers ek em á vit kominn, bregði engi fóstu heiti fira.”

Þórr kvað:
4. “Ek mun bregða, þvíat ek brúðar á flest um rúð sem faðir, varka ek heima, þá er þér heitit var, at sá einn, er gjöf er, með goðum.”

Alvíss kvað:
5. “Hvat er þat rekkja, er í ráðum telsk fljóðs ins fagrglá, fjardráleina, þik munu fáir kunna, þik hef bægum borit?”

Þórr kvað:
6. “Vingþórr ek heiti, hef ek víða ratat, sonr em ek Síðgrana; at ósátt minni skalattu þat it unga man hafa ok þat gjaford geta.”

Alvíss kvað:
7. “Sáttir þínar er ek vil snemma hafa ok þat gjaford geta, eiga vilja ek, heldr en án vera, þat it mjallhvíta man.”

Lay of Alvis

Alvis said:
1. “Clear the benches, for now my bride shall come home with me. It will seem to all that I was hasty with the maid. I won’t waste time getting home.”

Thor said:
2. “What sort of being are you, you who are such a white-nose? It seems to me that you ought to get a thurs’s corpse. You were not born for a bride.”

Alvis said:
3. “I am called Alvis, I live beneath the earth. I have a stead under the stones. For weapon’s worth I have come. Let no man disregard fast oaths.”

Thor said:
4. “I shall break the oath. As her father, I have the most say. I was not home when she was promised. It is for myself alone, of all the Gods, to give her for marriage.”

Alvis said:
5. “Who is this man, who says that he is the father of the fair maid? You wretch! Few will know you. Who brought you the rings?”

Thor:
6. “I am called Vingthor! I have wandered wide. I am Sithgrani’s son. You will not have the young lass by my leave, or have my approval of marriage.”

Alvis:
7. “I will soon have your consent, and get your approval. I would rather have the snow-white lass than to be alone.”
Thor said:
8.
“I will grant you the maid’s love, wise guest,
give you what you wish,
if you can tell me everything I want to know
about each of the worlds.”

9.
“Tell me this Alvis, for I think, dwarf,
that you know, the origin of all beings:
what the earth is called, that lies beneath
the sons of men, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
10.
“It is called “Earth” by men, “Field” by the Ases,
“Ways” by the Vanes, “Greenish” by ettins.
Elves call it “Growing”,
and the Uppregin call it “Clay.”

Thor said:
11.
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,
that you know the origin
of all things: what heaven is called
in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
12.
“Heaven” it is called among men. Gods call it “Sky”,
Vanes call it “Windweaver”,
ettins call it “Upper-World”, elves call it “Fair-Roof”,
and dwarves call it “Dripping Hall”.

Thor said:
13.
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,
that you know the origin of all beings:
what is the moon called, which is seen
by the sons of men, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
14.
“Men call it “Moon”, but it is called “Fiery”
among the Gods. In Hel they call it “Turning Wheel”.
Ettins call it “Speed”, dwarves call it “Shining”,
but elves call it “year reckoner”.

Þórr kvað:
8.
"Meyjar ástum muna þér verða
visi gestr of varit,
ef þú ór heimi kannt hverjum at segja
allt þat er vilja ek vita."

9.
"Segðu mér þat Alvíss, - öll of rök fira
vörumk, dvergr, at vitir,
hvé sú jördó heitir, er liggr fyr alda sonum
heimi hverjum í?"

Alvíss kvað:
10.
"Jördó heitir með mönnum, en með ásum fold,
kalla vega vanir,
ígrœn jötnar, alfar gróandi,
kalla aur uppregin."

Þórr kvað:
11.
"Segðu mér þat Alvíss, - öll of rök fira
vörumk, dvergr, at vitir,
hvé só himinn heitir erakendi,
heimi hverjum í?"

Alvíss kvað:
12.
"Himinn heitir með mönnum, en hlýnr með goðum,
kalla vindófini vanir,
uppheim jötnar, alfar fagræfr,
dvergar drjúpansal."

Þórr kvað:
13.
"Segðu mér þat Alvíss, - öll of rök fira
vörumk, dvergr, at vitir,
hversu máni heitir, sá er menn séa,
heimi hverjum í?"

Alvíss kvað:
14.
"Máni heitir með mönnum, en mylinn með goðum,
kalla hverfanda hvél helju í,
skyndi jötnar, en skin dvergar,
kalla alfar ártala."
Thor said:
15.  
“Tell me this Alvis, since I know, dwarf,  
that you know the origin of all beings:  
what the sun is called,  
that men see in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
16.  
“It is called “Sol” among men, and “Sun” among Gods.  
Dwarves call it “Dvalinn’s Plaything”,  
ettins call it “Everglow”, elves call it “Fairwheel”,  
but the sons of Ases call it “Allbright”.

Thor said:
17.  
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,  
that you know the origin of all beings:  
what are the clouds called,  
that bring showers, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
18.  
“Men call them “Clouds”, the Gods call them “Hope of Showers.” They are called “Windsailors” by Vanes,  
But “Rainhope” by ettins, and “Weather Might”  
by elves. In Hel they call them “Hiding Helm”.

Thor said:
19.  
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,  
that you know the origin of all wights:  
what the wide-faring winds are called  
in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
20.  
“Men call it “Wind”, Gods call it “Waverer”,  
the Ginnregin call it “Whinnier”,  
it is called “Roarer” by ettins “Din-Farer” by elves,  
and “Stormer” in Hel.”

Thor said:
21.  
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,  
that you know the origin of all beings:  
what is the calm called that rests  
over each of the worlds?”
Alvis said:
22. “It is called “Calm” by men, but “Stillness” by Gods, “Wind-Lull” by the Vanes. It is called “Over-Warmth” by ettins, “Day-Quiet” by elves, and “Day-Shelter” by dwarves.”

Thor said:
23. “Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf, that you know, the origin of all beings: what is the sea called, that men sail, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:

Thor said:
25. “Tell me this Alvis, for I think, dwarf, that you know the origin of all beings: what they call the forest that grows before the sons of life, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:
26. “Men call it “Fire,” the Gods call it “Flame”. The Vanes call it “Waver”, the dwarves call it “All-Burner”, and ettins call it “Greedy”, in Hel they call it “Speedy”.

Thor said:
27. “Tell me this Alvis, for I think, dwarf, that you know the origin of all beings: what they call the forest that grows before the sons of life, in each of the worlds?”

Alvis said:

Alvíss kvað:
22. "Logn heitir með mönnum, en lægi með goðum, kalla vindlot vanir, ofhlý jötunar, alfar dagsefa, kalla dvergar dagsveru.”

Þórr kvað:
23. “Segðu mér þat Alvíss, - öll of rök fira vörumk, dvergr, at vitir, hvé sá marr heitir, er menn róa, heimi hverjum í?”

Alvíss kvað:
24. “Sær heitir með mönnum, en sílœgja með goðum, kalla vág vanir, álheim jötnar, alfar lagastaf, kalla dvergar djúpan mar.”

Þórr kvað:
25. “Segðu mér þat, Alvíss, - öll of rök fira vörumk, dvergr, at vitir, hvé sá eldr heitir, er brennr fyr alda sonum, heimi hverjum í?”

Alvíss kvað:
26. “Eldr heitir með mönnum, en með ásum funi, kalla vág vanir, frekan jötnar, en forbrenni dvergar, kalla í helju hröðuð.”

Þórr kvað:
27. “Segðu mér þat Alvíss, - öll of rök fira vörumk, dvergr, at vitir, hvé viðr heitir, er vex fyr alda sonum, heimi hverjum í?”

Alvíss kvað:
28. “Viðr heitir með mönnum, en vallarfax með goðum, kalla hlíðþang halir, eldi jötnar alfar fagrlima, kalla vónd vanir.”
Thor said:
29.
“Tell me Alvis, For I think, dwarf,
that you know the origin of all things:
in each of the worlds, what do they call night
who was born to Nor?”

Alvis said:
30.
“Men call it “Night”, but the Gods call it “The Dark.”
The Ginnregin call it “Hood”, ettins call “Lightless”,
eves call it “Sleep-Pleasure”
and dwarves call it “Dream-Weaver”.

Thor said:
31.
“Tell me Alvis, for I think, dwarf,
that you know the origin of all things:
what the seed is called, in all the worlds,
that the sons of life sow?”

Alvis said:
32.
“It is called “Barley” by men, and “Barr” by Gods.
The Vanes call it “Growth”,
ettins call it “Eating”, elves call it “Waterstave”
but in Hel they call it “Drooping”.

Thor said:
33.
“Tell me this Alvis, for I think, dwarf,
that you know the origin of all things:
what is the ale called, in all the worlds,
that is drunk by the sons of life?”

Alvis said:
34.
“Men call it “Ale”, Ases call it “Beer”,
Vanes call it “Stout”, ettins call it “Pure-water”,
they call it “Mead” in Hel,
and Suttung’s sons call it “Sumble”.

Thor said:
35.
“I never saw such eld staves
beneath any breast,
but I fooled you with wily words.
At daylight you are up, dwarf,
now the sun is shining in the hall.”
Lay of Alvis: Notes

2. Though it may seem odd that Thor should tell a dwarf that he has a giant’s body, we may remind ourselves that there are similarities in that both are denizens of the realms beneath the earth and associated with graves and stones.

16. It can also be translated as the “plaything of Dvalinn”. Thor keeps Alvis talking until daybreak, at which time, dwarves who have not returned to Dark-Elfhom from their farings in Midgard are turned to stone. The visages of dwarves, ettins, and trolls may still be seen in the rock formations that serve as gateways to their homes.

20. Vafuthr=Waverer and may well mean wanderer. This is also one of the names of Odin in GM 54.

24. Lagastaf=Waterstave. The term is used twice by the elves, here to refer to the sea and again in 32 to refer to grain.
The Dreams of Baldr

1. Soon all the Aesir were gathered at thing and all the Asynjur in moot.
The powerful Tivar mooted over why Baldr had baleful dreams.

2. Up came Odin the old god and laid the saddle on Sleipnir.
He rode down to Niflhel, and met a hound from Hel.

3. He was bloody about his breast and he barked long at galder’s father.
Odin rode on. The ground thundered, and he came to the high hall of Hel.

4. Then Odin rode for the eastern door for he knew the tomb of the volva was there. Wise in witchcraft, he began to sing valgalder until the corpse was forced to rise and speak.

5. “What man is this whom I do not know who has increased my hardship by his journey? Was I covered in snow, and beaten by rain, and besprent by with dew? I was dead long.”

6. “I am called Vegtam and am the son of Valtam. Tell me about Hel. I am a man from Midgard. For whom are the benches strewn with rings, the chambers a flood of fair gold?”

7. “Here stands mead brewed for Baldr. A shield lays over the clear drinks. The sons of Odin are in despair. I spoke by need, but now I am silent.”

8. “Be not silent Volva! I will question you until I know all that I want to know. What wight shall be Baldr’s bane and rob Odin’s son of his life?”
9. “Höðr berr hávan
han munn Baldri
ok Óðins son
nauðug sagðak,
hróðbaðm þinig,
at bana verða
altri ræna;
nú mun ek þegja.”

9. “Hoth will bear the high and notorious spray.
This wight will be the bane of Baldr
and rob Odin’s son of his life.
I spoke under need. Now I shall be silent.”

10. “Þegjattu, völva,
unz alkunna,
Hvurr mun hit Heði
eða Baldrs bana
þik vil ek fregna,
vil ek enn vita:
Heft of vinna
á bál vega?”

10. “Be not silent volva! I will question you
until I know all that I want to know.
What wight will bring vengeance against Hoth
and send Baldr’s bane to the pyre?”

11. Rindr berr Vála
sá mun Óðins sonr
hönd um þvær
áðr á bál um berr
nauðug sagðak,
Ý vestrsölum,
einnett vega:
ne höfuð kembir,
Baldr’s andskota;
nú mun ek þegja.”

This one, while one winter old, Odin’s son, shall slay him.
He washes not his hands, nor combs his hair,
before he bears Baldr’s slayer to the pyre.
I spoke by need, now I shall be silent.”

12. “Þegjattu, völva,
unz alkunna,
Hverjar ro þær meyjar,
ok á himin verpa
þik vil ek fregna,
vil ek enn vita:
er at muni gráta
halsa skautum?”

12. “Do not be silent volva! I will question you
until I know all that I want to know.
Who are the maidens who shall weep
and cast their neck veils towards the heavens?”

13. “Ertattu Vegtamr,
heldr ertu Óðinn,
Ertattu völva
heldr ertu þriggja
sem ek hugða,
alðinn gautr.”
“né vís kona,
þursa móðir.”

13. “As I thought, you are not Vegtam.
Rather you are Odin, the old god.”
“You are no volva, nor wise woman
but rather the mother of three thurses.”

14. “Heim ríð þú, Óðinn,
svá komir manna
er lauss Loki
ok ragna rök
ok ver hróðigr,
meir aft á vit,
liðr ór bónund
rjúfendr koma.”

14. “Ride home Odin, and be triumphant.
No men shall thus come to call me again,
before Loki is free, his limbs loosed from the bonds,
and destroying Ragnarok comes.”
Baldr’s Dream: Notes

1. According to Snorri, the Aesir meet at Urth’s well below Bifrost bridge each day. A “thing” is an old Teutonic law assembly.

2. Niflhel is the same as Hel. Guard dogs and quaking earth are common features of journeys to the halls of wise women in Ettinhome and Hel. See also FS, SGD, and chapter 4. It is possible that the hound in this case is Garm who is mentioned in VSP 43. Sleipnir is the eight legged steed on which Odin fares out over the nine worlds. The lich or corpse-galder (O.N. Valgaldra) are a necromantic form of Galder used to waken the dead to elicit wisdom form them. Instance of this sort of magic are to be found elsewhere in Eddic and saga lore. See Hav. 157, GG, and Harbarth’s Lay 44-45 in Elder Edda. Also see the Hervor episode in Heidrek’s Saga. In Saxo’s story of Hadingus an engraved teinn is placed under the tongue of a corpse.

4. Vegtam = Road-Ready, Valtam = Battle-Ready.

6. The halls of Hel, like those of Gerth and Mengloth, are loaded with wealth.
Rígsþula

Svá segja menn í fornum sögum, at einnhverr af ásum, sá er Heimdallr hét, fór ferðar sinnar ok fram með sjóvarströndu nökkurri, kom at einum húsabœ ok nefndiz Rígr; eftir þeirri sögu er kvæði þetta:

1. Ár kváðu ganga grœnar brautir
öflgan ok aldinn ás kunnigan,
ramman ok röskvan Ríg stíganda;
egkk hann meir at þat miðrar brautar.

2. Kom hann at húsi, hurð var á gætti,
inna nam at ganga eldr var á golfi;
hjón sátu þar hár at árni, 
Ái ok Edda, aldinfalda.

3. Rígr kunni þeim ráð at segja;
meir settisk hann miðra fletja,
en á hlið hvára hjón salkyna.

4. Þá tók Edda ökkvinn hleif,
þungan ok þykkvan, þrunginn sáðum,
bar hon meir at þat miðra skutla,
söð var í bolla, setti á bjóð;
var kálfr søðinn krása beztr.

5. Rígr kunni þeim ráð at segja, 
reis hann upp þaðan, réðsk at sofna;
meir lagðisk hann miðrar rekkju,
en á hlið hvára hjón salkyna.

6. Þar var hann at þat þríar nætr saman, 
egkk hann meir at þat miðrar brautar, 
liðu meir at þat mánuðr nú.

7. Jóð ól Edda jósu vatni, 
hörvi svartan, hetu Þræl.

Lay of Rig

Men tell in old tales that one of the Ases was called Heimdall and that in the days of yore he made a journey along a certain seashore until he came to a farm. This is the story.

1. They say that in the days of yore an Ase walked wise and holy, powerful on the green wilderness ways. Mighty and mainful strode Rig.

2. He strode further down the middle wilderness way until he came to a house. The door was closed and he strode in. There was a fire on the floor. Hoary sat man and wife there at the hearth, Ai and Edda wearing old hoods.

3. Rig knew how to rede them well. He sat on the middle seat. Sat between the two in the hall.

4. Edda picked up a lumpy loaf thick and heavy with bran. Then she brought forth a bowl. She set it in the middle of the table, the bowl full of broth and boiled calf, best of fare. He rose up from there, ready for bed.

5. Rig knew how to rede them well. He lay in the middle of the bed between the two, there in the hall.

6. He stayed there three nights altogether, then walked further the middle ways. Nine months passed.

7. Joth and Edda sprinkled water on a dark linen clad boy named Thrall.
8.
Hann nam at vaxa
var þar á höndum
kropnir knúar
fingr digrir,
lútr hryggr,

ok vel dafna;
hrokkit skinn,
— — — —
fülligt andlit,
langir hælar.

8.
He began to grow and throve well.
Rough the skin of his hands,
gnarled the knuckle,
fingers were thick, his back was bent
His heels were long.

9.
Nam han meir at þat
bast at binda,
bar hann heim at þat

tegins um kosta,
byrðar gerva,
hrís gerstan dag.

9.
Then he began to test his might,
ropes of bast he bound, bore burdens,
bore home brushwood all day.

10.
Þar kom at garði
aurr var á iljum,
iðrbjúgt var nef,
gengilbeina
armr sólbrunninn,
nefnisk Þír.

10.
A bent legged woman approached his yard
with dirty soles, and sunburnt arms,
and her nose bent down. She was named Thir.

11.
Miðra fletja
sat hjá henni
rœddu ok rýndu,
þraLL ok þíR
meir settisk hón,
sonn huSS,
rekkju gerðu
þrungiN doegr.

11.
She sat down in the middle seat
with the son of the house next to her.
They talked and gossiped, they lay together,
Thrall and Thir all day.

12.
Börn ólu þau,
hygg ek at hétí
Krúr ok Klæggi,
Drumb, Digraldi,
Lútr ok Leggjaldi,
FréLL ok FríR
-hjuggu ok undu,-
Hreimr ok FjósniR,
Kefsir, Fúlnir,
Dröttir ok Hòsvir,
lögðu garða,
unnu at svínum,
grófu torf.

12.
They bore children, were happy in their home.
I think the children were called Hreim and Fjosnir,
Klur, Kleggi, Kefsir, Fulnir,
Drumb, Digraldi, Drott, and Hosvir.
Lut and Leggjaldi. They laid fences,
they dunged the acres, fed the swine,
herded goats, turned the turf.

13.
Deetr váru þær
Ókkvinkalfa
Ysja ok Ambát,
Tötrughypja
þaðan eru komnar
Drumba ok Kumba,
ok ArinNeFir,
EikINTjása,
ok Trönubeina.
þræla ættir.

13.
Their daughters were Drumba, Kumbla,
Okvinkalfa, Arinnefia,
Ysia, Ambat, Eikintiasna,
Trotughyphia and Tronobeina.
Thence comes the tribe of thralls.

14.
Gekk Rígr at þat
kom hann at höllu,
innaN at ganga,
hjón sátu þar,
rettar brautir,
hurð var á skíði,
eldr var á golfi,
heldu á sýslu.

14.
At that, strode Rig straight on the wilderness ways.
He came to a hall and the door was closed.
He started into the hall, found a fire on the floor,
man and wife had that house.

15.
Maðr teglði þar
var skegg skapat,
skyrtu þröngva,
meið til rifjar,
skör var fyr enni,
skokkr var á golfi.

15.
The man fashioned a loom pole from wood.
His beard was shaped, his hair hung over his forehead,
his tunic close fitting, there was a chest on the floor.
16. Sat þar kona, sveigði rokk, 
breiddi faðm, þjó til váðar; 
sveigr var á höfði, smokkr var á bringu, 
dúkr var á halsi, dvergar á öxlum. 
Afi ok Amma áttu hús;

17. Rígr kunni þeim ráð at segja, 
18. reis frá borði, réð at sofna, 
meir lagðisk hann miðrar rekkju, 
en á hlið hvára hjón salkynna.

19. Þar var hann at þat þríar nætr saman; 
gekk hann meirr at þat miðrar brautar; 
líðu meir at þat mánuðr nú;

20. Jóð ól Amma, jósu vatni, 
kölluðu Karl, kona sveip ripti, 
rauðan ok rjóðan, riðuðu augu.

21. Hann nam at vaxa ok vel dafna, 
öxn nam at temja, arðr at gerva, 
hús at timbra ok hlöður smíða, 
karta at gerva ok keyra plóg.

22. Heim óku þá hanginluklu, 
geitakyrدل, giptu Karli; 
Snör heitir sú, settisk und rifti, 
bjuggu hjón, bauga deildu, 
breiddu bjæjur ok bú gerðu.

23. Börn ólu þau, - bjuggu ok unðu, - 
hét Halr ok Drengr, Höldr, Þegn ok Smiðr, 
Breiðr, Bóndi, Bundinskeggi, 
Búi ok Boddi, Brattskeggr ok Seggr.

24. Ënn hétu svá öðrum nöfnunum, 
Snót, Brúðr, Svanni, Svarri, Sprakki, 
Fljóð, Sprund ok Víf, Feima, Ristill; 
þaðan eru komnar karla ættir.

16. Twirling her distaff the woman sat. She braided thread and made cloth. She had a hood on her head and a smock over her breast. She wore a muffler on her neck, and broaches on her shoulders. Affi and Amma owned that house.

17. Rig knew how to rede them well.

18. He rose from the bench, ready to sleep he lay down, between the two, betwixt the man and the woman, in the middle of the bed in the hall.

19. He stayed there three nights all told (He walked the middle ways.) Nine moons passed in the meantime.

20. Amma bore a boy. She sprinkled him with water. She named him Karl and clothed him in linen. Wild eyed, red and ruddy he was.

21. He began to grow, he waxed well, he tamed oxen and made plowshares, timbered houses and built sheds, fashioned carts and drove ploughs.

22. They brought home a bride, keys a dangling, in a goat-skin skirt, and gave her to Karl. She was called Snor and sat veiled. The man and dwelled and dealt rings, spread sheets and established a household.

23. They lived happily and bore sons called Hal, Dreng, Hold, Thegn, Smith, Breith, Bond, Bundinskegg, Bui, Boddi, Brattskeg and Segg.

24. But the daughters were called by other names. Wise, Bruth, Svanni, Svarri Sprakki, Fljoth, Sprund, and Vif, Feima, and Ristol. Thence comes the tribe of Karls.
25. Gekk Rígr þaðan réttar brautir,
    kom hann at sal, suðr horfðu dyrð,
    var hurð hnigin, hringr var í gætti.
26. Gekk hann inn at þat, golf var stráat.
    Sátu hjón, sáusk í augu,
    Faðir ok Móðir fingrum at leika;
27. Sat húsgumi ok snéri streng,
    alm of bendi, örvor skepti.
    En húskona strauk of ripti,
28. Keisti fald, kinga var á bringu,
    síðar sleður, serk bláfáan;
    brún bjartari, brjóst ljósara,
29. Rígr kunni þeim ráð at segja;
    meir settisk hann miðra fletja,
    en á hlið hvára hjón salkynna.
30. Þá tók Móðir merkðan dúk,
    hvítan af hörvi, hulði bjóð,
    hón tók at þat hleifa þunna,
31. Framm setti hón skutla fulla,
    silfri varða, setti á bjóð
    fáin ok fleski ok fugla steikða,
32. Þar vas hann at þat þríar nætr saman
    gekk hann meir at þat líðu meir at þat
33. Svein ól Móðir, silki vafði,
    jósu vatni, Jarl létu heita;
    Bleikt var hár, bjartir vangar,
    ötul váru augu

25. Then strode Rig over the wilderness ways. He came to a hall whose door faced south. The door was leaning open and there was a ring on its post.
26. He walked in and the floor was strewn with straw. Man and wife sat there, gazing at one another’s eyes. Father and Mother were playing with their fingers.
27. The house-master twisted bow string and bent elm. The lady of the house looked to her arms, she smoothed the skirt and pleated her sleeves.
28. She had a hood on her head and a brooch on her breast. The garment trailed behind her, the sark was blue. Her brow was brighter, her breast lighter, and her neck whiter, than fresh snow.
29. Rig knew how to rede them well. He sat down between the two, the man and the woman in the hall.
30. The mother brought forth a white flaxen embroidered cloth and covered the table. She got a thin loaf of white wheat and set it on the table.
31. A silver platter she set at the table full of steaked fowl. She set wine in a plated vessel. They drank and talked to the end of the day.
32. Rig rose from there, ready for sleep. He stayed there three nights all told. Then fared out over the middle wilderness ways. Nine moons passed in the meantime.
33. Mother bore a son and clothed him in silk. She sprinkled him with water and called him Earl. He was fair of hair, bright of cheeks, and his eyes pierced like an adder’s.
34. Earl grew up there at the hall. 
Earl grew up there at the hall. 
He began to shake linden shields 
He began to shake linden shields 
He fixed bow strings, bent elm, 
Shafted arrows flung spears, sped lances, 
Rode horses, hunted with hounds, 
Swung swords and swam the sound.

35. Then Rig came walking from the grove. 
Then Rig came walking from the grove. 
Walking Rig came, taught him the runes 
And granted his own name, 
saying it belonged to his son. Rig bade him take 
Possession of odal vales and old halls.

36. He rode further thence through Mirkwood, 
He rode further thence through Mirkwood, 
Over frosty fell, until he came to a hall. 
He began to shake spears, to shatter linden shields. 
He rode forth on his horse, swung his sword, 
Wakened war, bloodied the earth 
Dropped corpses, fought for land.

37. He ruled eighteen halls, he dealt wealth, 
He ruled eighteen halls, he dealt wealth, 
And granted it to all. He showered rings, 
Gifts and jewels, and slender horses. 
He hewed asunder arm rings.

38. His heralds drove over the wet wilderness ways 
His heralds drove over the wet wilderness ways 
And came to the hall where Hersir dwelled. 
A daughter he had, small fingered, 
And fair and wise, named Erna.

39. They asked for her and drove her home. 
They asked for her and drove her home. 
They gave her to Earl and she walked in linen. 
They dwelled together and were happy. 
They had children and lived cheerfully.

40. Burr was the oldest and Barr was the second. 
Burr was the oldest and Barr was the second. 
Then came Joth, Athal, Arfi, Mog, 
Nith, and Nithjung. They began to play 
At swimming and tables. Son and Svein came. 
Kund was another and Kon was the youngest.

41. The sons of the Earl grew up. 
The sons of the Earl grew up. 
They tamed horses, wielded shields, 
Shaped shafts, shook the ash-wood (spear).
42. But young Kon knew the runes -
age runes and life runes,
and more to help pregnant women,
some to blunt edges and some to calm the sea.

En Konr ungr kunni rúnar,
ævinrúnar ok aldrrúnar,
meir kunni hann mönnum bjarga,
eggjar deyfa, ægi lægja.

43. He understood the chirping of birds, he quenched
fires, calmed the seas, and soothed sorrows.
He had the strength and endurance of eight men.

Klök nam fugla, kyrра elda,
sefa of svefja, sorgir lægja
afl ok eljun áтta manna.

44. He contended in runes with Earl Rig.
He battled him in wits, and knew the runes better.
So he came to have for himself
the name Rig and runelore.

Hann víð Ríg jarl rúnar deilði,
brögðum beitti ok betr kunni,
þá öðlaðisk ok eiga gat
Rígr at heita, rúnar kunna.

45. The young Kon rode through forest and copse.
He loosed missiles and tamed birds.

Reið Konr ungr kjörr ok skóga,
kolfi fleygði, kyrрði fugla.

46. A crow spoke, sitting on a branch.
“Why do you tame birds young Kon?
Instead you might
ride horses and fell heroes.

Dá kvað þat kráka, sat kvisti ein:
“Hvat skaltu, Konr ungr kyrра fugla?
Heldr mætti þér hestum ríða,
[hjörvi bregða] ok her fella.

47. “Dan and Damp have a hall more dear,
and estates larger than yours.
They know how to steer a ship and they know
the edge of the sword and they bring ruin.”

Á Danr ok Danpr dýrar hallir,
œðra óðal en éр hafið;
þeir kunnu vel kjóli at ríða,
egg at kenna, undir rjúfa.”
Lay of Rig: Notes

1. On wilderness ways, might, and main, see glossary.

2. “Middle way” refers to a road through Midgard, while a “wilderness way” is a road through an outer home, especially Ettinhome.

7. Baptism was part of the pre-Christian rite of naming a child. An infant was not accepted as a human being until after he was named which endowed the child with a soul. Naming is a person’s first initiatory rite. As with all initiatory rites, there is a period in which the individual is in an ambiguous liminal state beyond the pale of society.

10. Thir-Drudge

23. Keys dangling from a belt were typical bridal gear. See Lay of Thrym.

24. Runes and the cult of Odin were the province of the aristocracy.

43. Runic spells of these sorts are found in Havamal, and Svipdagsmal.

44. Sigurth Volsung understood the language of birds when he tasted the blood of the dragon’s heart.
### The Shorter Spae of the Volva

1. Eleven were the Aesir all told.
   Baldr fell to the grave hill,
   Vali sought to venge him,
   slew his brother’s slayer.

2. Baldr’s father was Burr’s eldest son.
   Frey married Gerth who was Gymir’s daughter,
   of the tribe of ettins and Aurbotha.
   Thiazi was their kin.
   Skathi was that ettin’s daughter.

3. I have told you much, but will say more of what you need to know. Do you want to know more?

4. Haki was the best of Hvaethno’s sons,
   but Hjorvarth was the father of Hvaethno.
   Heith and Hrossthiof were the kin of Hrimnir.

5. The volvas are all from Vitholf.
   Vitki’s all from Vilmeith,
   but users of seith from Svarthofthi,
   and all the ettin’s from Ymir.

6. Much I have told you, but I will say more of what you need to know. Do you want to hear more?

7. In the days of yore, one was born kinsman of the Gods, powerful in magic.
   Nine ettin maids begot the nailglorious one on the edge of the earth.

8. I have told you much, but I will say more of what you need to know. Do you want to hear more?

9. Gjalp and Greip,
   Eistla and Eyrgjafa,
   Ulfrun and Angeyja,
   Imthir and Atla, and Jarnsaxa all bore him.

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### Völuspá hin skamma

1. Váru ellifu æsir talðir, Við banaþúfu;
   Baldr er hné, við banaþúfu;
   þess lézk Váli verðr at hefna, sínns bróður sló hann handbana.

2. Var Baldrs faðir Burs arfþegi, Freyr átti Gerði, jötina ættar, þó var Þjazi, skrautgjarn jötunn, Burs arfþegi, hon var Var Gymis dóttir, ok Aurboðu; þeira frændi, hans var Skáði dóttir.

3. Margt segjum þér vörumk, at viti svá. Viltu enn lengra?

4. Haki var Hveðnu hóti beztr sona, en Hveðnu var Hjörvarðr faðir; Heiðr ok Hrossþjófr Hrímnis kindar.
   hóti beztr sona, frá Hveðnu.
   Hjörvarðr faðir; frá Hveðnu.
   Hrímnis kindar.

5. Eru völur allar frá Viðolfi, vitkar allir frá Vilmeithi, seiðberendr frá Svarthófiða, jötnar allir við jarðar þrömm.
   frá Viðolfi,
   frá Vilmeithi,
   frá Svarthófiða,
   við jarðar þrömm.

6. Margt segjum þér vörumk, at viti svá. Viltu enn lengra?

7. Varð einn borin í árdaga röguna kindar; nú báru þann naddgöfgan mann jötna meyjar við jarðar þrömm.
   í árdaga
   röguna kindar;
   nú báru þann
   naddgöfgan mann
   við jarðar þrömm.

8. Margt segjum þér vörumk, at viti svá. Viltu enn lengra?

9. Hann Gjalp um bar, hann Greip um bar, bar hann Eistla, ok Eyrgjafa, hann bar Ulfrún, ok Angeyja, Imðr ok Atla ok Járnsaxa.
   hann Greip um bar,
   ok Eyrgjafa,
   ok Angeyja,
   ok Járnsaxa.
10. He waxed by the main of the ground and by the cold sea and by the blood of the sacrificial boar.

11. I have told you much and will tell you more of what you need to know. Do you want to know more?

12. Loki begat children by Angrboða and begat Sleipnir by Svaðilfari. The most awful of all monstrosities was that born by the brother of Byleist.

13. Loki ate the heart, the stone of a woman half roasted in linden fire. Thereby was Loki quickened with child by the evil woman. Thence came flagthis onto the world.

14. The sea stormed to heaven itself flooded over the land. The sky gave way. Thence come the snows and fierce winds at the ruin of the Regin.

15. One was born, greater than all he was raised on the main of the earth. They say he is the most strong spirited, a sib of the entire folk.

16. Another will then come, but mightier though I dare not name him. Few can see beyond the time when Odin meets the wolf.
The Shorter Spae of the Volva: Notes

2. Burr is the same as the giant Borr mentioned in Gylf. and Voluspa - who married Bestla to bear Odin, Vili, and Ve. Aurbotha is the same as the giant Ymir.

4. Heith is the name of Gullveig in VSP 22. This is almost certain because stanza 5 is about volvas and users of Seith, and Gullveig is both.

5. Vitholf=Wood-Wolf

7. According to Gylf. 26 Heimdall was born to nine sisters at the edge of the world. It is commonly thought that they are waves, but could as well be ettin maids such as those who dwell with Mengloth in Ettinhome which is on the edge of the world. The meaning of “nailglorious” is not clear. The term “nailglorious ettin” occurs in GG 14 and may refer to Fjolsvith. The term may refer to horns or tusks. In the case of Heimdall these studs or nails may be the tusks of the boar. Stanza 10 tells us that he was nourished by the blood of a sacrificial boar. In Gylf. 27 Heimdall is called “golden tooth” and it is said that his teeth were of gold and his sword was called Head. That his sword is called “head” suggests that he fights with his head, in which case, his tusks are his weapons. The term stud can be used to refer to horn, for ram’s horns may be called studs.

9. Gjalp=noisy; Greip=Grip; Eistla=Stormy; Angeya=Oppressor; Imthir=Frenzied; Atla=ruinous; Jarnsaxa=Ironsword.

10. He grew powerful by the godly powers of the sea, the earth, and the sacrificial boar.

12. Gylf. 34 tells us that Angrbotha was a giantess in Ettinhome by whom Loki begat Fenris Wolf, Jormungand, and Hel. Svathilfar is the stallion of the master builder in Gylf. 42. Loki seduced Svathilfari by taking the shape of a mare.

13. On the term flagtha, see the glossary and FS 2-3.
Hyndluljóð

Freyja kvað:
1. “Vaki mær meyja, vaki mín vina, Hyndla sysístir, er í helli býr; nú er rökk rökkra, ríða vit skulum til Valhallar ok til vés heilags.
2. Æþjum Herjaföðr í hugum sitja, hann geldr ok gefr gull verðungu, gaf hann Hermóði hjalm ok brynju, en Sigmundi sverð at þiggja.
3. Gefr hann sigr sumum, en sumum aura, mælsku mörgum ok mannvit firum, byri gefr hann brögnun, en brag skáldum, gefr hann mannsemi mörgum rekki.
4. Þórr mun ek blóta, þess mun ek biðja, at hann æ við þik einart láti; þó er hánum ótítt við jötuns brúðir.
5. Nú taktu ulf þinn einn af stalli, lát hann renna með runa mínum.”

Hyndla kvað: “Seinn er göltr þinn goðveg troða, vilkat ek mar minn goðveg troða,æ þó freistart mín, á oss þannig, í valsinni Örvar unga Innsteins burr.”

Freyja kvað:
6. “Dulin ertu, Hyndla, er þú freistar mín, þar er göldr glóar Gullinbursti, er mér hagir gerðu, þar er göldr glóar Gullinbursti, er mér hagir gerðu, draums ætlak þér, í valsinni, Dáinn ok Nábbi.
7. “Seinn er göltr þinn goðveg troða, æ þó freistart mín, þar er göldr glóar Gullinbursti, er mér hagir gerðu, þar er göldr glóar Gullinbursti, er mér hagir gerðu, draums ætlak þér, í valsinni, Dáinn ok Nábbi.

Lay of Hyndla

Frey said:
1. “Wake up maid of maids! Awaken my friend, Sister Hyndla who sleeps in the cave! Now is the twilight of twilights and we shall ride to Valhalla, to that hallowed ve.
2. “Let us bid Battle-father He grants and gives gold to the worthy. He gave to Hermod a helm and bynne, and Sigmund got a sword.
3. “He gives victory to some, and money to others, many get the gift of speech, to others he gives wisdom, fair winds to sailors, poetry to skalds, and valor to men.
4. “I shall sacrifice to Thor, and ask him that he always show you favor, though he has no love for the brides of ettins.
5. “Now take one of your wolves from its stall and let him run alongside my boar.”

Hyndla said: “Your boar is slow to tread the Gods’ road. Nor will I burden my worthy steed.

6. “You are false Freya, in seeking me. Your eyes show us that you lead your lover, the young Ottar, son of Innstein, on a death journey.”

Frey said:
7. “You are dull Hyndla. I think that it is a dream of yours, that I lead my lover on the death road. There is a golden boar, with golden bristles, Hildisvin, whom the two dwarves, Dainn and Nabb fashioned for me.
8. Senn vit òr söðlum
ok um jöfra
gunna þeira,
sitja vit skulum
ættir døma,
er frá goðum kvámu.

8. “We two shall contend from our saddles!
Let us sit and speak of the families of boars
and of their kin, who are descended from Gods.

9. Þeir hafa veðjat
Óttarr ungi
skylt er at veita,
fóðurleifð hafi
Vala málmi
ok Angantyr;
svá at skati inn ungi
eftir frændr sína.

9. “They bet welsh metal,
young Óttar and Angantyr.
It is fitting to grant that the young warrior
has his father’s share after his kinsman’s death.

10. Hörg hann mér gerði
nú er grjót þat
rað hann í nýju
æ trúði Óttarr
hlăðinn steinum;
at gleri orðit;
blóði;
í nýju nauta
á ásynjur.

10. “He made me a high stone harrow.
Now the rough stones are glassed.
He reddened them anew, in the blood of the ox,
for Óttar is ever true to the Asynjur.

11. Nú láttu forna
ok upp bornar
hvät ek Skjöldunga,
hvät er Óðlinga,
hvät er hóldborit,
mest manna val
nûðja talða
ættir manna;
hvät ek Skilfinga,
hvät er Ylfinga,
hvät er hersborit
und Miðgarði?”

11. “Now you shall tally up
from the oldest kinsmen the tribes of men.
Say who was a Scylding and who a Scilfing,
say who an Othling, and who a Wolfing,
who born of a noble, who born of a chief,
choose the greatest of men in Midgard.”

Hyndla kvað:
12. “Pú ert, Óttarr,
en Innstein var
Alfr var Ûlfí,
en Ûafari
borinn Innsteini,
Alfi inum gamla,
Ulf Ûafara,
Svan inum rauða.

Hyndla said:
12. “You, Óttar, were sprung from Innstein,
but Innstein was born of Alf the old,
and Alf to Ulf, and Ulf to Seafara,
and Seafara to Svan the Red.

13. Mòður átti faðir þinn
hygg ek at hon héti
Fröði var faðir þeirar,
öll þòtti ætt sú
menjum göfga,
Hlèðís gyðja,
en Friund mòðir;
með yfîrmönnum.

13. “Your father’s mother, necklace bedecked,
was called a priestess of Hledis I think.
Her father was Frothi, and Friund their mother.
Their whole family is superior among men.

14. Auði var áðr
Halfdan fyrri
fraeg váru folkvíg,
hvartla þòttu hans verk
öflgastr manna,
hæstr Skjöldunga;
þau er framir gerðu,
með himins skautum.

14. “Auði was the most powerful of men before that,
and Halfdan, the highest of Scyldings, before that.
That foremost man conducted many battles,
his works seemed to tower to the corners of heaven.

15. Efðisk hann við Eymund
en hann và Sigtrygg
eiga gekk Almveig,
ðau ðau ok áttu
céztan manna,
með svøllum eggjum,
céztu kvinna,
átján sonu.

15. “He befriended Eymund the best of men,
and slew Sygtrygg by the icy sword’s edge.
He led home Almveig, the best of women
and they had eighteen sons.
16. Þaðan eru Skjöldungar, 
þaðan eru Öðlingar, 
þaðan eru höldborit, 
mest manna val 
alt er þat ætt þín, 
þaðan eru Skilfingar, 
þaðan eru Ýnglingar, 
þaðan eru hersborit, 
und Miðgarði; 
Óttarr heimski.

17. Var Hildigunnr hennar móðir, 
Sváfu barn 
alt er þat ætt þín, 
Varðar, at viti svá, 
hennar móðir, 
ok sækonungs; 
viltu enn lengra?

18. Dagr átti Þóru drengja móður, 
ólusk í ætt þar 
Fróðmarr ok Gyrðr, 
Amr ok Jösurmarr. 
Varðar, at viti svá, 
drengja móður, 
œðztir kappar, 
ok Frekar báðir, 
Alfr inn gamli. 
viltu enn lengra?

19. Ketill hét vinr þeira, 
var hann móðurfæðir 
þar var Fróði, 
en eldri var 
Klypps arflægi, 
móður þínnar; 
fyrr en Kári, 
Alfr um getinn.

20. Nanna var næst þar 
var mógr hennar 
fyrnð er sú megð, 
kunna ek báða 
allt er þat ætt þín, 
Nökka dóttir, 
mágr þíns föður; 
fram tel ek lengra; 
Brodd ok Hørví 
Óttarr heimski.

21. Ísolfr ok Ásolfr ok Skúrhildar 
skaltu til telja 
allt er þat ætt þín, 
Ölmóðs synir 
skekkils dóttur; 
skattana margra; 
Óttarr heimski.

22. Gunnarr balkr, 
järnmjöldr Þórir, 
Grímr arðskafi, 
Ulfr grínandi.

23. [Hervarðr, Hjörvarðr, 
Búi ok Brámi, 
Tindr ok Tyrfringr, 
Hrani, Angantýr], 
Barri ok Reifnir, 
ok tveir Haddingjar; 
Óttarr heimski.

16. “From there the Scyldings and the Scilfings, 
from there the Othlings and the Ynglings, 
from there the noble born and the princely born, 
the most worthy men of Midgard, 
these are your kinsmen foolish Ottar.

17. “Hildigunn was her mother, 
she was the child of Svava and Saekonung. 
Your family is old, foolish Ottar. It is important 
to know this, do you want to know more?

18. “Dag married Thora the mother of Dreng. 
In that family the best of champions were born. 
Frathmar and Gyrth and the Freki brothers, 
Amr and Josurmar, and Alf the Old. It is needful 
to know this, do you want to know more?

19. “Ketil was their kinsman, Klypp’s eldest son, 
he was the mother’s father of your mother. 
Frothi lived before Kari, 
and Alf the Old was begotten by Hild.

20. “Nanna, Nokkvi’s daughter was born next. 
Her son was your father’s brother. 
Of the antiquity of this family I shall tell more. 
I know both Brodd and Horvi. 
They are all your kinsmen, foolish Ottar.

21. “Isolf and Asolef, the sons of Olmoth, 
and Skurhilda who was Skekkil’s daughter. 
You shall tally many heroes. 
These are all your kinsmen foolish Ottar.

22. “Gunnar Balk, Grim Arthskafi, 
and Thori Ironshield and Wolf the Gaping.

23. “Hervarth, Hjorvarth, Hrani, Angantyr 
Bui and Brami, Barri and Reifner, 
Tind and Tyrfig, and the two Haddings. 
Your family is old, foolish Ottar.
24. Austr í Bolm váru bornir
Arngríms synir ok Eyfuru,
brökun var berserkja, bölm margr konar,
um lönd ok um lög
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.

25. Kunnak báða Brodd ok Hórví;
þeir í hirð Hrólfs ins gamla.
Allir bornir frá Jörmunreki,
Sigurðar mági,
þess er Fáfnì vá.

26. Sá var vísir frá Völsungi,
ok Hjördís frá Hrauðungi,
en Eylimi frá Öðlingum;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.

27. Gunnarr ok Högni,
ok it sama Guðrún, eigi var Gutfrormr
þó var hann bróðir,
allt er þat ætt þín,
Gjúka arfar, systir þeira;
þess er Angantýr ættir rekja.

28. Haraldr hilditönn borinn Hróereki
slöngvanbauga, sonr var hann Auðar, Austr júpúðga
en Ráðbarðr var Randvers faðir;
þeir váru gunnar
allt er þat ætt þín,
Heiðrún fari.

Freyja kvað:
29. "Bar þú minnisöl minum gesti,
svá hann öll muni orð at tína
þessar reðu á þriðja morgni,
þá er þeir Angantýr ættir rekja."

Hyndla kvað:
30. "Snúðu braut heðan, sofa lystir mik,
fær þú fátt af mér fríðra kosti;
þeir váru gunnar, Óds vina
sem með höfrum, Úti á náttum,
Heiðrún fari.

"Aust and Bolm were the sons of Arngrim and Eyfura.
The din of the berserks and many evil deeds rushed over land and sea like wild fire.
These are all your kinsmen, foolish Ottar.

"I knew Brodd and Horvi, they were in the retinue of Hrolf the elder, all born by Jormunrek, brother of Sigurth the folk-ruler who slew Fafnir - hear my words.

"This leader was of the Volsungs, and Hjordis from the Hrauthungs, but Eylimi from the Othlings.
These are all your kinsmen, foolish Ottar.

"Gunnar and Hogni were the sons of Gjuki. By the same their sister Guthrun, but Guthorm was not of the Gjuki’s family, though he was the brother of both sons. These are all your kinsmen foolish Ottar.

"Harold Wartooth was born to Hroereck Ringslinger, who was the son of Auth. Auth the deep-minded was the daughter of Ivar, but Radbarth, was the father of Randver. These men were given to the Gods. These are all your kinsmen foolish Ottar."

"Bring the ale of memory to my boar so that he remembers and recalls all my words and speak of these things on the third morning when those with Angantyr well of their families.”

"Get out of here! I am going to sleep. You shall not have many opportunities for rest away from me. You rush out at night, noble friend, like Heithrun among the billy-goats."
31. Rannt at Óði ey þreyjandi,
skutusk þér fleiri und fyrirskyrtu;
aleypr þú, Óðs vina útí á náttum,
sem með höfrum Heiðrún fari.”

Freyja kvað:
32. “Ek slæ eldi of ívíðju,
svá at þú eigi kemsk á braut heðan.”

Hyndla kvað:
33. Hyr sé ek brenna, en hauðr loga,
verða flestir fjörlausn þola;
ber þú Óttari bjór at hendi,
eitri blandinn mjök, illu heilli.”

Freyja kvað:
34. “Orðheill þín skal engu ráða,
þóttú, brúðr jötuns bölv heitir;
hann skal drekka dýrar veigar;
bið ek Óttari öll goð duga.”

31. “You always ran with lust to Oth,
but more run from under your skirt.
You rush around at night
like Heithrun among the billy-goats.”

Freyja said:
32. “I set fire around you, you evil ogress.
You won’t leave this place.”

Hyndla said:
33. “I see the embers burn, a fire on the earth.
He will eagerly be freed.
Bring mead to Ottar’s hand,
well blended with venom. Ill health to you!”

Freyja said:
34. “You’ll not speak your magical words!
Though you are a ettin’s bride, you call down evil.
He shall drink the good drink.
I bid all the gods help Ottar.”
Lay of Hyndla: Notes

1. Hyndla means “little dog.”

Twilight is a time of transformation, the state between two phases that is neither one nor the other; a liminal period. Twilight is a good time to begin trance journeys and to perform other transformative magic. Freya and Hyndla are intending to go to Valhalla from Etthinhome.

2. Hermod rode to Hel to try to persuade Hel to release him to the world of the living. Sigmund was given the sword Gram in the Saga of the Volsungs.

5. See VSP note 40 on troll women riding wolves.

6. Like Odin, Freya takes fallen warriors to live in her hall Folkvang.

7. The boar is sometimes used as a kenning for kings or warriors. The boar is especially strongly associated with Frey and Freya and may especially apply to Vanic warriors. The boar is possibly the form taken by the warrior’s fetch soul. Ottar has a great deal of Vanic ancestry for his ancestors include Scyldings, Ynglings, and Frothi and Halfdan. In Hav 129, Loddafafnir is warned not to look up in battle because some warriors will seem like wild boars when they enchant. It may be that some Vanic warriors were capable of letting their fetch souls manifest in combat such that they raged with the power and fury of their fetch animal much like the Odian berserkers who wore bear or wolf skins and went into a berserker rage in which they fought like beasts and felt no pain. Vanic warriors are known for wearing boar crested helmets such as those mentioned in Beowulf and those recovered by archaeologists.

10. The alter was glassed from sacrificial flames.

28. Harold Wartooth had tusks.

32. Hyndla wishes to return to sleep, and Freya sets flames around her. Like Brynhild in Saga of the Volsungs, she will now sleep surrounded by flames.
Grógaldr

1. “Vaki þú, Gróa, vaki þú, góð kona, vek ek þik dauðra dura; ef þú þat mant, at þú þinn mög bæðir til kumldyşjar koma.”

2. “Hvat er nú annt mínnum eingasyni, hverju er tu nú bólví borinn, er þú þá móður kallar, er til moldar er komin ok ör ljóðheimum liðin?”

3. “Ljótu leikborði skaut fyr mik in lævísa kona, sú er faðmaði minn fóður: þar bað hon mik koma, er kvæmtki veit, móti Menglöðu.”

4. “Löng er för, langir ro farvegar, langir ro manna munir; ef þat verðr, at þú þinn vilja bíðr, ok skeikar þá Skuld at sköpum.”

5. “Galdra þú mér gal, þá er góðir eru, bjarg þú, móðir, megi; á vegum allr hygg ek at ek verða muna, þykkljumk ek til ungr afi.”

6. “Þann gel ek þér fyrstan, - Þann kveða fjölnýtan, - Þann góí Rindi Rani, at þú af öxl skjótir því er þér atalt þykkir; sjalfr leið þú sjalfan þik.

7. Þann gel ek þér annan, ef þú árna skalt viljalauss á vegum: Úrðar lokur haldi þér öllum megum, er þú á sinnum sér.

8. Þann gel ek þér inn þríðja, ef þér þjóðáar falla at fjörlotum: Horn ok Ruðr snúisk til heljar meðan, en þverri æ fyr þér.

The Galder of Groa

1. “Wake up Groa! Awaken good woman! I awaken you at the door of the dead. Do you remember how you bade your son come to your howe hill?”

2. “What worries you now, my only son? By what curse are you burdened that you call she who is buried in the earth and has passed away from the world of men?”

3. “The artful woman who embraced my father shot me a hideous gaming board. She bade me go there to she who grants no approach, to a meeting with Mengloth.”

4. “The journey is long, the roads are long, and the loves of men are long, if it is worthy that you work your will, and Skuld turns the doom.”

5. “Sing to me the magical spells that are good! Help me oh mother! Avail! It seems that I am too young and that I could die.”

6. “I sing to you the first, and tell you the most useful that Rind sang to Rand. So that you may shoot from your shoulders what seems shocking to you. Let your self guide you.”

7. “I sing you the second so that if you wander without will on the road, Úrth’s ward songs may hold you with all main when you are on the way.”

8. “I sing you the third so that if rivers rise to take your life Horn and Ruth will turn themselves hence to Hel and always ebb before you.”
9. Þann gel ek þér inn fjórða, ef þik fjándr standa görvir á galgvegi, hugr þeim hverfi til handa þér, ok snúisk þeim til sátta sefi.

10. Þann gel ek þér inn fimta, ef þér fjöturr verðr borinn at boglimum: leysigaldr læt ek þér fyr legg of kveðinn, ok stökkkr þá láss af limum, en af fótum fjöturr.

11. Þann gel ek þér inn séttta, ef þú á sjó kemr meira enn menn viti: logn ok lögri gangi þér í lúðr saman ok ljái þér æ friðrjarar farar.

12. Þann gel ek þér inn sjaunda, ef þik sækja kemr frost á fjalli háu: hraevi kulði megit þínu holdi fara, ok haldisk æ lið at liðum.

13. Þann gel ek þér inn áttta, ef þik úti nemr nött á niflvegi: at því firr megi þér til meins gera kristin dauð kona.

14. Þann gel ek þér inn núnda, ef þú við inn naddgöfga orðum skiptir jötun: máls ok mannvits sé þér á minni ok hjarta gnóga of gefit.

15. Far þú nú æva, þars forað þykkir, ok standit þér mein fyr munum; á jarðfóstum steini stóð ek innan dura, meðan ek þér galdra gól.

16. Móður orð ber þú, mógr, heðan ok lát þér í brjósti búu; iðgnóga heill skaltu of aldr hafa, meðan þú mín orð of mant.”
Fjölsvinnsmál

1. Útan garða hann sá upp um koma þursa þjóðar sjöt:
   “Hvat er þat flagða, er stendr fyr forgörðum
   ok hvarfarum um hættan loga?”

2. Hvers þú leitar, eða hvers þú á leitum ert,
   eða hvat viltu, winlaus, vita?
   Ürgar brautir árnaþu aftr héðan,
   áttattu hér, vernðarvanr, veru.”

3. “Hvat er þat flagða, er stendr fyr forgarði
   ok býðrat líðöndum löð?
   Sæmðarorða lauss hefir þú, seggr of lifat,
   ok haltu heim héðan.”

4. “Fjölsviðr ek heiti, en ek á fróðan sefa,
   þeygi em ek mínis mildr matar;
   innan garða þú kemr hér aldregi,
   ok dríf þú nú vargr at vegi.”

5. “Augna gamans fýsir aftr at fá,
   hvars hann getr svást at sjá;
   garðar glóa mér ðykkja of gullna sali,
   hér munda ek eðli una.”

6. “Segðu mér hverjum ertu, sveinn, of borinn
   eða hverra ertu manna mógr?”
   “Vindkaldr ek heiti, Várkaldr hét minn faðir,
   þess var Fjörkaldr faðir.”

7. “Segðu mér þat, Fjólsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun
   ok ek vilja vita:
   hvorr hér ræðr ok ríki hefir
   eign ok auðsölum?”

8. “Menglöð of heitir, en hana módir of gat
   við Svafþorins syni;
   hon hér ræðr ok ríki hefir
   eign ok auðsölum”

Lay of Fjolsvith

1. Beyond the yard he saw rising up,
   the dwelling of the tribe of thurses.
   “Fare hence from here, through the wet
   wilderness ways! There is no shelter for you here!”

2. “Who is that fiend who stands before the forecourt
   and wanders about the flickering flame?”
   “Who do you seek or for what is your search
   or what is it that you want to know, oh friendless one?”

3. “Who is that fiend, who stands in the forecourt
   and offers no hospitality to the wanderer?”
   “You are without words of praise, Stranger
   so get out and go home!”

4. “I am called Fjolsvith and I am deep in lore
   but I am not free with my food.
   Never come here, to this hold.
   Go away quickly now, you wolf, down the road.”

5. “He desires to find the delight of his eyes
   who sees his most beloved. It seems to me
   that the wall around the golden hall glows.
   I want this place, my allodial estate.”

6. “Tell me boy! By whom were you born
   whose son are you?”
   “I am Vindkald, and my father is Varkald
   and his father was Fjolkaldr.”

7. “Tell me Fjolsvith, what I shall ask,
   and what I wish to know.
   Who holds power and rules this place
   and this land and wealth?”

8. “She is called Mengloth, and her mother begat her
   with Svafrthorin’s son.
   She is the one holding power and she rules
   this land and wealth.”
9. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: Hvat sú grind heitir, er með göðum sáat menn it meira forð?”

10. “Pryngjöll hon heitir, en hana þrír gerðu Sóblinda synir; fjóturr fastr verðr við faranda hvern, er hana hefr frá hliði.”

11. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: Hvat sá garðr heitir, er með göðum sáat menn it meira forð?”

12. “Gastrópnir heitir, en ek hann görfan hefk ór Leirbrimis limum; svá hefik studdan, at hann standa mun æ meðan öld lifir.”

13. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: Hvat þeir garmar heita, er gífrari hefik önga fyrr í löndum lítit?”

14. “Gífr heitir annarr, en Geri annarr, ef þú vilt þat vita; varðir ellifu er þeir varða, unz rjúfask regin.”

15. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: hvárt sé manna nökut, þat er megi inn koma, meðan sökndjarfir sofa?”

16. “Missvefni mikit var þeim mjök of lagit, söðan þeim var varzla vituð; annarr of nætr sefr, en annarr of daga, ok kemsk þá vætr, ef þá kom.

9. “Tell me Fjolsvith, what I shall ask, and what I want to know. What is that gate called, that men do not see among Gods to be more dangerous?”

10. “It is called Thrymgjoll, and was built by the three sons of Sunblind. Fast fetters await the wanderer who hefts it from its portal.”

11. “Tell me Fjolsvith, what I shall ask, and what I want to know. What is that wall called that men do not see among Gods to be more dangerous?”

12. “It is called Gastropnir, and I built it out of the limbs of Leirbrimi and have fastened it so well that it will always stand as long as mankind shall live.”

13. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask you and what I want to know. What are the dogs called who stalk before the hall?”

14. “One is called Gif, and the other Geri and if you want to know, eleven wardens guard there until the destruction of the world.”

15. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask and what I want to know. Are there any men, who can enter while the audacious ones sleep?”

16. “A great alternation of sleeping was imposed on them when the watch was established for them. One sleeps at night, the other at day so that no one who goes there gets through.”
17. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsvíðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvárt sé matar nökkut, þat er menn hafi,
ok hlaupi inn, meðan þeir eta?”

18. “Vegnbráðir tvær liggja í Viðópnis liðum,
ef þú vilt þat vita:
þat eitt er svá matar, at þeim menn of gefi,
ok hlaupi inn, meðan þeir eta.”

19. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsvíðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvat þat barr heitir, er breiðask um lönd öll límár?”

20. “Mímameiðr hann heitir, en þat manngi veit,
af hverjum rótum renn;
við þat hann fellr, er fæstan varir;
flærat hann eldr né járn.”

21. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsvíðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvat af móði verðr þess ins mæra viðar,
er hann flærrat eldr né járn?”

22. “Út af hans aldni skal á eld bera
fyr kelisjúkar konur;
útar hverfa þats þer innar skyli,
sá er hann með mönnum mjötuðr.”

23. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsvíðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvat sá hani heitir, er sitr í inum háva viði,
allr hann við gull glóir?”

24. “Viðópnir hann heitir, en hann stendr veðrglasi á meiðs kvístum Míma;
einum ekka þryngr hann órófsaman Surtr Sinmòru.”

Is there any meat that one may give them in order to rush in while they eat?”

18. “There are two chunks of wingflesh on Vithofni’s limbs, and if you want to know that is the only meat one may give them to rush in while they eat.”

What is the yew (barr) called whose limbs spread over all the land?”

20. “It is called Mimameith and no one knows from what roots it rises. Very few know by what it falls. Neither fire nor iron can destroy it.”

21. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask and what I want to know. What becomes of the mod of that great tree which neither fire nor iron fell?”

22. “Out of its (the tree’s) berries it (the mod) shall bring a fire for hysterical women. They (the women) shall turn outside from within. Such is the power of the meter among men.”

23. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I ask of you and what I want to know. What is the cock up in the high tree called who is all aglow with gold?”

24. “He is called Vithofni, he stands weatherglassy on the branches of Mimameith and imposes an immense grief on Surt and Sinmora.”
25.
“Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvárt sé vápna nökkut, þat er knegi Viðópnir fyr hníga á Heljar sjótt?”

26.
“Lævateinn hann heitir, en hann gerði Loft rúninn fyr nágrindr neðan;
i seigjárnskeri liggr hann hjá Sinmöru, ok halda njardlásar nú.”

27.
“Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvárt aftir kemr, þá er eftir ferr ok vill þann tein taka?”

28.
“Aftir mun koma, þá er eftir ferr ok vill þann tein taka,
ef þat farir, er fárir eigu, Eiri örglasis.”

29.
“Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvárt sé mæta nökkut, þat er menn hafi, ok verðr því in fólva gýgr fegin?”

30.
Ljósan léa skal tu í luðr bera, þann er í Viðópnis völlum, Sinmöru at selja, æðr hon söm telisk vápn til vígs at ljá.”

31.
“Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þík fregna mun ok ek vilja vita:
hvat só salr heitir, þer slunginn er vísum vafrloga?”

32.
“Hyrr hann heitir, en hann lengi mun á brodds oddi bifask;
aðranns þess munu um aldr hafa frétt eina firar.”
33. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: hvær þat gördi, er ek fyr garð sák innan, ásmaga?”
34. “Uni ok Íri, Óri ok Bári, Varr ok Vegdrasill; Dóri ok Úri, Dellingr, Atvarðr, Líðskjalfr, Loki.”
35. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: hvat þat bjarg heitir, er ek sé brúði á þóðmæra þruma?”
36. “Lyfjaberg þat heitir, en þat hefir lengi verit sjúkum ok sárum gaman; heil verðr hver, þótt hafi árs sótt, ef þat klífr, kona.”
37. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: Hvat þær meyjar heita, er fyr Menglaðar knjám sitja sáttar saman?”
38. “Hlíf heitir, önnur Hlífþrasa, þriðja Þjóðvarta, Björt ok Blíek, Blíðr, Fríð, Eir ok Aurboða.”
39. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þik fregna mun ok ek vilja vita: hvárt þær bjarga þeim er blóta þær, ef görask þarfar þess?”
40. “Bjarga svinnar, hvær er menn blóta þær á stallhelgum stað; eigi svá hátt forað kemr at hölða sonum, hvern þær ór nauðum nema.”

33. “Tell me Fjolsvith, what I ask you what I want to know. Which of the kinsmen of the Gods built that which is inside that hold that I have not yet seen?”
34. “Uni and Iri, Ori and Bari, Varr and Vegdrassill, Dori and Uri, Delling, Atvarth Lithskjalf, Loki.”
35. “Tell me Fjolsvith, what I shall ask what I want to know. What is that mountain called where I may see the bride standing gloriously?”
36. “It is called Lyfjaberg and it has long been a pleasure for the sick and wounded. She who climbs it will become healthy even though mortally ill.”
37. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask, what I want to know. What are the maids called, who sing peacefully together before the knees of Mengloth?”
38. “One is Hlif, another Hlifthrasa, the third Thjothvarta. Then there are Bjort and Bleik, Blith and Frith Eir and Aurbotha.”
39. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask what I want to know. Do they help those who sacrifice to them when they are in need?”
40. “There are some who are wise and help the men who sacrifice to them. Anytime great danger comes to the sons of men they take them from need.”
41. “Segðu mér þat, Fjölsviðr! er ek þik fregna mun
   ok ek vilja vita:
   hvárt sé manna nókkut, þat er knegi á Menglaðar
   svásum armi sofa?”

42. “Vætr er þat manna, er knegi á Menglaðar
   svásum armi sofa:
   nema Svipdagr einn, hánun var sú in sólbjarta
   brúðr at kván of kveðin.”

43. “Hrittu á hurðir, láttu hlið rúm,
   hér máttu Svipdag sjá;
   en þó vita far, ef vilja myni
   Mengloð mitt gaman.”

44. “Heyr þú, Mengloð! hér er maðr kominn,
   gakk þú á gest sjá;
   hundar fagna, hús hefir upp lokizk,
   hygg ek, at Svipdagr sé.”

45. “Horskir hrafnar skulu þér á hám gálga
   slíta sjónir ór,
   ef þú þat lýgr, at hér sé langt kominn
   mögr til minna sala.

46. Hvaðan þú fórt, hvaðan þú för gördir,
   hvé þik hétu hjú?
   At ætt ok nafni skal ek jartegn vita,
   ef ek var þér kván of kveðin.”

47. “Svipdagr ek heiti, Sólbjart hét minn fáðir,
   þaðan ráumk vindar kalda vegu;
   Urðar orði kveðr engi maðr,
   þótt þat sé við löst lagit.”

48. “Vel þú nú kominn, hefik minn vilja beðit,
   fylgja skal kveðju koss;
   forkunnar sýn mun flestan glaða,
   hvars hefir við annan ást.

41. “Tell me Fjolsvith what I shall ask you
   what I want to know.
   Is there any man who is able
   to sleep in Mengloth’s loving arms?”

42. “There is no man who is able to sleep
   in the loving arms of Mengloth
   except for Svipdag. To him only
   was the sunbright maid given as betrothed bride.”

43. “Fling open the gates! Open the gate wide!
   Here you may see Svipdag!
   Now go and see if Mengloth my delight
   desires my love.”

44. “Listen Mengloth! Here comes a man.
   Go to the guest and see. The hounds welcome him
   and the house heaves up its locks.
   I think that you are Svipdag.”

45. “Wise Ravens shall tear out your eyes,
   high on a gallows
   if you lie, saying that the hero
   has come to my hall from afar.”

46. “From whence do you fare? From whence do you travel?
   How did your parents call you?
   I shall know your father’s name, and the token,
   that I was betrothed as bride to you.”

47. “I am called Svipdag. My father was called
   Sunbright. I wandered the wind cold ways.
   No man strives against the word of Urth
   even if it is among the worst.”

48. “Welcome! I have won my wish.
   My kiss shall follow the welcome.
   The sight of the beloved
   who has love for the other is very pleasing.”
49.
Lengi ek sat ljúfu bergi á,
beið ek þín dægr ok daga;
nú þat varð, er ek vætt hefi,
    at þú ert kominn, mögr, til minna sala.

50.
Þrár hafðar er ek hefi til þíns gamans,
    en þú til míns munar;
nú er þat satt, er vit slíta skulum
    ævi ok aldr saman.”

49.
“Long I sat on Lyfjaberg
waiting for you day after day.
Now what I wished for has happened
now that you have come, my man, to my hall.”

50.
“I had patience for your love
and you for mine.
Now it is certain that we two shall live
our lives and times together.”
Lay of Fjolsvith: Notes

1. Utan Gartha may mean “outside the wall” or that they are located in Utgarth, the region beyond the wall of Midgard in the east.

   Though the text refers to the dwelling of the tribe of thurses, Mengloth, and Fjolsvith are of the tribe of ettins. Thurses dwell in the same region.

   “Wet wilderness ways” is a translation of the words urgar braut. Braut refers especially to a road cut through rock or wilderness terrain. Urgar means “wet” and is related to the word Ur which refers to drizzling rain and is found in the name of rune Ûruz.

2. The dangerous flame about which Svipdag wanders is no doubt the same as the flickering flame that surrounds Sigdrifa in the Lay of Sigdrifa st. 31-32.

4. Fjolsvith calls Svipdag a vargr which literally means wolf and figuratively means outlaw.

12. “The Limbs of Leirbrime” are often thought to be the arms and legs of a clay giant since the name seems to mean “sea of clay.” This is the material from which the wall Gastropnir was built, and according to the text, it will “always stand as long as mankind shall live.” It seems likely that the wall is made from the limbs or branches of Mimameith, the world tree which will also endure and can be felled by neither fire nor iron.

21. The word “fruit” is expressed in the Icelandic by the word moth which is indistinguishable in its dative form from the word mothr which means wrath or moodiness and is cognate with our word “mood.” This ambiguity is probably intended to indicate that an aspect of the spirit of the tree is contained in its berries.

In stanza 22 this “mood” is referred to as a fire that the tree brings forth from its berries for use by woman who are in a state of madness or possibly pregnant. This passage is very vague and it is difficult to discern the precise effect or function of the berries. The passage seems to say that the women, as a result of the fire from the berries, will turn outside from within. This has led some to believe that it is a means of procuring an easy childbirth, though it is as likely to refer ecstatic states brought on by the berries. Please note that yew berries are highly toxic. One of the Rune-Gild drightens once tried burning yew berries and breathing the smoke. He is lucky to be alive.

The passage concludes with the phrase, “such is the power of the meter (divine measurer, especially Tyr) among men. Meter or mjotuthr is probably another term for the divine spark contained in the fruit of the tree and may be the same as the mothr (mood) referred to earlier. It may also refer to the world tree itself. The word mjotuthr used here to describe the tree means meter or measurer and is cognate with the Anglo-Saxon word “Metod” which generally refers to God. In Icelandic contexts it is also used often to refer to a divine dispenser of Wyrd. In stanza 47 of Voluspa the word mjotuthr is used and it is said to be kindled or lighted, recalling the yew berries bringing forth fire in FS 22. In stanza 2 we find the word associated with nine giantesses, recalling the nine maids who dwell with Mengloth, and is said to be located beneath the earth and is called the “worthy measurer beneath the earth.”
Volume II

Keys to Practical Application
Chapter 1

Runic Keys to Eddic Myth
Runic Transliteration

The Eddic poems were composed by rune masters and are much concerned with the mysteries of the nine-worlds. These poems were composed in such a way that each stanza may have several related levels of meaning. Some of the mysteries of the world encoded may be explored by studying the content, the resonances of the words themselves, the meter and the grammar, but others may be revealed by runic thinking. Runic transliteration is one method of fathoming the deeper esoteric meanings encoded into the Eddic stanzas. Runic transliteration is a means of finding the runic expressions for the ideas and magic contained in the stanzas. Many Eddic stanzas are spells and may be expressed by runes in galder and gand magic. Runic transliterations may be used both to deepen your understanding of the Gods and your own soul, and employed magically to effect changes in the subjective and objective realms.

There are three main runic alphabets or “Futharks.” The twenty four character Elder Futhark is generally used by siblings of the rune-gild and other modern runesters. The poems of the Edda were composed during the Viking Age when the 16 character Younger Futhark was in use. The Eddic runesters were using this system when they were encoding the runes into their poetry. The main difference between the Futharks is their number of runic characters. There are 24 runes in the elder row and only 16 in the younger row. As time passed, the mysteries of the elder row were compressed and expanded in the younger row and fewer symbols were used to convey more complex ideas. For this reason, the younger row is sometimes more difficult to work with at first, but easier to use when you reach advanced stage of rune-work.

The runic alphabet was not primarily a system of writing. It was maintained not as for purposes of recording literature or other mundane records, but as system of magic. The elements of the runic system include order, name, number, aett, shape, sound and meaning.

Each rune has a definite place in the rune row. The order in which the runes appear should be studied carefully in order to understand how the runes are related to each other and how the runes of the row form a whole. Each rune has a number corresponding to its place in the row. The third rune, Thurs, can be expressed by the number 3. Each rune has a name that has bearing on its esoteric significance. Each rune has a place on an aett. The runic alphabet is divided into three rows called “aetts.” The runes F-U-Th-A-R-K form the first aett of six on the younger row. The next ten runes appear on two aetts of five runes. Runes can also be expressed numerically by the aett and the position on the aett in which they appear. The T rune (T) could be expressed as 3-1 meaning that it appears on the third row in the first place.

The shapes of the runes should also be considered though you should bear in mind that there were many variations on the shapes used for the runes. Finally, there are two rune poems for the younger row. A stanza of each poem is devoted to each stave. These poems provide keys to unlocking the mysteries of the runic staves (characters). Each rune is also associated with a particular sound, usually the first sound of their names. The charts below show the order, number, aett, name, sound, shape and meaning of the runes of the Younger Futhark.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Esoteric Interpretation of Name</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Gørlev</th>
<th>Major Variants</th>
<th>Phonetic Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>dynamic power</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>fertilizing essence</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>y/o/a/y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>breaker of resistance</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>th/an</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>power of the word, sovereign force</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>y</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>r</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>spiritual path or journey</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>k/g/ng</td>
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<td>꜖</td>
<td>꜖</td>
<td>h</td>
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<td>-R</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Old Norse Name</td>
<td>Translation of Name</td>
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<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>fé</td>
<td>cattle, money, gold</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>úr (r)</td>
<td>drizzling rain/slag/aurochs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>thurs</td>
<td>thurs (“giant”)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>áss</td>
<td>(the) god (= Ódhinn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>reidh</td>
<td>a ride, riding/vehicle/thunderclap</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>kaun</td>
<td>a sore</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>hagall</td>
<td>hail (a special rune name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>naudh (r)</td>
<td>need, bondage, fetters</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>íss</td>
<td>ice</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>ár</td>
<td>(good) year, harvest</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>sól</td>
<td>sun</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Týr</td>
<td>the god Tyr</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>bjarkan</td>
<td>birch (-goddess) (a special rune name)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>madhr</td>
<td>man, human</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>lögr</td>
<td>sea, waterfall (liquid)</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>ýr</td>
<td>yew, bow of yew wood</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Transliterating the Runes**

The following table shows how to transliterate Old Norse words phonetically. Note that nasals (m/n) before denatals (d/t) are generally not written. Thus *brandr* = BRÅD. Runes are never doubled. Odinn is therefore ÓÐIN. All such rules may be violated for magical purposes.

<table>
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<th>Consonants</th>
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Rune Poems

The Norwegian and the Old Icelandic rune poems are included here in their entirety in both the original languages and in modern translation. These poems are keys to the esoteric meaning of the runes of the Viking Age Futhark.
The Norwegian Runic Poem

This poem was penned around the twelfth or thirteenth century. Though the word *krist* appears in stanza 7, it is clear from the meter that Hropt was the God who originally appeared in this place. *Hr* sounded like “kr” in Old Norse. The first word that appears in each stanza is the name of the rune itself.

1. Fé vældr frænda róge;
   föðesk ulfr í skóge.
2. Úr er af illu jarne;
   opt lypr ræinn á hjarne.
3. Þurs vældr kvinna kvillu;
   kátr væðr fár af illu.
4. Óss er flæstra færða
   før; en skalpr er sværða.
5. Ræið kveða rossom væsta;
   Reginn sló sværðet bæzta.
6. Kaun er barna bölvan;
   böl görver nán fölvan.
7. Hægall er kalsastr korna;
   Kristr skóp hæimenn forna.
8. Nauðr gerer næppa koste;
   nökktan kælri í froste.
9. Ís köllum brú braiða;
   blindan þarf at læiða.
10. Ár er gumna góðe;
    get ek at örr var Fróðe.
11. Sól er landa ljóme;
    lúti ek helgum dóme.

1. [Money] causes strife among kinsmen;
   the wolf is raised in the woods.
2. [Slag] is from bad iron;
   oft leaps the reindeer over frozen snow.
3. [Thurs] causes the sickness of women;
   bad-luck pleases few.
4. [River Mouth] is the way of most journeys;
   but a sheath is for a sword.
5. [Riding] they say, is the worst for horses;
   Regin forged the best sword.
6. [Sore] is the curse of children;
   bale makes a man pale.
7. [Hail] is the coldest corn;
   Krist shaped the world in days of yore.
8. [Need ] makes for a hard condition;
   the naked freeze in the frost.
9. [Ice] they call the broad bridge;
   the blind need to be lead.
10. [Harvest] is good for men;
    I say Frothi was openhanded.
11. [Sun] is the light of the land;
    I bow to the holy judgement.
12. [Tyr] is the one-handed God; oft strikes the smith.
   [Týr] er æinendr ása;
   opt værðr smiðr blása.

13. [Birch] is the leafy green limb; Loki brought the luck of falsehood.
   Bjarkan er laufgroenstr líma;
   Loki bar flærða tíma.

14. [Man] is a growth of the earth; great is the grip of the hawk.
   Maðr er moldar auki;
   mikil er græip á hauki.

15. [Water] is a river that falls from the fell; but gold is dear.
   Lögr er, fællr ór fjalle
   foss; en gull ero nosser.

16. [Yew] is the wintergreen wood; it is wont to singe when it burns.
   Ýr er vetrgroenstr viða;
   vænt er, er brennr, at sviða.
The Old Icelandic Runic Poem

This poem was composed in the fifteenth century. Each stanza is followed by two words; the first a Latin translation of the rune name, the second an Old Icelandic word for “leader”. These additional words are further keys to the esoteric word for the runes.

1. Fé er frænda róg
   ok flæðar viti
   ok grafsheiðs gata
   aurum         fylkir.
1. [Money] is strife among kinsmen;
   the fire of the sea;
   and the path of the serpent.
   Gold           Leader of the Retinue

2. Úr er skýja grátr
   ok skára þverrir
   ok hirðis hatr.
   umbre         vísi
2. [Shower] is the crying of the clouds;
   and the ruin of the harvest;
   and hated by herdsmen.
   Shadow        Leader

3. Þurs er kvenna kvöl
   ok kletta búi
   ok varðróunar verr.
   Saturnus    þengill.
3. [Thurs] is the torment of women;
   and the crag-dweller;
   and the husband of Varðruna.
   Saturn        Thing Ruler

4. Óss er algingautr
   ok ásgards jöfurr,
   ok valhallar vísi.
   Jupiter     oddviti.
4. [Ase=Odin] is the old God;
   Asgard’s wild boar;
   Valhalla’s leader.
   Jupiter      Point-Leader

5. Reið er sitjandi sæla
   ok snúðig ferð
   ok jórðs erfiði.
   iter          ræsir.
5. [Riding] is a blissful sitting;
   and a swift journey;
   and the work of the steed.
   Journey      Worthy Man

6. Kaun er barna bóll
   ok bardaga [för]
   ok holdfúa hús.
   flagella     konungr.
6. [Sore] is the bale of children:
   a painful spot;
   the house of rotten flesh.
   Whip          King

7. Hagall er kaldakorn
   ok krapadrífa
   ok snáka sótt.
   grando        hildingr.
7. [Hail] is a cold corn;
   a shower of sleet;
   and a sickness of snakes.
   Hail          Battle Leader
8.
Nauð er Þýjar þrá
ok þungr kostr
ok vássamlig verk.
operaniflungr.

9.
Íss er árbörkr
ok unnar þak
ok feigra manna fár.
glaciesjöfurr.

10.
Ár er gumna góði
ok gott sumar
algróinn akr.
ananusallvaldr.

11.
Sól er skýja skjöldr
ok skínandi röðull
ok ísa aldrtrøggi.
rotasiklingr.

12.
Týr er einhendr áss
ok ulfs leifar
ok hofa hilmir.
Mars tiggi.

13.
Bjarkan er laufgat lim
ok lítittré
ok ungsamlígr viðr.
abies buðlungr.

14.
Maðr er manns gaman
ok moldar auki
ok skipa skreytir.
homo mildingr.

15.
Lögr er vellanda vatn
ok viðr ketill
ok glömmungr grund.
lacuslofðungr.

8.
[Need] is the hardship of the bondmaid;
a heavy cost (or choice);
and hard work.
WorkDescendent of the Dead

9.
[Ice] is the bark of rivers;
the roof of the waves;
danger of the doomed.
IceWild Boar

10.
[Harvest] is good for men;
and a good summer;
and the green acre.
YearAll-Wielder

11.
[Sun] is the shield of the clouds;
and a shining halo;
the deadly sorrow of ice.
WheelDescendent of the Victorious One

12.
[Tyr] is the one-handed God
and the leavings of the wolf;
and the hof-ruler.
MarsDirector

13.
[Birch] is the leafy limb;
and the little tree;
and the young wood.
Silver FirProtector

14.
[Man] is the joy of man;
the increase of dust
and the adorner of ships.
HumanGenerous One

15.
[Wetness] is the eddying water;
and the wide kettle;
and the land of fish.
LakeWorthy of Praise
16.
[Yew] is the bent bow;
and the brittle iron;
and the giant of the arrow.
Bow, Rainbow Descendent of Yngvi

16.
Ýr er bendr bogi
   ok brotgjarnt járn
   ok fifu fárbauti.
arcus       ynglingr.
Asking the Eddas

The Eddas are dense with meaning. For those who go the way of Odin, they are an unending source of wisdom. As the quest of the Odian is never ending, so even the high God himself continues to wander the wilderness ways in search of knowledge. Though he sees farther than all others, he sees not all. The Eddas offer us the accumulated knowledge of generations of rune magicians. Runic thinking is a way to “ask” the Eddas to yield their encoded spells and hidden lore.

The following steps should be taken in “asking” the Eddas.

1. Choose passages that intrigue you the most, passages that promise to yield insights that will be of the most immediate value

2. Contemplate the meaning of the passage in English and consider its connections to other passages in the same poem and in other Eddic poems.

3. Find the key words in the stanza and ponder their meanings. Look especially for names of holy beings and words for major holy words such as “might”, “main”, “galder”, “gand”, “Regin”, etc. To find out how these terms are used in other Eddic contexts, consult the index - there is no better way to come to an understanding of a word than to study all the ways it is used in the Edda.

4. Assign runes to the key words.

5. Transliterate the key words into runes.

6. Ponder the meanings of the runes in the key words. Especially consider how the combination of runes in the word is significant. Consider the number and the order of the runes.

7. Think deeply on these runes. Chant the names or the sound (the first letter of the rune name is usually the vowel or consonant associated with the runes - see the table of Pronunciation of the Runes) of the one or all of the runes in the word while visualizing one or all of these runes.

8. Distill the content you deem important into a bind-rune and or into a galdric chant or song for use in magical workings and to allow you to recall profound insights and states of consciousness you experienced during meditation. The stanzas of the Elder Edda are often spells in their own right. By knowing how to ask you may discover their hidden magic.

Suppose you are seeking lore on the soul because you wish to strengthen your presence of mind or your will, and after perusing the Eddic poems. You find the spells of The Galder of Groa draw you, especially Stanza 6 which is for staying strong and unshaken in trying circumstances.

“I sing to you the first and recall
the most useful which Rind sang to Rand,
so that you may shoot from your shoulders
what seems shocking.
Allow your Self to lead you.”

This is one of nine spells given a young man about to make an initiatory journey to Ettinhome. This is the first which Rind gave to her son by Odin named Vali or Rand who was born for the purpose of venging the death of Baldr, and most notably, to survive Ragnarok. Rand was born as a vehicle for the survival of part of Odin’s soul after his own death. Svipdag (the young initiate in The Galder of Groa) must also be prepared for death and
rebirth. The voyage to Ettinhome, a realm of the dead, may be seen as death and his emergence as rebirth. This spell was given to Odin’s son to ward his wits in from the terrors of the initiatory process.

If you can turn this stanza into a spell of your own, you will be able to maintain your composure in trying times. A spell for keeping your spirits high under duress may form the basis for a spell to shake off “warfetters” and other spells by which warriors are paralyzed in battle. You need not go to war, or to Ettinhome to test these spells - the trials of daily life may be used to test and develop your powers. In fact, it is best to develop your skills in less stressful environments before you need them for a real catastrophe.

Fierceness may be countered by fierceness. What is shocking, or fierce, may be itself attacked or shot. When something shakes your soul, you need to be able to deal with the source of the terror in the world and with the terror itself in your own soul. It is your own soul which must be mastered first; if you are out of your wits, you cannot handle a crisis effectively. You must first then be fierce with yourself. It is not the foemen in the outer world who are the real source of your terror, but rather your own perceptions of them and their actions and the way that these perceptions are processed by your unconscious mind and by your nervous system. You will learn to interfere with the unconscious patterns to bring about a resourceful state of mind rather than paralysis or hysteria.

The spell should initially be developed in your own magical working environment. Here you may recall a time of crisis in which you fell into a debilitating state of mind in which your subsequent actions only made things worse. Recall other stimuli that have shaken your confidence and moral and contain them in your hand with a symbol of your choice, say a shark tooth or a bind-rune. Associate this symbol with as much of the feelings associated with states of fear or shock as you are able, until recalling the symbol is sufficient to recall the states. Now that you have anchored the feelings to a symbol, you have some basis for control over them.

The next step is to anchor your most exalted and resourceful states of mind to a runic spell. In some cases you may wish to include a state of anger, if it is appropriate to the type of situation you envision. Anger is also easily summoned to replace fear. These feelings may be anchored to a bind rune and a galdric rune song derived from stanza 6. Once this has been accomplished, you will carve the runes onto an object, say a hammer, while singing the runes of your galder. As you do this you should recall the exalted states you wish to associate with these symbols and concentrate them in the object in which you are carving the runes. In a ritual setting, recall the negative feelings associated with the foemen and concentrate them in an object on which the symbol or bind rune you have associated with them has been carved - something made out of wood is ideal. Then bring out your hammer and recall the high states of mind. Visualize your sigil and sing your galder. Then smash the shocking object with the hammer, and imagine the negative states being totally overwhelmed by the positive. After this, test your sigil in trying circumstances in your daily life until threatening situations stimulate you to states in which you have control of yourself. Ideally, you will be able to become angry if that is needed, but it will be a controlled anger from which the controlling part of yourself is removed and from which you may be withdrawn. The final clause of the stanza states “Allow your Self to lead yourself.” This is a spell in which the self acts on itself to effect change in itself. This recalls how Odin sacrificed himself to himself on the world tree to bring his conscious self to his supra-conscious Self for a profound flash of insight. In your higher state you will ideally have access to rede from your higher unconscious Self, or fetch, besides having conscious control of your body and nervous system. The ability to gain greater awareness of and interaction with the higher self may be gained by a meditative program such as The Nine Doors of Midgard by Edred Thorsson which provides the basic magical exercises for the Rune-Gild.
Finding Key Words
Alliteration

After you have studied the meanings of the passage on their various levels as they relate to your purpose, begin looking for the words that are most powerful and most useful to your aim. Look especially for words that alliterate in the Old Norse text. Alliterating words often resonate powerfully. Alliterating words begin with the same sounds. Half-lines, those lines with a large space in the middle in the Old Norse text, are bound by alliterating words. The first line of stanza 6 is composed of two half lines.

“Thann gelk ther fyrstan, thann kvetha fjolnytan”

The first word in the first half-line alliterates with the first word in the second, thann alliterates with thann. The second word of the first half-line alliterates with the second word in the second half-line; gelk with kvetha. Fyrstan and fjolnytan also alliterate. Normally there are two sets of alliterating words binding two half-lines and these words were the accented words (those words stressed in the metrical scheme). All vowels alliterate with each other. J, which is pronounced y (see table of Old Norse pronunciation) alliterates with all vowels. Sk, sp, and st usually alliterate with sk, sp, and st respectively, and rarely with s+ other consonants. The rules of meter may also be used to understand which words resonate with which others; see E.V. Gordon’s An Introduction to Old Norse for the rules of meter in Old Norse poetry.

Key words may also be selected for the bearing they have on your aims, for the bearing the runes they contain have on your aims. The names of holy beings should be considered as well as words conveying especially powerful holy concepts such as might and main. In stanza 6, words such Rind, and Rand, would be selected because they are names of holy beings. “Shoulder” and “shocking” might be selected because they alliterate. The word sjalfr might be selected because of its bearing on the aim of the spell, and because the Self is such an important concept in Odian magic. The word shoot (ON SKjotir) since shooting is the action by which the fears that bring loss of self control are driven away. Those who wish to consider the double and triple meanings of some of the words in a given passage, or who want to understand the shades of meaning of a word, may consult an Old Norse dictionary. Once you have a list of words, transliterate them into runes and contemplate the significance of the runes, especially as they bare on your aims. “Shoot” and “Self” are two likely choices, which may be transliterated ᚴᛁᚦᛁᚴ and ᚴᛁᚦᛁᛚᚴ respectively.

Before meditating on the links between the runes in the word(s), meditate on the individual runes themselves. From these words, you may select one or all of the runes and work them into a bind rune or sigil. There are a number of methods for encoding runes into sigils.

The first rune in both “self” (sjalfr) and “shoot” (skjotir) is the S rune. In consulting the tables of runic correspondences, you will find that the name of the Sol meaning sun, it is associated with the sun wheel, and therefore also with the hammer of Thor, (like the hammer, it kills giants), and it is number eleven and appears on the second aett, the aett of Hagal. More important, it sounds like our word soul, and may be taken as the guiding light of consciousness in the soul which should also be the center from which the rest of the soul is organized and its activities orchestrated, particularly in combination with the Tyr rune, the last and fifth rune in the word “shoot” (skjot) which serves as an axis about which the sun wheel rotates. The K rune Ú is the controlled heat of consciousness used to loosen the ice of the Iss rune which holds the rest of the being together. Ice holds the soul together, but heat is needed to bring the dissolution that allows change. The fires of the soul must be kept in control, or the effects of the terror will be augmented by dissolution. On the other hand, heat is needed to prevent the soul from freezing into the state of shock and suffering a paralysis. Fire and ice must be held in balance by the guiding force of consciousness ᚳ in conjunction with the ordering principal of the Tyr rune. If fire is overwhelmed by ice, the soul will freeze and be fettered, and if ice is overwhelmed by fire and turned water or steam, there will be weakness and madness. In the wrong measure you will have the drizzle of the Ú rune, rather than the power of the aurochs, circulating through your being.
Between the Sol and Tyr runes, stand Kaun (fire), Iss (Ice) and the Ur (drizzle, rain, slag, aurochs) rune. Ur is easily shaped by either fire or ice. Ice can make it strong as iron or hard as snow, or it may be heated to molten liquid or drizzle. The U rune is also the principal by which the resulting energies are channeled through your being. These dynamic forces of fire, ice, and iron or earth are balanced and regulated by the first and the last runes of the root of our word shoot, the Sol and the Tyr rune. Sol is the guide of consciousness and Tyr is the strength of will and the principal of right order about which the elements of the soul are marshalled and arrayed. Tyr, like Sol, is a guiding principal, it is the pole star of the night sky, by which the soul is guided in the absence of Sol. It is the cosmic axis of the world column (tree) Irminsul about which the wheel of Sol rotates. For the purpose of this magical working, we may also think of the Tyr rune as an arrow by which the will is projected (sent) and effected.

Once you have pondered the meanings of the words in the stanza and their relevance to your aims, abstract them into a runic sigil and galder. In this case we have selected the words “shoot” and “self.” The act by which the self is protected is that of shooting, therefore shoot is perhaps the single most useful word. The idea of Self may be anchored by the S rune, since both words begin with this letter, and for reasons discussed above. The Tyr rune might be included for its ordering power and as the instrument of the destruction of the state of shock. The sigil may look like this:

Emblazon the sigil on your memory while in the state of mind you would have when under a state of duress. To summon such states while in meditation, recall instances in which you have been this state, as many as you can, and associate them with the image of the sigil and the sound of the galder, which may be the intonation of one or more of the runes in the word “shoot.” The state may be further anchored to a hand gesture that imitates the sigil or one or more of the runes that comprise the sigil.

Seeking Rede From Within the self

Number was a means by which meaning was encoded into the Eddic stanzas. Numerology has been part of many systems of philosophy in the past, many of which are well known in occult circles today. A typical approach is to take a familiar system of numerology, such as that of the Kabbala, and incorporate it into rune-work. This may work as a magical system for an individual magician, but it will not be authentic. For authenticity, look for numerological thought in the Eddas themselves. Try to understand the Eddas on their own terms by looking at the contexts in which a given number occurs in the Eddas. Look at the kinds of things and events that happen in twos, threes, fours, etc. Look at the events that occur in cycles, the number of phases to the cycle, and numbers of events that occur within a phase. After considering the Eddas, then go to other Germanic sources, such as saga and folklore. Scholars have done a good deal of work investigating the meaning of mythic symbols, but have barely scratched the fertile field of northern tally lore. Runologists have been aware that number is an important part of magical runic inscriptions, but little has been done to get at meaning of the numerological content.

Number, like myth, is a system of abstraction and communication. Just as myths may have several levels of meaning and may sometimes convey complex ideas in abstract form, so complex abstract ideas are encoded into number lore. To extract this lore you need to study the Germanic lore on numbers.

Edred Thorsson and Robert Zoller have made good progress in this direction but much remains to be done. Here I will summarize some of their observations and opinions to help you along in your own work. For more infor-
mation you may consult Runelore by Edred Thorsson, or Skaldic Number-Lore by Robert Zoller available through the Rune-Gild.

Three and its multiples, especially three, nine, and twelve were among the holiest of numbers for the Germans. The old Germanic number system used to be quasi-twelve based. Hence our unusual system of measures in which we have twelve inches to a foot. In old Germanic tongues, the word “hundred” meant 120. Also note that we have the words eleven and twelve instead of something like one-teen and two-teen. Twelve and its multiples were also especially holy. The Elder Futhark had twenty-four runes. Four is another key number. The holy number twelve may be looked upon as three fours or four threes.

The following are some keys to use in thinking about the first nine digits.


2. Think in terms of polar opposites such as fire and ice, the two sexes and other extremes. Also consider holy teams such as the ravens Huginn and Muninn, or the wolves Geri and Freki.

3. The number of holy beings and things that come in threes is overwhelming. Note especially Odin-Vili-Ve. Three seems to be a number of dynamism.

4. The dwarves at the four quarters, Northi, Austri, Suthri and Vestri may be though of as wardens of the four quarters who keep order and four as a number of stability.

5. Rarely occurs in Eddic lore. Old Teutonic week consisted of five days. There are five runes in the names Odin and Woden.

6. Rare in Eddic sources. Best you draw your own conclusions.

7. There were traditionally seven days between a death and a funeral. There is little mythic lore on the number seven.

8. Holy things are sometimes listed in eights. There were eight runes in each aett of the elder Futhark. In Havamal 137 there eight cures for eight woes, and in stanza 144 there are eight steps to runic work. In The Lay of Grim there is a list of the eight finest things.

9. Nine is the HOLY NUMBER. There are nine-worlds connected by the world ash upon which Odin hangs for nine nights.

Each rune has numeric value. This may be expressed in its position in the row, or by its place on a given aett. The Thurs rune is the third rune on the row and may be expressed by the number 3. It may also be expressed by the numbers 3 and 1 since it is the third rune on the first aett. The Sol rune may be expressed by the number 11 since it is the eleventh rune in the row. It may also be expressed by the numbers 2 and 5 since it is the fifth rune on the second aett. Look at the rune poems when searching for the meaning of numbers by looking at the runes they go with. You may also explore the number of runes in a given rune name. Sol has three runes in it and therefore associated with the word three by its ‘rune count.’ You may also tally up the numeric values of the runes contained in the rune name. Sol contained the Sol rune (11), the Ur rune (2) and the Logr rune (15) for a total of 28. Or it may expressed as 2:5, 1:2, 3:4.

Once you have a feeling for some of the numerals, especially the holy ones, then you may apply numerical analysis to Eddic stanzas, lines, half-lines, or words to elicit deeper meaning and find ways to express a passage numerically. One way is to find the rune count of a line or half line.
There are many ways to “ask” the Eddic stanzas. As you begin exploration by one means, you will find others, and the truths of the world will unfold before you forever.
Chapter 2

Working With Holy Wights, Natural Forces and Their Holy Names
Working With Holy Names

Though the *Lay of Alvis* is frequently disregarded as a useless collection of synonyms, it is in fact an important source for the holy ritual and magical names used by the denizens of the nine worlds to invoke fundamental natural forces of Midgard. The stanzas of this lay reveal holy language of wights beyond Midgard that may be used in invoking them and the natural forces of Midgard. This language reveals relationships between Midgard and the outer worlds. Finally, theses stanzas are the keys to creating galdra-magical songs or chants - to work with the natural forces of Midgard and the wights of other worlds.

The holy words of the *Lay of Alvis* function much like kennings. A kenning is a poetic circumlocution for an ordinary event: the sea may be called a “whale road”, for example. In modern literary circles, the kenning is admired as a clever and amusing poetic device, though they originally functioned as holy words by which divine powers and wights could be called in ritual and magic.

Holy-words distill sacrality from ordinary events and allow the speaker to transcend profane consciousness to a higher state of awareness of the profound beauty and normally unseen numinous power of the world. In such a state a vitki may experience a deep state of awe and awareness of some part of the world and its wights.

In the *Lay of Alvis*, Thor interrogates the dwarf Alvis (Allwise) for the words by which the wights of the nine worlds to call thirteen of the natural phenomena of Midgard including:

1. Earth  
2. Heaven  
3. The Moon  
4. The Sun  
5. Clouds  
6. Winds  
7. Calm  
8. Sea  
9. Fire  
10. Forest  
11. Night  
12. Seed  
13. Ale

Each of these elements is in someway related to the others by its function or holy name. The elements that are most closely related are listed next to one another and form pairs.

1. Earth and Heaven  
2. Moon and Sun  
3. Clouds and Wind  
4. Calm and Sea  
5. Fire and Forest  
6. Night and Seed

Ale is the leftover as the odd element which can be used to begin another series of pairs. This may at first seem an unlikely combination compared to earth and heaven, but *The Words of Har* 137 shows a connection “when you drink ale, call upon the main of the earth, for “earth is good against ale.” The same stanza also sheds light on the magical uses of grain, the moon, fire, and trees, as well as recalling earth’s use for drawing off floods. The other pairs include:

1. Earth and Ale  
2. Heaven and Moon  
3. Sun and Clouds  
4. Wind and Calm  
5. Sea and Fire  
6. Forest and Night  
7. Seed and Ale

For each element, six holy names are given that are used by six categories of beings from the nine worlds. Denizens of seven of the nine-worlds are represented in the poem. Only beings from six of the nine worlds are included in any one stanza.
Those represented include the Ases of Asgard, the elves of Light-Elfhome, the Vanes of Vanaheim, the dwarves of Dark-Elfhome, Hel-folk from Helhome, ettins from Ettinhome and men from Midgard. There is no consciousness associated with Muspelheim or Niflhome as these are regions of the primal fire and ice that came together in Ginnungagap to create the world. There are three catagories of beings that are hard to classify. Some are names for different Asic and Odian forces in Asgard. Ginnregin (holy advising powers, specifically the powers of consciousness of the Aesir) appears twice in the Lay of Alvis and appears elsewhere in the Eddas. In The Words of Har 80 they are associated with the creation of the runes. The other beings are “uppregin” (high advising powers), “sons of Ases,” and ”Suttung’s sons.” Suttung’s sons are the ettins who dwelled with Suttung who once held the mead of poetry.

Three catagories of beings appear in every stanza: Men are listed first, then the Ases, and ettins are listed fourth. The other beings will change place with one another. Vanes usually appear in the third place but are listed in the sixth in stanza 10. On two occasions third place is filled by the Ginnregin and on other occasions by Hel-folk. Hel-folk are usually listed sixth. The fifth place is always occupied by elves or dwarves.

Some of the meanings that bind some of the more unlikely pairs may be discovered by looking at the holy names. In the first series, forest and fire do not seem as appropriate as a pairing of fire and sea. The stanza on forest names shows that ettins consider it fuel or firewood. Lay of Fjolsvith 22 shows that the mood (spirit) of Yggdrasil brings forth a fire for hysterical women which makes it clear that there is a magical fire in wood.

Deeper levels of understanding of the meanings and uses of these stanzas may be acquired by fathoming the holy names and the wights who use them. All the words used by a single type of being may be compared to gain insight into its holy language. The words for the elements that appear in pairs may be compared to understand their relationships with one another, with Midgard and the other worlds. Runic transliteration and deep meditation are useful tools. Also check other Eddic lore concerning these elements.

The thirteen elements are phenomena experienced by the wights of the other worlds when they fare forth to Midgard, and which are reflected in some way in their own gards, since these elements are expressions of fundamental numinous powers that flow through the universe - they are the stuff of which the nine worlds are made. It is the function of priests and magicians to know the divine forces that are essences behind the natural phenomena we experience in Midgard. These numinous powers are the divine reality behind nature. Natural phenomena are expressions of these pantheisitic magical forces. These powers are the stuff with which the magician works.

In order to work magically with these divine forces, the vitki must gain both an intellectual grasp of the qualities of these forces through scrutiny of the Eddic and folklore sources and practical experience by summoning them in religious and magical workings by their holy names. Those working with the runes may find that they are already familiar with these forces from workings with the runes that govern them.

So also must our elders and gothis come to know the beings of the nine-worlds by summoning them and performing blessings in their honor. At first it is very difficult to become aware of these wights and elements, but by invoking the elements with their holy names and meditating on them in the presence of the natural phenomena which are their expressions one comes to know the numinous forces associated with the sky, begin by quietly gazing into the heavens and admiring their beauty. As your sense of the sky’s beauty deepens, become aware of its might and the sense of beauty turns to awe. In a state of ecstatic awe you may experience the elemental forces of the sky. By singing or chanting the holy names of the elements during part of this experience, you internalize the associations between names and the feelings you had and the knowledge you gained during the meditative sittings. Later it will become possible to invoke the holy powers of the sky in ritual settings in which the sky is not in view and with little or no meditative preparation.

To summon one of the wights of the outer gards, find an environment for which these wights have an affinity. The Ases and Vanes are best summoned at harrows and hofs raised for the purpose. Ettins and dwarves are best
summoned in the presence of stone, crag and cliff at night. Elves are best summoned in the presence of lush vegetation and an open sky during the day. As one works with the world’s wights and elements, one will become able to detect their presence while in mundane states of mind and be able to cross easily from a mundane state to a holy state by means of holy names. The essences of the phenomena of Midgard are to be found in the other eight worlds. Rain and clouds have corresponding counterparts in Ettinhome and Dwarfhome. A rock holy to the dwarves in Midgard has its counterpart in Dwarfhome. When we enter a holy space, we are close to the spirits of the other worlds. Here it is easiest to enter a holy frame of mind. Just as we are used to meeting the gods in ritual spaces in which a gate has been created between Midgard and Asgard so may we summon dwarves, elves, ettins, and land-wights into specially prepared ritual spaces in the rocks and the winds when we know how to call them in their holy languages. And so we may also commune with them.

Just as there are howes, harrows, crags, springs and groves in Midgard that are gates to the homes of ettins, Vanes, dwarves, and elves, so are there rocks, harrows and groves in these outer homes which serve as gates to Midgard. The natural phenomena of Midgard have counterparts in the outer homes as well.

Each stanza provides several holy names which provide keys to several aspects of a given element. These keys unlock the cluster of powers and attributes of the natural forces much as the rune poems provide clues to the qualities of individual runes. The rune poems and the stanzas of the Lay of Alvis can be used together to fathom runic connections with the elemental powers. Those working with streams of runic power from the earth, sky etc. in the Rune-Gild are especially well prepared to begin working with the natural forces of the Lay of Alvis.

In comparing the Lay of Alvis to the rune-poems it might be noted that some of the elements and wights of the Lay of Alvis appear in rune-names and rune-poems. The three wights who always appear in the stanzas of Lay of Alvis, Men, Ases, and ettins are found in the As rune, Mathr rune and Thurs rune. Fire is associated with several runes, including Fe, Kaun, and Nauth in the younger row. The sun is found in the Sol rune, the sea in the Logr rune, trees in the Bjarkan and Yr runes, and the sky and clouds may be associated with the Ur and Hail runes. The esoteric uses of the elements listed in the Lay of Alvis may be further fathomed by transliterating their names into runes. The powers of the elements may then be tapped by arranging the runes that invoke the qualities of the element you want to work with into a sigil or bind rune, and carving it while chanting these runes and the names of the elements.

**Working With the Wights and Forces of The Lay of Alvis**

**Working With the Wights**

The blessing and the working are the two main types of ritual interface with the wights of the nine worlds. The blessing is the worshipful way of rightly honoring these wights to reaffirm our kinship with them, to acknowledge their place in the order of things, to thank them for the good we have gotten from them. Thereby right order is kept and goodly wights are called to the hospitality of our homes and hearths.

The working is a magical act in which friendly wights are called to aid the vitki in some magical operation. Once you have become familiar with the beings of one of the outer gards (Dwarfhome, Elfhome, Vanahem etc.) through meditative sittings, trance journeys (faring forth), or partaking of blessings you may gain a “feeling” for working with certain types of beings. At this point you may try inviting these wights to work with you in your magical workings.
Blessings

The ritual blessing is a nine part operation which includes:

1. Hallowing 6. Drinking
2. Reading 7. Blessing
3. Rede 8. Giving
4. Call 9. Leaving
5. Loading

These parts serve the following functions:

1. Hallowing sets ritual time and space apart from routine
2. Reading puts rite into mythic context
3. Rede links myth to purpose of rite
4. Call summons gods or wights to ritual space/time
5. Loading charges drink with holy might
6. Drinking circulates holy might within
7. Blessing circulates holy might without
8. Giving restores rightful part of might to deities.
9. Leaving declares work rightly done/return to routine

The blessings of the Troth may be celebrated alone or in groups. It is common for the ritual operations to be divided up among two or three celebrants in group workings. Roles may be divided as the kindred leader sees fit, though the following three roles are most traditional: Theal, Shope and Goodman. The Theal performs speaking parts in which holy powers are invoked and their blessings given. The Shope speaks those parts involving the setting of mythic and social context. The Goodman performs nonspeaking ritual actions involving the distribution of the holy liquid.

At the beginning of most rites the speaker strikes the holy stance of the rune Y. This is done by standing straight with the arms straight out and up at about a 45 degree angle. This is an old and holy stance taken by Germanic peoples when they commune with holy beings. This pose was known even to the Romans.

The ninefold blessing parts are elaborated below.

1. Hallowing: A hammer working or some other method of setting a space apart for holy working is performed. In the hammer working the hammer sign is traced in the air in air to the North, East, South, West and above and below the celebrants with the words “Hammer! Hallow and hold this stead.”

2. Reading: A passage from the Eddas or sagas is read or recited. The passage should be about the wights that are being called on and the great deeds and attributes of these wights.

3. Rede: The content and significance of the reading may be further elaborated or it may add details from other myths. It may also state the purpose of the blessing in general terms.

4. Call: Here the wights are invoked by their names when known. The positive attributes and deeds of these beings are again glorified, and as poetically as possible.

5. Loading: Ale is poured into a drinking horn, and the horn is raised aloft. The speaker may then verbally offer the might of the gathered folk housed in the ale to the wights. This might is blended with the might of the holy wights summoned in the call.
6. Drinking: The speaker makes the sign of the hammer in the air over the rim of the horn and drinks from it. The horn is passed around to each sworn member of the kindred.

7. Blessing: Ale is poured into the blessing bowl on the harrow. A fresh cut evergreen sprig is dipped in the blessing bowl and the ale sprinkled on the harrow and sworn members with the words: “The blessings of (name of wights called) be upon you!”

8. Giving: Ale is poured onto the ground and the verbally dedicated to the wights who were summoned and to mother earth.

9. Leaving: The blessing is called to an end with the words “So shall it be!” added to any other closing remarks.

Blessing to the Dwarves

1. Hallowing: Speaker raises a hammer (not a Thor hammer) and hallows the quarters saying “By the hammer of Dvalinn, I hallow this harrow!”

2. Reading: Recite the story of the making of Thor’s hammer by Brokk and Sindri and the making of the other great godly tools told in Poesy of the Skalds (Skaldskaparmal) chapter 35 in the Younger Edda of Snorri Sturluson. The story of the brewing of the poetic mead by Gjalar and Fjalar in Poesy of the Skalds chapter I might be recited instead.

3. Rede: “Let us think now, on the uses to which the kin of Dvalinn and Durinn put the mead they made from the blood of Kvasir, that wisest of wights in whom the combined knowledge of the Aesir and Vanir had been housed. Let us ponder the wondrous works wrought by the sons of Ivaldi, by Brokk and Sindri. Let us strive for the craft, precision and excellence exemplified by the dwarves in our own daily deeds. Let us wisely wield their gifts.”

4. Call: “Hail Dvalinn and Durinn, mighty masters of craft and creativity, forgers of the blade Tyrfing. Hail Dvalinn, highest of dwarves, entranced in artistic inspiration and madness! Hail the sons of Ivaldi, shapers of Skithblathmir and Gungnir, who worked gold hair for Sif. Hail Brokk and Sindri, makers of the hard hammer Mjolnir, who fashioned Frey’s golden boar and the ring Draupnir. Hail Gjalar and Fjalar, brewers of Suttung’s poetic mead, killers of Kvasir! Hail the makers of mainful Brisingamen, the glowing glory of Freya, the lady of the Vanir! Hail Weyland and his wondrous works. Worthy wights of who dwell behind the gates of stone, throw open the gates this night and share with us the cup of craft and let us share blessings.”

5. Loading: Mead is poured into the horn and the horn raised aloft with the words: “We give you welcome and the gifts of our works, bring you gifts of honey and mead in thanks for the good you have granted us. In this cup let us mingle our main.”

6. Drinking: Speaker drinks and then pours mead into the horns of the other celebrants. The remainder is poured into the blessing bowl.

7. Blessing: The harrow and gathered folk are sprinkled with the mead in the blessing bowl with the words: “The blessings of the dwarven smiths and artists, the dwellers in the darkness, be upon us.”

8. Giving: The contents of the blessing bowl are poured onto the ground to the east of the harrow with the words: “To Dvalinn and Durinn, to the sons of Ivaldi, to Brokk and Sindri, to Gjalar and Fjalar, to Weyland, to the dwarves of the earth, to the dwarves of the stone, to Meadwolf and to Oakenshield, and to all their kin gathered here.”
9. Leaving: “So our work is wrought and it again renews our hearts to do worthy deeds and to strive towards our
goals with mighty moods, wise words, and trust in our own powers - ever holding our oaths to ourselves and
our folk.”

Magical Workings

In planning workings for elves, dwarves, and ettins, keep in mind the type of atmosphere that would be most
suited for such wights, and in what sorts of endeavors they are best suited to help you. Before engaging in a
working of this nature, it is wise to familiarize yourself with the lore available on the beings you choose to work
with. First check the *Elder Edda* and the *Younger Edda*. If you wish to pursue the matter further, check saga and
folklore material. References to these sources can sometimes be found in the notes of the better books on Norse
mythology.

Ettins are best called on for workings involving the acquisition of wisdom through meetings with the fetch-wife
or an ettin-wife, love, initiation, destruction, the acquisition of mead or poetry, access to dead ancestors, lore
concerning the creation and beginnings of the world, fertility and prosperity, troll-magic (the art of shape chang-
ing and faring forth), and some of the darker and deadlier arcane arts that you will find referred to in the Eddas.
The mysteries of the ettins and Ettinhome are deep and complex. Let those who would test their wit against
Vafthruthnir be very wise indeed.

Elves are best called for work involving weather magic, fertility, prosperity, etc. No doubt there are is a lot more
to the elves than indicated here, but I have not deeply fathomed their mysteries and am more familiar with the
ways of dwarves, ettins, and trolls.

Dwarves are best called for workings involving the acquisition of creative powers, the brewing of magical
meads, and the magical creation of holy objects, especially ritual objects such as rune knives, rings, spears, and
gands. The ritual creation of magical tools of artistry would also be fall into the ken of the dwarves.

Dwarven Workings

Before doing a magical ritual, you may want to familiarize yourself with the beings you are working with in the
context of a sitting. “Sitting Out” is a traditional practice in which you enter an altered state of consciousness
and commune with holy beings. This is best done at a site known to be holy to these wights already, or at a site
they would find pleasing. Crags, hills and grave hills and especially consecrated stone alters are pleasing to
ettins and dwarves. In Europe, there are still sites known to be associated with these wights, but in America we
must discover suitable sites and discover the dwarves and ettins who are already there, or invite them in. Stones
may be specially consecrated as “dwarf stones.” These serve as the gates between Midgard and Dwarfhome. By
these gates you may summon dwarves for communion, blessings or work, or you may “fare forth” into the home
of the dwarves. Be careful in such endeavors - it is possible to lose your mind or your soul. In *Saga of the
Ynglings*, King Sveighir followed a dwarf into a crag, never to return. In such farings, it is possible to obtain a
gift from the dwarves, such as a ring, a sword, or a necklace. The gift will be special to you and may be
integrated into your magical work for the purpose of obtaining higher states of consciousness or states of con-
sciousness that are good for specific types of work. Say you were given a ring, you might find you are able to get
in touch with your creative faculties by recalling it to your memory. I have found that dwarves and ettins are all
too eager to be of help in magical work.

The following working is for the express purpose of endowing physical objects with numinous properties for
specific purposes. Simply by handling the object, you be able to bring on higher states of mind, or artistic states
of mind that were generated in the ritual setting in which they are created. If you are an artist, you might wish to
charge a pen or a brush with the power to put you in touch with creative energies. To go a step further, you might
hallow the tool for the express purpose of performing magical acts, such as carving, painting, or drawing runes
or magical sigils or creating magical art objects.

**Working for Forging a Magical Tool**

A. The Harrow

The harrow should be set up to resemble the basic components of a blacksmith shop. Those who are themselves
jewelers or metalsmiths of some sort may take the idea behind this working and set it to the metaphors of their
own trade and may even use their own work space as the ritual chamber. Besides the tools used in a blessing,
include a small brazier, to be set on the south side of the harrow to symbolize the fires of the forge and the
energies of Muspell. A bowl or cauldron of water or some other liquid that seems appropriate should be set on
the side of the alter to act as the liquid in which the tool is tempered and to symbolize the waters of Hverglmir.
In the west set a bellows or small fan to represent the winds of the home of the heavens or of Vanahelm. A
hammer may be set in the east to symbolize the iron and wood of Ettinhome in the east. An anvil (any hard flat
surface will do) may be set in the middle of the harrow surface to symbolize Midgard, the realm in which the
elements and energies of the nine worlds meet are synthesized and transformed. The elements of the four quar-
ters are hereby brought together for the shaping of a magical tool. It also possible to set the fire, water, etc.
slightly away from the harrow rather than on it. It is also possible that you will want to include other elements
from the nine worlds for the charging of the tool you are working on. Feel free to innovate.

Place the mead on the east side of the alter and spig on the west. Other tools, including the gand and rune
carving and coloring instruments may be placed in the center near the anvil.

B. The Working

1. The working may ideally be placed in the context of a dwarf blessing with minor changes, up to the point of
the blessing phase, at which time the actual working takes place. The call should be modified to include the
following invocation to Northi, Austri, Vestri and Suthri the dwarven wardens of the four quarters.

   a. Face the east in the Ý stance and call or sing the name Austri three times and say “Austri, warden of the
eastern gates, let might and main of the ettin homes flow forth to dwell in the iron on this harrow.”

   b. Face south and call or sing the name Suthri three times and say “Suthri, warden of the southern wickets. Fling
open the gates and let the all-burning fires of Muspell flow forth to dwell in the fires of the hearth at this
harrow.”

   c. Face west and call or sing the name Vestri and say “Vestri, warden of the western wicket, fling wide the gates
to Vanahelm. Let the wafting winds of Hraesvelgr rush forth to this harrow to fan the flames of Muspell.”

   d. Face north and call or sing the name Northi three times and say “Northi, warden of the northern wickets, fling
wide the gates of Niflhel. Let the waters of Hverglmir flow forth to fill the waters on this harrow with their
might and main.”

After the mead has been drunk and the harrow has been sprinkled with mead, but before the remaining mead is
poured on the ground, perform the following actions.

   a. Light the fires of the forge.
b. Fan the flames with the bellows.

c. Circle the object to shaped over the flames nine times.

d. Set the tool on the anvil.

e. Carve runes into object, if you intended to do so.

f. Bring out the hammer: Think on the purpose to which the tool is to be set. Remind yourself of the state of mind you wish to attain when you are using the tool you are about to hallow. Hold the hammer in both hands, raise it aloft and focus the visions and feelings of this state of mind on the hammer and feel them in the hammer. Channel these energies through your arms and into the hammer. Then bring the hammer down over the tool and transfer the numinous power from the hammer into the tool.

g. Dip the tool in the water in the north to solidify shaped energies in the tool.

h. Pour the remaining mead on the ground and close with the words “So it is done!”

**Weather Workings**

The elements in the *Lay of Alvis* may be summoned for work with the weather. I personally like a good rain storm, but will not attest that any of the thunder storms with which I have been blessed were the result of magic. Nevertheless, I have known some who are confident in their abilities to change the weather, and this sort of magic is very traditional and well attested in the old lore. Therefore I include suggestions for working weather magic based on the holy-language of the *Lay of Alvis*. I would recommend two steps: a.) Sitting Out (meditation) and b.) summoning. In meditation you should contemplate the names of the elements you are summoning and think deeply on their significance in the presence of the element if possible. Transliterate the Old Norse names into runes as described in Chapter 1. These transliterations may be turned into runic chants for the purpose of calling the elements with galder or gand magic. The more you get a feeling for working with an element in the presence of that element, and by exploring the Eddic lore on it, the more effective you be in summoning that element in ritual contexts.

To get a feeling for working with the clouds, go out on a cloudy day and chant a mantra consisting of the holy names ascribed to clouds. You may concentrate on one holy name until you understand how the atmospheres generated by this name differ from those of others. Once you feel that you are in tune with the qualities of a given name, summon them by chanting or singing a mantra, runic or otherwise, that you have created for this name. Imagine streams of this power flowing from the clouds into a sphere around your body and then inhale some of it with each breath and imagine it coursing through your body.

To call rain you will want to deal with three elements including clouds, wind and heaven and the names associated with them that are most pertinent to bringing rain.
Catalogue of Dwarf Names

This is a brief list of Eddic dwarf names and their translations.

Dvalinn=entranced; Note that Dvalinn is the dwarf who fashioned the sword Tyrfing in The Saga of King Heidrek the Wise, that he is the dwarf who brought runic wisdom to the other dwarves. Dvalinn is also the name of one of the Harts in GM who eats leaves from the limbs of Yggdrasil. Another one of these harts is named Dain which is also a dwarf’s name. The connection between dwarves, Dvalinn in particular, and harts occurs again in the story of King Heidrek. King Svafrlami chased a stag into the woods, but lost it at dusk and found instead two dwarves by a stone. He prevented the dwarves from entering the stone with a graven sword. He knew they were the most skilled of all dwarves and forced them to forge a sword. The sword was Tyrfing, the dwarves were Durinn and Dvalinn. Perhaps the hart is a wer-shape taken by dwarves in their daylight farings, and perhaps it is dwarves in the shape of harts who eat the leaves of Yggdrasil on the roof of Valhalla.

Nyi=new moon; Nithi=waning moon; Motsognir=mead drinker; Allthiof=Allthief; Austri=east; Vestri=west; Sudri=south; Nordri=north; Nar=corpse; Nainn=corpse; Nipingr=darkening?; Dainn=dead; Bifurr=shield ornament?; Bombur=large?; Nari=puny; Bafurr=bean; Ai=father of the tribe; Mjothosein=meadwolf; Vigg=horse?; Gandalf=wizard elf; Vindelf=wind elf; Thrainn=threatening; Thekkr=welcomed (also a name of Odin); Thorin=strong; Thorr=thriving (also a name of Odin, an elf, a sword, and a boar); Vitr=wise; Lit=beauty; Nyr=new; Regin=mighty; Ratsvid=wise-counsel; Fili=file; Kili=wedge smith; Fundinn=found; Nali=dead; Heptifili=file haft; Hannar=skilled; Frar=quick; Hornbori=hornblower; Fraegr=famous; Loni=The Shining; Jari=conflict; Fjallar=?; Frosti=frost.

The Lay of Alvis is a gold mine for those who wish to invite dwarves, elves or ettins to their blessings, and for those who are working with the magical streams of the elements.
Chapter 3

Spring Drama and Eddic Myth
Spring Drama and Eddic Myth

Myths are a means by which a society speaks about itself. Myths are about the order the world and define the sacred in its order. Sacred stories map the order of the cosmos, the social order, the natural order, the nature of the individual, and the structure of the soul. All of these orders are built in accordance with the same structure. The microcosm of the mind is mirrored in the macrocosm of the heavens. The society of the Gods is a mirror of that of their folk. The structure of the myths is the structure of reality. Myth and ritual define, preserve and celebrate the order and the holy.

Germanic myth is cyclic, like the year. Our holiest festivals are the seasonal holidays such as Yule and Easter. These festivals celebrate certain points in the seasonal cycle such as the regeneration of the year in the dead of winter and the full manifestation and return of the powers of nature in spring. The mysteries of the natural order and the seasonal cycle contain the mysteries of the other cycles and realms of existence.

The structure of the spring drama has been reconstructed by comparative study of myth, saga, folklore, folk custom, archaeology, place-names, and art. Of special worth are accounts of spring celebrations that survived throughout Europe into the early modern period. It is our task take the myths whose structure and motifs echo the archetypal spring drama, as reconstructed by scholars, and adapt them to this model as a basis for the production of authentic spring festivals in the modern world.

The Eddic poems in which spring drama motifs stand out most clearly are the lays of Skirnir, Svipdag, and Sigdrifa; though spring drama motifs are present, they have been obscured for having been preserved in writing at a time when people were more interested in the myths as entertaining stories of heroism and adventure, and as a result of having come down to us through the channels of Odinic cults in which these myths were interpreted in terms of initiation into the mysteries of magic and the runes. Therefore, the Eddic texts need to be understood in terms of the overall structure when you adapt them to a spring drama. You will find it best to reinterpret some of the text and to alter it slightly in some cases.

The themes of the spring drama reverberate powerfully throughout much Teutonic myth and literature. There are two main phases to the spring drama: 1.) The freeing of a divine or semi divine maiden in the underworld by a God or hero of the upper world. 2.) The marriage of the hero (May Lord) and the woman (May Queen).

Outline of Spring Drama

1. The May Lord is set on his quest for the May Queen in the underworld by the machinations of the May Queen. He may have indirect contact with the May Queen through a vision as in the Lay of Skirnir, or by contact with one of her minions.

2. The May Lord travels in disguise, especially an animal guise, to the underworld hold of the May Queen.

3. The May Lord meets the Winter Lord who sits on a howe hill warding the way to the May Queen, who is held in thrall to the Winter Lord as a spouse, daughter, or sibling.

4. The Winter Lord is a brother, father, husband, or some other close relative of the May Queen, and often a brother or father of the May Lord as well or instead. Such themes are preserved in much of the heroic literature.

5. Flying and or battle between the May and Winter Lords in which the May Lord is victorious and the Winter Lord slain or driven out of town.
6. May Queen brings chalice to May King and they drink, thereby hollowing their union and celebrating her return to Midgard.

7. Procession around fields and into town accompanied by revelry and merriment, followed by feasts, dances, and games etc.

Now let us consider this outline in light especially of the Lay of Svipdag, but also of the Lay of Skirnir, and the Lay of Sigdrifa, which provide much in the way of dialogue that can be used in spring dramas, some of which may actually be authentic survivals from the original spring drama from which the myth was taken.

1. Sending the hero on a quest by the May Queen or one of her representatives is not included in detail in the Eddic myths. The Lay of Skirnir opens with Frey having just glimpsed Gerth from the high seat and in the Lay of Fjolsvith Svipdag is compelled, in a magical battle with a woman who was either his stepmother or one of his father’s lovers, to visit Mengloth. In the archetypal version of the spring drama, the hero slays his own brother or father in order to take his bride and his kingdom. This may be the source of the motif of the dual kingship and harken back to rites in which kings were sacrificed.

2. The May Lord, compelled to seek a bride in the underworld, travels in disguise, often in a beast shape. In the Lay of Svipdag, Svipdag assumes the name of Vindkald (means windcold) in his encounter with the herdsman. The animal form he may have used in the original may have been a wolf, for Fjolsvith called him a “vargr” which has the meaning of both “wolf” and “outlaw”.

   In the Lay of Skirnir, Skirnir travels on a horse, perhaps as one originally, and does not reveal his name to the herdsman or to Gerth, but does not give a false name either.

3. The third phase is a contest between the May Lord and the Winter Lord. The Winter King is married to the May Queen and holds her in thrall, keeping the world captive winter. The Spring Lord battles with the Winter King to the death. In some instances, the Spring King is slain and resurrected before he triumphs over winter. Such combats were a central part of the spring dramas and were well preserved in the spring festivals that survived in Europe into the early modern period. In the mythic poems of the Edda, the battles appear as mere flytings. In the Lay of Svipdag there is a flyting between the hero in quest of the maiden and the herdsman on the mound before her yard. This recalls other Eddic flytings with underworld wights such as the Lay of Vafthruthnir, the Lay of Alvis, and the Lay of Grimnir, in which giants or dwarves are defeated in a contest of wits and lore. Svipdag triumphs when he reveals his true name. If such a flyting existed in the original spring drama from which the myth ultimately is ultimately derived, then we might guess that Fjolsvith was destroyed by the sun-like brilliance of Svipdag’s true identity when he casts off his disguise to reveal it. The dag in Svipdag means day. The meaning of the word svip is uncertain. So Thor slew Alvis by delaying him in conversation until the sun rose.

   In the Lay of Skirnir, there is no flyting between the hero and the herdsman, and it is possible that herdsman was not the Winter Lord in the original. Skirnir used the sword given him by Frey to defeat a giant before he reached the herdsman. Gerth feared that Skirnir had slain her brother prior to meeting with the herdsman. It could be that this myth was derived from a spring tradition in which the Winter Lord was the brother of the May Queen. It is also possible that the Winter Lord was Gerth’s father since Skirnir threatens to kill him. Perhaps there were two Winter Lord figures in the original spring drama.

The theme of the twin kings or Gods, one of whom slays the other to marry his bride, is common in the epic literature of the heathen north. It seems that two brothers would alternately replace one another on a yearly basis in spring drama rituals. In other versions, it seems that there is a long lineage of kings in which sons constantly replaced fathers.
4. After the Spring Lord defeats the Winter Lord, he is welcomed by the bride with a beaker of drink. Drinking from a beaker was common in elder Scandinavian marriage ceremonies and is known sometimes to have been accompanied by a prayer for prosperity. In both *Lay of Skirnir* and *Lay of Sigdrifa* the hero is offered a vessel of mead by the bride. In this phase it is safe assume that a ritual marriage was celebrated.

5. The procession had the purpose of leading the May Queen and King into town and making the fields fruitful.

The *Lay of Fjolsvith*, *Lay of Sigdrifa*, and *Lay of Skirnir* are clearly derived from spring drama myths. Because they are preserved in the form of dialogues they are good material from which to flesh out a spring ritual.

There are a couple of ways to present the spring ritual. One is by the use of effigies to represent the Gods, and the other is by use of human actors to represent the May Queen and Kings. The use of effigies to represent a Goddess or God is well documented, back even to the 2nd century. Generally it seems that there is one effigy and a priest who ceremonially marries the effigy, or that two effigies are married with a priest acting as mediator hollowing the marriage, much as Skirnir arranges the marriage between Frey and Gerth. Priests or priestesses who acted ritually as the consorts of a deity would either be of the opposite sex, and may have, in rare instances, dressed in the garb of the opposite sex as the priests of the twin Gods known as the Alcis were reported by Tacitus to have done.

When using effigies, it is customary to draw them about on a wagon. This again, is documented back to the 2nd century.

**Spring Drama Based on the Lay of Fjolsvith**

**Cast:**
Fjolsvith, Svipdag, and Mengloth. Extras might include the nine singing maidens who dwell in Lyr, and the hounds Gifr and Geri.

**Props and sets.**
1.) Alter with usual tools, plus any that are appropriate for a ritual marriage. 2.) Animal skins and mask of boar or other Vanic animal. 3.) Fire before alter. 4.) Perhaps a gate or door way before the alter with the fire in front of it. 5.) A mound or elevated area to symbolize a mound where Fjolsvith sits.

**Act I:**
Vindkald arrives before the herdsman Fjolsvith.

Fjolsvith:
Who is that fiend who stands before the fore-court and wanders before the flickering flame?

Svipdag:
What manner of fiend are you who stands in the fore-court and offers not hospitality to the wanderer?

Fjolsvith:
Have you no good words stranger? Fare hence homeward from here, through the wet wilderness ways! There is no shelter for you here!

The two pause and glare at each other until Fjolsvith interrupts the silence.

Fjolsvith:
Do you know who I am? Wolf! I am called Fjolsvith, and I am not free with my food. Never come again to this
hold. Run now! Run along boy! Run, Wolf, run outlaw, down the wet wilderness ways.”

Vindkald, shaken slightly, regains his composure.

Svipdag:
The first spell my mother recited to me, that I may shake from my shoulders what seems shocking.

Vindkald traces a sigil in the air and recites an incantation in Old Norse or Old English.

Svipdag:
An eighth my mother recited, that I not be vexed, by ettins.

Vindkald traces another sigil and chants another spell. He then stands undaunted by the ettin’s threats.

Fjolsvith:
Who do you seek or rather what is the nature of your quest? What is it that you want to know, friendless one?

Svipdag:
He desires to find the delight of his eyes who sees his most beloved. It seems that the wall around the golden hall is aglow. I come to claim this place as my alodial estate!

Fjolsvith:
Ha! Tell me lad, who are you, by whom were you born?

Svipdag:
I am Vindkald and my father was Varkald and his father was Fjokold.

Svipdag performs another incantation

Svipdag:
Listen ettin, now you tell me everything that I ask you.

Svipdag traces a sigil in the air whenever he repeats this refrain.

Stanzas 6-41 are then quoted verbatim using the refrain above for Svipdag’s parts.

Fjolsvith:
The loving maid sleeps only in my loving arms and this shall never be your patrimony, outlaw, unless your name be Svipdag. Now be on your way! The trolls take you.

Svipdag:
Wise ravens take your eyes foul fiend! I am Svipdag.

Svipdag engages in combat with the giant, either using a weapon or slaying the giant with his tusks or antlers or horns. Svipdag then casts off his skins and leaps over the flame. Mengloth carries a large horn of mead and greets him before the alter.

Mengloth:
From whence do you fare? What did your parents call you, oak of the mail thing? I shall know your father's name and the token that I am betrothed to you.

Svipdag:
I am called Svipdag, my father Solbjarti. I have wandered the windcold ways.

Mengloth:
Long I sat on Lyfjaberg waiting for you day after day. Now the thing I wished for has happened, now that you are finally here, my man.

Mengloth signs the horn.

Mengloth:
Hail Day! Hail days sons!
Hail the night! Hail the daughters of night.
Look upon us with friendly eyes and grant victory to us!
Hail the Aesir! Hail the Asynjur!
Hail him on the beneficent earth!
Goodly speech and human wit may you grant us
and healing hands while we live!

They drink and any other marriage rites are performed. Svipdag dawns foliage and he and Mengloth lead a procession and dancing around the alter and fire. Those up to it may jump over the fire in celebration of the triumph of spring.
Chapter 4

Magical Initiation and
Faring Forth into Ettinhome
Magical Initiation and Faring Forth into Ettinhome

The *Lay of Fjolsvith* and *Lay of Sigdrifa* are examples of spring drama stories that were understood in terms of initiation into higher mysteries of the soul and the nine-worlds by means of a union with the fetch wife.

Like the spring drama myths, the central event is intimate contact between a hero from Midgard and a divine or semi-divine woman in Ettinhome, but the imagery of the fertility rites is interpreted in terms of initiation. In modern psychological terms the fetch may be equated with the higher self. The fetch is a numinous tutelary spirit that belongs to each person and is that person’s means of access to higher unconscious wisdom and to divine knowledge. Fetch souls may also take the form of an animal. This is known as a person’s fetch animal while the contrasexual manifestation is known as the fetch-wife.

Initiation ceremonies are prominent in traditional societies and serve to transfer an individual from one status to another. Rites involve a symbolic death and rebirth. A young man is recognized as an adult after he has symbolically died and been reborn as an adult. Graduation and wedding ceremonies are the vestiges of initiation rites that remain in contemporary western culture.

Central to the initiatory experience is the “liminal” period. The liminal period is a time of symbolic death. It is the time in which the initiate stands between two states of being but in neither one nor the other. It is a time in which the initiate is an outsider with no status in society. Old patterns are dissolved so that new ones can be formed. In ceremonies of manhood boys are taken to the wilderness to undergo tests. Those who pass are taught new knowledge by tribal elders. When they return from the liminal state of dissolution they are reconstituted as new beings. Odian magic is largely about self-initiation. Initiations into manhood involve the reprogramming of the initiate by initiators. Self-initiation is a process whereby the individual explores his own soul and his environment and consciously brings about changes in himself to raise himself to more powerful states of being.

Ettinhome is the main liminal environment to which Odian magicians fare for self initiation. It is an underworld land of the dead, a land of awesome and terrible magical beings. It lays beyond the pale of our Middle Earth, a land of wards.

In the *Lay of Fjolsvith*, Svipdag is called a “warg” by the ettin herdsman who wards the hall of Mengloth. Warg can mean both outlaw and wolf. Indeed, Svipdag, as an initiate in the liminal state, is beyond the laws of society, hence an outlaw, until he returns.

Ettinhome is where Odin undergoes some of his most powerful initiatory experiences. It is at the hall of the ettin Suttung that Odin wins mead of poetry for Gods and men. It is at Mim’s well that Odin sacrifices an eye for second sight. It is in Ettinhome that Odin has numerous magical liaisons with ettin-wives.

By union with the fetch-wife the vitki gains access to divine wisdom from the higher unconscious self. The vitki not only weds his conscious self with his personal unconscious, but also with the collective unconscious, the world of the archetypes, the gods, the runes, great wisdom, and truth in a pure and undefiled form. At the time of the union the vitki may experience profound flashes of insight. Afterwards, he will have a stronger link with the fetch and have easier access to its guidance. It is at the time of this union that self-transformation occurs. This is the point in the liminal experience where the vitki remanifests and emerges from the liminal state a greater being.

At the time of union the fetch-wife offers a vessel of mead or ale to the vitki. When Sigdrifa gives drink to Sigurth, she gives him magical power and spells. Odin obtains a draught of mead from Gunnloth immediately after union. In the *Lay of Fjolsvith*, Mengloth gives Svipdag drink when they meet. By drinking the vitki brings the wisdom of the collective unconscious into himself and integrates it into his being. Faring forth is the act of immersing yourself in the unconscious, drinking is the act of internalizing it and integrating it with conscious experience.
Before faring forth, study the geography of the journey carefully. Know what obstacles you will likely face and devise spells to counter them. Look especially carefully at the *Lay of Svipdag*, the *Lay of Sigdrifa*, and the *Lay of Skirnir*. Also look at the descriptions of Ettinhome found in the *Younger Edda*. There is also useful information in some of the sagas.

The roads through Hel and Ettinhome are very similar and there seems to be a very close affinity between the two. Both are regions to which departed spirits fare. Ettins and the souls of ancestors are known to dwell together in hills and howe hills. The road to and through Hel and Ettinhome are typified by: 1.) the crossing of great bodies of water, especially rivers, which separate one cosmic region from another; 2.) traversing dark troll filled forests such as Mirkwood and Ironwood, which lie before the waters; 3.) roads that quake loudly beneath the tread of mortals and Gods. The greater the being, the more loudly the road trembles. 4.) Gates to the hold of the fetch wife guarded by hounds, a herdsman and flames. 5.) great wealth lays inside the holds of ettin-wives. These features are common to most accounts, though every account has its omissions, additions and variations.

**Faring Forth into Ettinhome**

Ritual work is done in a holy frame of mind. Faring forth requires the ability to get into deep states. As you gain experience you will become familiar with a variety of holy states of consciousness and the inner workings of your own soul. Faring forth is concerned not only with the exploration and work within the realms of the Gods, but also within one’s own soul. In routine consciousness, you will never reach Ettinhome or Helheim no matter how far you may journey. The crossing from routine to mythic reality requires an act of magic. This is accomplished with a variety of ritual and meditative techniques and facilitated by the use of holy sites where the boundaries between the worlds are thinner. In some cases, stepping into the holy stead will suffice to bring on a mythic state of consciousness. This will be more apparent when permanent holy sites are available. The more experience you have with meditation, magic, pathworking and other mind and soul work, the more likely you are to succeed in faring forth. The Rune-Gild’s *Nine Doors of Midgard* is the best place to start acquiring the skills needed for faring forth. It is good to visualize the journey in a light meditative state a few times before actually faring forth.

There are a number of ways to initiate and control trance states. I have found runes to be an effective tool for understanding and controlling my states of mind when faring forth.

There are a variety of techniques available for inducing trance and hypnotic states. Whether runes are used or not, a program of regular meditative and magical exercises is important to develop the skills needed for faring forth. Drums and drugs are commonly employed in traditional societies as vehicles for trans-mundane journeys. Drugs allow easy access to trans-mundane realms but it is difficult to control the experience. Generally speaking, the use of drugs for such work is ill advised. Though many traditional societies use hallucinogens on a regular basis as a shamanic vehicle, they have acquired the knowledge of the use of the drug over centuries and perhaps millennia. We have no significant surviving lore concerning the use of hallucinogens for such purposes among the Germanic folk. There is no evidence that I have yet come across for the use of *Amanita muscaria* by berserkers in the heathen age. This seems to be a fable that started in the 18th century. The sagas and Eddas contain not a peep on the use of any hallucinogenic plants.

Drumming is used by many traditional societies as a means of controlling trance states, but there is no evidence for the use of drums among the Germanic folk either. Our folk seemed to have relied heavily on poetry, singing, and chanting. Galder magic seems to have been the main vehicle of magical and mystical experience in the North.
Starting the Journey

Traditionally, such journeys were begun by sitting out at an ancestral grave site. If it is not possible to actually be at such a site, and more than likely it will not, then visualize an ancestral howe as the starting point for the journey. Begin the journey to the underworld at the doors of the dead.

Faring forth is the art of sending your conscious self forth into the world and the throughout the nine-worlds by transferring it to a suitable vehicle. Troll magic is the art of gaining mastery of the hamr by means of the will and shaping it to the form of an animal, transferring the conscious self into it, and detaching it from the body to walk the worlds. When Loki travels to Ettinhome he uses the falcon or hawk shaped hamrs of Freya or Frigg. The world hamr is often translated as cloak or skin in these contexts. Such translations conceal more than they reveal. Another way to fare forth is by transferring your conscious self into one of your fetch shapes. The fetch-wife may ride the hamr shape, or the conscious mind may take the form of its natural body and ride a fetch animal.

The Journey

The Lay of Svipdag shows us a glimpse of the geography of underworld from the doors of the dead, into and through Ettinhome to the hold of Mengloth. The spells of the Galder of Groa reveal sites likely to be seen on the way to Mengloth’s garth. These songs are spells to allow the wayfarer to handle the obstacles to be encountered on the way.

The first spell Groa teaches Svipdag allows him to shake from his shoulders what seems shocking, which is to say that it allows him to avoid panic as a result of disorientation and loss of control during the journey. The vitki who would make such a journey is well advised to ponder the first spell of Groa in a meditative state to discover a rune or bind rune that serves this purpose. See chapter 1.

The second spell enables the vitki to recover his spirit after demoralization so that he does not lose sight of his goal and wander aimlessly without will.

Maintenance of one’s spirits under adverse circumstances is crucial to success in long and difficult undertakings.

The third spell, in stanza 8, allows passage through cosmic rivers that separate Middle Earth from Ettinhome. These rivers are almost always included in stories of journeys to the under world and are only crossed by magical means, except by Thor, who is able to wade most such rivers and oceans. They are sometimes crossed by magical steeds or by taking bird shape.

From stanza 9 we learn that there is a “gallows road” across the river at which point the vitki is liable to meet “fiends.” Note that the approach taken with these fiends is not to attack them, but rather to mollify their hostility.

The tenth stanza is a spell for loosing fetters. This is the sort of spell one may have to use when fiends do not become amiable under a galdric spell derived from stanza 9. It may also be used against the fetters of Mengloth’s gate Gastropnir.

Beyond the gallows road lies a sea which is liable to be heavy. This sea is to be controlled by the will of the magician through the use of a runic song. For this spell, the vitki can look for inspiration to the Lay of Sigdrifa stanza 10 as well as from stanza 11 of the Galder of Groa.
From the sea the vitki fares through high hills in which the frost threatens to doom him and his mission to immobility and stasis.

From the hills, the vitki approaches Mengloth’s garth. In this misty region the vitki may meet on the road the wraiths of dead folk who are not given entry by the ettin herdsman. These spirits wander beyond the gates and flames in isolation and alienation. These are the souls of outlaws. In the times in which the *Lay of Fjolsvith* was put into its present form, these included the lost souls of those who abandoned the troth of their folk for alienation. In the late heathen period they had only to deal with a few Christian spirits, now we may have to contend with a whole multitude.

The ninth and final spell allows the vitki to work his will in a battle of wits with the herdsman who wards the gates. It is here that the vitki tries to elicit the secrets of the hold of Mengloth from Fjolsvith before entry. Before faring forth, you may try “sitting out” to seek rede from an ancestral volva, such as Groa. Find a relevant passage form the *Elder Edda* and form a galdric chant or song by transliterating some of the words from the passage into runes. From the *Galdar of Groa* you might transliterate the phrase “Awaken Groa!” When you feel the presence of the volva, listen.
Appendix A

Thinking About the Hail Rune
The runes represent the archetypal patterns by which the nine worlds are structured, and the Hail rune, the mother of the runes, is the template for the entire cosmos. From its snowflake form in the younger row we may derive all the other rune shapes, or make an abstract map of the cosmos or world tree. The Hail rune is the seed that contains in latency the first principals by which the world tree Yggdrasil is manifested, grows, dies, and is reborn. The pattern in the seed existed before Odin, as the Voluspa says: “I remember nine-worlds, the nine homes of the great meeting wood, beneath the earth.” This refers to Yggdrasil as a seed in the cosmic stuff of Ginnungagap waiting to begin ordering the undifferentiated Ginn (primal stuff) into the nine worlds.

The Hail rune is that seed. According to the Norwegian Runic Poem, “Hagal is the coldest grain, Hropt (Odin) shaped the world in days of yore.”

Odin had to discover the first principles himself in order to reshape the cosmos. The runes are a systematic expression of the totality of the worlds’ mysteries as Odin perceived them when he hung on the tree. In the Hail rune we may find the most fundamental, the simplest, most condensed, and densest crystallization of these structures. The Hail rune may be said to hold all the building blocks while the other runes express phenomena associated with particular combinations of these blocks. It is the work of the runester to discover these patterns himself in order to reshape self and society.

Odin shaped the world by slaying his kinsman the primal ettin, Ymir, and making the new order from the ettin’s body parts. Odin may be said to have seen the component parts of the world and the principals by which they cohered such that he was able to dismantle the old edifice and to recombine its elements to shape the new order. This was the second sacrifice. The first sacrifice was Odin’s giving of himself to himself in which he dissolved himself in order to perceive the structural principals of the world and then reorder himself in accordance with the new knowledge. Then he repeated this process and worked his will on the cosmos.

In Hagal we have the mysteries of sacrifice; the patterns by which the world may be broken down into component parts and by which these parts may be rearranged. If we will look at how Hropt shaped the world in days of yore, we must look Grimnismal 41-42. “Of Ymir’s flesh the earth was shaped. Of his blood the briny sea. Of his hair the trees, of his bones the hills, of his skull the sky. But of his brow the loving Gods made Midgard for the sons of men. From his brain they made the moody clouds hovering in the heavens.”

This cosmic sacrificial structure can be found throughout the Indo-European world. The following table shows how the structure of the human being is applied to the cosmos in general in both the Grimnismal and in a typical Indo-European pattern as reconstructed from a comparison of numerous Indo-European cosmological myths. From this table we notice that certain elements were left out of the account in the Grimnismal, including wind-breath, sun-eye, and moon-mind. In the Skaldskaparmál Snorri gives us eye and shield as metaphors for the sun and moon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earth</th>
<th>Stone</th>
<th>Plants</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Moon</th>
<th>Cloud</th>
<th>Heaven</th>
<th>Wind</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IE gen. pattern</td>
<td>Flesh</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Blood/ Eye</td>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Brain/ Head</td>
<td>Breath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grim.</td>
<td>Flesh</td>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Hair</td>
<td>Blood</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Brain</td>
<td>Skull</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A complete catalogue of these nine cosmic elements, plus some, including grain, is to be found in the 13 spells of the Alvismal in which 6 names used in 6 of the nine-worlds are given for each of the 13 elements. We already know the homology for nine of the 13 elements including earth, trees, sea, sun, moon, sky, clouds, and wind. The other 4 elements in the Alvismal are not found in the Grimnismal’s cosmogony include fire, night, calm, ale, and seed. Seed is of course the “coldest grain” Hagalaz, in which prototypes for all of these archetypes are contained.
The *Anglo-Saxon Runic Poem* describes the transformation of the “whitest grain” into water after a buffeting in the heavens by the wind. “Hail is the whitest grain. It is whirled from the air of heaven and buffeted by gusts of wind and then it is turned to water.” This may be taken as a formula for a sacrificial dissolution. It includes the elements of the sky, wind and water which in amount in human terms to skull, breath and blood. The prominence of breath, the gusting wind, in this transformation recalls the Odin’s hanging on a windswept tree and might be included in a working for a similar self-sacrifice.

Knowing this correlation between the cosmic and the human is a great tool for work with the other rune-poems as well as for the unraveling of other mythic lore. The seed structures of the cosmos are to be found in man and vise-versa. By considering this seed pattern carefully, the mysteries by which Hropt shaped the world, you may extrapolate the pattern to the level of the human soul and its component parts, or to society and its parts. This work requires a careful study of these elements as they appear in kennings (check the *Skaldskaparmal*) and other mythic material concerning the soul and society.

The Hail rune may be ideographically represented by either the H shape of the elder row or by the * snowflake shape of the younger row. The younger row is the best to work with when you are fathoming the runic content of the Eddas. Hail is the seventh and the * shape has seven points. This pattern may be used successfully as a mapping device for the first principals associated with the Hail rune. Pairs of opposites may also be juxtaposed on the bars of the H shape rune of the elder row or opposite one another on the snowflake pattern as shown below:

![Pairs of Elements in Grimnismal and Elements from Alvismal](image-url)
Six names for the Moon from *Alvismal*

Elements of the *Alvismal* arranged on the Hail map with runic correspondences. The arrangement of the elements and runes may be varied as it suits one for meditative and working purposes. These values may be assigned to aspects of your own world.
Mapping is an approach that may be used successfully with other runes as well, but is only one of many approaches to understanding the runes. Likewise, the seemingly crude cosmological and homological level of interpreting the mysteries of Hagalaz is only one of many, but a very good starting point. From the lore of the shaping of the world it is easy to move into the mysteries of the nature of sacrifice and its role in transformation, of self and world.
Appendix B

Pronunciation of Old Norse
Pronunciation of Old Norse

The phonetic values provided below are those of reconstructed Old Norse (as it would have been spoken in the Viking Age).

The consonants b, d, f, l, m, t, and v are just as in modern English.

a as in “artistic”
á as in “father”
e as in “men”
é as in ay in “bay”
i as in “it”
í as ee in “feet”
o as in “omit”
ó as in “ore”
ö as in “not”
ø pronounced same as ö
u as in “put”
ú as in “rule”
æ as ai in “hair”
œ as u in “slur”
y as u in German Hütte (i with rounded lips)
y as u in German Tür (ee with rounded lips)
aʊ as ou in “house”
eɪ pronounced same as ei
g always hard as in “go”
ŋ as in “long”
h same as English, except before consonants, then as wh in “where”
j always as y in “year”
p as in English, except before t, then this pt cluster is pronounced ft
r trilled r
s always voiceless as in “sing”
θ voiceless th as in “thin”
ð voiced th as in “the”
rh pronounced dl
rn pronounced dn
nn pronounced dn after long vowels and diphthongs
Glossary

Aesir: Race of gods corresponding to the functions of magic, law, and war.

Aett: Family or genus, used both as a name for the threefold divisions of the Futhark and eight divisions of the heavens. Also means a group or division of eight.

Athling: A noble person motivated by noble goals and tasks.

Erulian: Member of the ancient gild of runemasters who formed an intertribal network of initiates in the Germanic mysteries.

Ettin: ON. Jotun and OE. Eoten. A race of giants dwelling to the east of Midgard in Ettinhome.

Ettin-wife: A female ettin taken in magical marriage.

Fetch: A numinous being attached to every individual, which is the repository of all past action and which accordingly affects the person’s life: the personal divinity. Visualized as a contrasexual entity, an animal, or an abstract shape.

Fetch-wife: The fetch in female form.

Galder: ON. Originally “incantation.” The verb gala also means to crow. Later meant magic in general, but especially verbal magic. Here it is used to refer to verbal magic.

Hamingja: ON. Mobile magic force rather like mana of other traditions. Often defined as “luck,” “shapeshifting force,” and “guardian spirit.”

Hamr: The plastic image forming stuff that surrounds each person. It may be collected and reformed by magical power (hamingja) according to the will (hugr).

Multiverse: The many states of being (worlds) that make up the universe. Used when focusing on the multiplicity of being.

Norn: ON. One of the three female wights who embody the processes of cause and effect and evolutionary force.

Numen: A living holy power. A numinous experience is one in which contact is made with this power. It is nonphysical and magical energy.

Orlog: ON. Primal layers or laws of past action that shape present and future conditions.

Seith: A Vanic form of magic taught to Odin by Freya. It involves getting into ecstatic states to gain visions and fare forth in animal shape. Typically performed by volvas. Such women would roam the countryside and attend feasts where they would sit on a wooden platform, go into a trance with the aid of magical songs, and obtain visions of the future. In this state they would answer questions of the villagers.

Stave: A spell or a rune.

Teinn: A talisman.
**Thurs:** A strong and stupid kind of giant.

**Valkyrie:** ON. “Chooser of the slain.” Protective numinous qualities that become attached to those who attract them. A linking force between men and gods (Odin in particular).

**Vanir:** ON. The race of gods corresponding to the fertility, eroticism and prosperity functions.

**Vé:** A holy stead such as a temple or a grove. A setting for religious and magical workings.

**World:** One of the nine worlds or planes of being ordered about the world tree.

**Vitki:** A wielder of the runes. An Odian magician.

**Volva:** A female magician who specializes in seith magic.

**Yggdrasil:** The world tree about which the nine-worlds are ordered.

**World Tree:** The ash Yggdrasil about which the multiverse is ordered.
Bibliography


The Nine Homes
In the Depths of Mim’s Well
Mardol finds Od at Saga’s Shore

Drawing by James Chisholm

Mardol walked the earth weeping tears of gold in search of her husband Od, as the story goes. Od is thought to be Odin. What Mardol sought was inspired furor, which is what the od in Odin means.