

## *Hávamál*

The Sayings of Hár [or, Words of the High<sup>1</sup>]

### **Bellows' Introduction (1936)**

This poem follows the *Voluspo* in the *Codex Regius*, but is preserved in no other manuscript. The first stanza is quoted by Snorri, and two lines of stanza 84 appear in one of the sagas. In its present shape it involves the critic of the text in more puzzles than any other of the Eddic poems. Without going in detail into the various theories, what happened seems to have been somewhat as follows. There existed from very early times a collection of proverbs and wise counsels, which were attributed to Othin just as the Biblical proverbs were to Solomon. This collection, which presumably was always elastic in extent, was known as "The High One's Words," and forms the basis of the present poem. To it, however, were added other poems and fragments dealing with wisdom which seemed by their nature to imply that the speaker was Othin. Thus a catalogue of runes, or charms, was tacked on, and also a set of proverbs, differing essentially in form from those comprising the main collection. Here and there bits of verse more nearly narrative crept in; and of course the loose structure of the poem made it easy for any reciter to insert new stanzas almost at will. This curious miscellany is what we now have as the *Hovamol*.

Five separate elements are pretty clearly recognizable:

- (1) The Hovamol proper (stanzas 1-80), a collection of proverbs and counsels for the conduct of life;
- (2) The Loddafnismol (stanzas 111-138), a collection somewhat similar to the first, but specifically addressed to a certain Loddafnir;
- (3) The Ljothatal (stanzas 147-165), a collection of charms;
- (4) The love-story of Othin and Billing's daughter (stanzas 96-102), with an introductory dissertation on the faithlessness of women in general (stanzas 81-95), which probably crept into the poem first, and then pulled the story, as an apt illustration, after it;
- (5) The story of how Othin got the mead of poetry – the draught which gave him the gift of tongues – from the maiden Gunnloth (stanzas 103-110). There is also a brief passage (stanzas 139-146) telling how Othin won the runes, this passage being a natural introduction to the *Ljothatal*, and doubtless brought into the poem for that reason.

It is idle to discuss the authorship or date of such a series of accretions as this. Parts of it are doubtless among the oldest relics of ancient Germanic poetry; parts of it may have originated at a relatively late period. Probably, however, most of its component elements go pretty far back, although we have no way of telling how or when they first became associated.

It seems all but meaningless to talk about "interpolations" in a poem which has developed almost solely through the process of piecing together originally unrelated odds and ends. The notes, therefore, make only such suggestions as are needed to keep the main divisions of the poem distinct.

Few gnomic collections in the world's literary history present sounder wisdom more tersely expressed than the *Hovamol*. Like the *Book of Proverbs* it occasionally rises to lofty heights of poetry. If it presents the worldly wisdom of a violent race, it also shows noble ideals of loyalty, truth, and unflinching courage.

### **Auden & Taylor Introduction (1969/1981)**

Hávamál, literal translation:

*The Words of the High, or the words of Óðinn, the chief god of the old Æsir religion of the Northern people of Europe.*

This poem is certainly not younger than the start of the Viking Age, ca. 800 AD, and the original we have access to today is in *Codex Regius*, the only copy of this poem in manuscript form. We Icelanders have tended through the ages to think of this as an Icelandic poem, but it is not purely Icelandic; this poem is Germanic/Nordic, it is a part of the common cultural heritage of the people of Northern Europe. We Icelanders are, however, privileged to be able to read the poem in the original surviving version, others have to do with a translation, or learn Icelandic. In this sense the poem is Icelandic today.

The following translation by W.H. Auden and P.B. Taylor is in itself a good one, but can only give a sense of the original, the scansion being different and in every translation the map differs, i.e. the mental map the reader has imprinted from his cultural heritage. This poem has been compared in importance to the writings of Lao Tse and other great thinkers. It is offered here in the hope that it will maybe help someone to understand the Icelandic psyche a little better.

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## Part I. Counsels (1-79)

The *Gestabáttir* (“Guest’s Section”), or *Hávamál* proper, (stanzas 1-80), a collection of proverbs and gnomic wisdom, comprising a set of maxims for how to handle oneself when a guest and traveling, focusing particularly on manners and other behavioral relationships between hosts and guests and the sacred lore of reciprocity and hospitality to the Norse pagans.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
1	All door-ways, before going forward, Should be looked to; For difficult it is to know where foes may sit Within a dwelling.	<sup>6</sup> Within the gates   ere a man shall go, (Full warily let him watch,) Full long let him look about him; For little he knows   where a foe may lurk, And sit in the seats within.	Have thy eyes about thee when thou enterest Be wary always, Be watchful alway; For one never knoweth when need will be To meet hidden foe in the hall.	The man who stands at a strange threshold, Should be cautious before he cross it, Glance this way and that: Who knows beforehand what foes may sit Awaiting him in the hall?
2	Givers, hail! A guest is come in: Where shall he sit? In much haste is he, who on the ways Has to try his luck.	<sup>7</sup> Hail to the giver!   a guest has come; Where shall the stranger sit? Swift shall he be who,   with swords shall try The proof of his might to make.	All hail to the givers! <sup>26</sup> A guest hath come Say where shall he sit? In haste is he to the hall who cometh, To find a place by the fire.	Greetings to the host, The guest has arrived, In which seat shall he sit? Rash is he who at unknown doors Relies on his good luck,
3	Fire is needful to him who is come in, And whose knees are frozen; Food and raiment a man requires, Who o'er the fell has travelled.	Fire he needs   who with frozen knees Has come from the cold without; Food and clothes   must the farer have, The man from the mountains come.	The warmth seeketh who hath wandered long And is numb about his knees; Meat and dry clothes the man needeth Over the fells who hath fared.	Fire is needed by the newcomer Whose knees are frozen numb; Meat and clean linen a man needs Who has fared across the fells,
4	Water to him is needful who for refection comes, A towel and hospitable invitation, A good reception; if he can get it, Discourse and answer.	Water and towels   and welcoming speech Should he find who comes, to the feast; If renown he would get,   and again be greeted, Wisely and well must he act.	A drink needeth to full dishes who cometh, A towel <sup>27</sup> , and the prayer to partake; Good bearing eke, to be well liked And be bidden to banquet again. <sup>28</sup>	Water, too, that he may wash before eating, Handcloth's and a hearty welcome, Courteous words, then courteous silence That he may tell his tale,
5	Wit is needful to him who travels far: At home all is easy. A laughing-stock is he who nothing knows, And with the instructed sits.	Wits must he have   who wanders wide, But all is easy at home; At the witless man   the wise shall wink When among such men he sits.	Of his wit hath need who widely fareth— A dull wit will do at home; A laughingstock he who lacketh words Among smart wits when he sits.	Who travels widely needs his wits about him, The stupid should stay at home: The ignorant man is often laughed at When he sits at meat with the sage,
6	Of his understanding no one should be proud, But rather in conduct cautious. When the prudent and taciturn come to a dwelling, Harm seldom befalls the cautious; For a firmer friend no man ever gets Than great sagacity.	A man shall not boast   of his keenness of mind, But keep it close in his breast; To the silent and wise   does ill come seldom When he goes as guest to a house; <sup>8</sup> (For a faster friend   one never finds Than wisdom tried and true.)	To be bright of brain let no man boast, But take good heed of his tongue: The sage and silent come seldom to grief As they fare among folk in the hall. [More faithful friend findest thou never Than shrewd head on thy shoulders.] <sup>29</sup>	Of his knowledge a man should never boast, Rather be sparing of speech When to his house a wiser comes: Seldom do those who are silent make mistakes; Mother wit is ever a faithful friend,
7	<sup>2</sup> A wary guest, who to refection comes, Keeps a cautious silence, With his ears listens, and with his eyes observes: So explores every prudent man.	The knowing guest   who goes to the feast, In silent attention sits; With his ears he hears,   with his eyes he watches, Thus wary are wise men all.	The wary guest to wassail who comes Listens that he may learn, <sup>30</sup> Opens his ears, casts his eyes about: Thus wards him the wise man 'gainst harm.	A guest should be courteous When he comes to the table And sit in wary silence, His ears attentive, his eyes alert: So he protects himself,
8	He is happy, who for himself Obtains fame and kind words: Less sure is that which a man must have In another's breast.	Happy the one   who wins for himself Favor and praises fair; Less safe by far   is the wisdom found That is hid in another's heart.	Happy is he who hath won him The love and liking of all; For hard it is one's help to seek From the mind of another man.	Blessed is he who in his own lifetime Is awarded praise and wit, For ill counsel is often given By mortal men to each other,
9	He is happy, who in himself possesses Fame and wit while living; For bad counsels have oft been received From another's breast.	Happy the man   who has while he lives Wisdom and praise as well, For evil counsel   a man full oft Has from another's heart.	Happy is he who hath won him Both winning ways and wisdom; For ill led is oft who asketh help From the wit and words of another.	Fortunate is he who is favored in his lifetime With praise and words of wisdom: Evil counsel is often given By those of evil heart,
10	A better burthen no man bears on the way Than much good sense;	A better burden   may no man bear For wanderings wide than wisdom;	Better burden bearest thou nowise Than shrewd head on thy shoulders;	Better gear than good sense A traveler cannot carry,

	That is thought better than riches in a strange place; Such is the recourse of the indigent.	It is better than wealth   on unknown ways, And in grief a refuge it gives.	In good stead will it stand among stranger folk, And shield when unsheltered thou art.	Better than riches for a wretched man, Far from his own home,
11	A worse provision on the way he cannot carry Than too much beer-bibbing; So good is not, as it is said, Beer for the sons of men.	A better burden   may no man bear For wanderings wide than wisdom; Worse food for the journey   he brings not afield Than an over-drinking of ale.	Better burden bearest thou nowise Than shrewd head on thy shoulders; But with worse food farest thou never Than an overmuch of mead.	Better gear than good sense A traveler cannot carry, A more tedious burden than too much drink A traveler cannot carry,
12	A worse provision no man can take from table Than too much beer-bibbing: For the more he drinks the less control he has Of his own mind.	<sup>9</sup> Less good there lies   than most believe In ale for mortal men; For the more he drinks   the less does man Of his mind the mastery hold.	For good is not, though good is it thought, Mead for the sons of men; The deeper he drinks the dimmer grows The mind of many a man.	Less good than belief would have it Is mead for the sons of men: A man knows less the more he drinks, Becomes a befuddled fool,
13	Oblivion's heron 'tis called that over potations Hovers; he steals the minds of men. With this bird's pinions I was fettered in Gunnlod's dwelling.	<sup>10</sup> Over beer the bird   of forgetfulness broods, And steals the minds of men; With the heron's feathers   fettered I lay And in Gunnloth's house was held.	The heron of heedlessness hovers o'er the feast, <sup>31</sup> And stealeth the minds of men. With that fowl's feathers fettered I was When I was Gunnloth's guest. <sup>32</sup>	I forget is the name men give the heron Who hovers over the feast: Fettered I was in his feathers that night, When a guest in Gunnlod's court
14	Drunk I was, I was over-drunk, At that cunning Fjalar's. It's the best drunkenness, When every one after it regains his reason.	Drunk I was,   I was dead-drunk, When with Fjalar <sup>11</sup> wise I was; 'Tis the best of drinking   if back one brings His wisdom with him home.	Drunk I became, dead drunk, forsooth, When I was with wise Fjalar; <sup>33</sup> That bout is best from which back fetches Each man his mind full clear.	Drunk I got, dead drunk, When Fjalar the wise was with me: Best is the banquet one looks back on after, And remembers all that happened,
15	Taciturn and prudent, and in war daring, Should a king's children be; Joyous and liberal every one should be Until his hour of death.	The son of a king   shall be silent and wise, And bold in battle as well; Bravely and gladly   a man shall go, Till the day of his death is come.	Let a king's offspring be sparing in words, And bold in battle; Glad and wholesome the hero be Till comes his dying day.	Silence becomes the Son of a prince, To be silent but brave in battle: It befits a man to be merry and glad Until the day of his death,
16	A cowardly man thinks he will ever live, If warfare he avoids; But old age will give him no peace, Though spears may spare him.	The sluggard believes   he shall live forever, If the fight he faces not; But age shall not grant him   the gift of peace, Though spears may spare his life.	The unwise man thinks that he ay will live, If from fighting he flees; But the ails and aches of old age dog him Though spears have spared him.	The coward believes he will live forever If he holds back in the battle, But in old age he shall have no peace Though spears have spared his limbs
17	A fool gapes when to a house he comes, To himself mutters or is silent; But all at once, if he gets drink, Then is the man's mind displayed.	The fool is agape   when he comes to the feast, He stammers or else is still; But soon if he gets   a drink is it seen What the mind of the man is like.	The fool but gapes when to folks he comes, He mumbles and mopes; Soon is seen, when his swill he had, What the mind of the man is like.	When he meets friends, the fool gapes, Is shy and sheepish at first, Then he sips his mead and immediately All know what an oaf he is,
18	He alone knows who wanders wide, And has much experienced, By what disposition each man is ruled, Who common sense possesses.	He alone is aware   who has wandered wide, And far abroad has fared, How great a mind   is guided by him That wealth of wisdom has.	Only he is aware who hath wandered much, And far hath been afield, What manner of man be he whom he meets, If himself be not wanting in wit.	He who has seen and suffered much, And knows the ways of the world, Who has traveled', can tell what spirit Governs the men he meets,
19	Let a man hold the cup, yet of the mead Drink moderately, speak sensibly or be silent. As of a fault no man will admonish thee, If thou goest betimes to sleep.	Shun not the mead,   but drink in measure; Speak to the point or be still; For rudeness none   shall rightly blame thee If soon thy bed thou seekest.	The cup spurn not, yet be sparing withal; Say what is needful, or nauth; For ill breeding upbraids thee no man If soon thou goest to sleep.	Drink your mead, but in moderation, Talk sense or be silent: No man is called discourteous who goes To bed at an early hour
20	A greedy man, if he be not moderate, Eats to his mortal sorrow. Oftentimes his belly draws laughter on a silly man, Who among the prudent comes.	The greedy man,   if his mind be vague, Will eat till sick he is; The vulgar man,   when among the wise, To scorn by his belly is brought.	The greedy guest gainsays his head And eats until he is ill; His belly oft maketh a butt of a man, On bench 'midst the sage when he sits.	A gluttonous man who guzzles away Brings sorrow on himself: At the table of the wise he is taunted often, Mocked for his bloated belly,
21	Cattle know when to go home, And then from grazing cease; But a foolish man never knows His stomach's measure.	The herds know well   when home they shall fare, And then from the grass they go; But the foolish man   his belly's measure Shall never know aright.	The herd do know when home they shall, And gang from the grass to their stalls; But the unwise man will not ever learn How much his maw will hold.	The herd knows its homing time, And leaves the grazing ground: But the glutton never knows how much His belly is able to hold,

22	A miserable man, and ill-conditioned, Sneers at every thing: One thing he knows not, which he ought to know, That he is not free from faults.	A paltry man   and poor of mind At all things ever mocks; For never he knows,   what he ought to know, That he is not free from faults.	The ill-minded man who meanly thinks, Fleers at both foul and fair; He does not know, as know he ought, That he is not free from flaws.	An ill tempered, unhappy man Ridicules all he hears, Makes fun of others, refusing always To see the faults in himself
23	A foolish man is all night awake, Pondering over everything; He then grows tired; and when morning comes, All is lament as before.	The witless man   is awake all night, Thinking of many things; Care-worn he is   when the morning comes, And his woe is just as it was.	The unwise man waketh all night, Thinking of this and that— Tosses, sleepless, and is tired at morn: Nor lighter for that his load.	Foolish is he who frets at night, And lies awake to worry; A weary man when morning comes, He finds all as bad as before,
24	A foolish man thinks all who on him smile To be his friends; He feels it not, although they speak ill of him, When he sits among the clever.	The foolish man   for friends all those Who laugh at him will hold; When among the wise   he marks it not Though hatred of him they speak.	The unwise man weens that all Who laugh with him, like him, too; Nor sees their scorn, though they sneer at him, On bench 'midst the sage when he sits.	The fool thinks that those who laugh At him are all his friends, Unaware when he sits with wiser men How ill they speak of him.
25	A foolish man thinks all who speak him fair To be his friends; But he will find, if into court he comes, That he has few advocates.	<sup>12</sup> The foolish man   for friends all those Who laugh at him will hold; But the truth when he comes   to the council he learns, / That few in his favor will speak.	The unwise man weens that all That laugh with him, like him, too; But then he finds, when to the Thing <sup>34</sup> he comes, Few spokesmen to speed his cause.	The fool thinks that those who laugh At him are all his friends: When he comes to the Thing and calls for support, Few spokesmen he finds
26	A foolish man thinks he knows everything If placed in unexpected difficulty; But he knows not what to answer, If to the test he is put.	An ignorant man   thinks that all he knows, When he sits by himself in a corner; But never what answer   to make he knows, When others with questions come.	The unwise man weens he knows all, If from harm he is far at home; But knows not ever what answer to make When others ask him aught.	The fool who fancies he is full of wisdom While he sits by his hearth at home. Quickly finds when questioned by others That he knows nothing at all.
27	A foolish man, who among people comes, Had best be silent; For no one knows that he knows nothing, Unless he talks too much. [He who previously knew nothing Will still know nothing, talk he ever so much.]	A witless man,   when he meets with men, Had best in silence abide; For no one shall find   that nothing he knows, If his mouth is not open too much. (But a man knows not,   if nothing he knows, When his mouth has been open too much.) <sup>13</sup>	The unwise man among others who comes, Let him be sparing of speech; For no one knows that naught is in him, But he open his mouth too much.	The ignorant booby had best be silent When he moves among other men, No one will know what a nit-wit he is Until he begins to talk; No one knows less what a nit-wit he is Than the man who talks too much.
28	He thinks himself wise, who can ask questions And converse also; Conceal his ignorance no one can, Because it circulates among men.	Wise shall he seem   who well can question, And also answer well; Nought is concealed   that men may say Among the sons of men.	Clever is he who is keen to ask, And eke to answer, all men; 'tis hard to hide from the hearing of men What is on everyone's lips.	To ask well, to answer rightly, Are the marks of a wise man: Men must speak of men's deeds, What happens may not be hidden.
29	He utters too many futile words Who is never silent; A garrulous tongue, if it be not checked, Sings often to its own harm.	Often he speaks   who never is still With words that win no faith; The babbling tongue,   if a bridle it find not, Oft for itself sings ill.	Much at random oft rambles he Whose tongue does ever tattle; A talker's tongue, unless tamed it be, Will often work him woe.	Wise is he not who is never silent, Mouthing meaningless words: A glib tongue that goes on chattering Sings to its own harm.
30	For a gazing-stock no man shall have another, Although he come a stranger to his house. Many a one thinks himself wise, if he is not Questioned, and can sit in a dry habit.	In mockery no one   a man shall hold, Although he fare to the feast; Wise seems one oft,   if nought he is asked, And safely he sits dry-skinned.	No mock make thou of any man, Though thou comest among kinsmen; He knowing weens him whom no one has asked, And dry-shod hies him home. <sup>35</sup>	A man among friends should not mock another: Many believe the man Who is not questioned to know much And so he escapes their scorn.
31	Clever thinks himself the guest who jeers a guest, If he takes to flight. Knows it not certainly he who prates at meat, Whether he babbles among foes.	Wise a guest holds it   to take to his heels, When mock of another he makes; But little he knows   who laughs at the feast, Though he mocks in the midst of his foes.	A wise man he who hies him betimes From the man who likes to mock; For at table who teases can never tell What foe he might have to fight. <sup>36</sup>	The wise guest has his way of dealing With those who taunt him at table: He smiles through the meal, not seeming to hear The twaddle talked by his foes
32	Many men are mutually well-disposed, Yet at table will torment each other. That strife will ever be; Guest will guest irritate.	Friendly of mind   are many men, Till feasting they mock at their friends; To mankind a bane   must it ever be When guests together strive.	Many a man means no ill, Yet teases the other at table; Strife will ever start among men When guest clashes with guest.	The fastest friends may fall out When they sit at the banquet-board: It is, and shall be, a shameful thing When guest quarrels with guest,
33	Early meals a man should often take,	Oft should one make   an early meal,	An early meal ay a man should get him,	An early meal a man should take

	Unless to a friend's house he goes; Else he will sit and mope, will seem half-famished, And can of few things inquire.	Nor fasting come to the feast; Else he sits and chews   as if he would choke, And little is able to ask.	Lest famished he come to the feast: He sits and stuffs as though starved he were, And naught he says to his neighbors.	Before he visits friends, Lest, when he gets there, he go hungry, Afraid to ask for food.
34	Long is and indirect the way to a bad friend's, Though by the road he dwell; But to a good friend's the paths lie direct, Though he be far away.	Crooked and far   is the road to a foe, Though his house on the highway be; But wide and straight   is the way to a friend, Though far away he fare.	To false friend ay a far way 'tis, Though his roof be reared by the road; To stanch friend ay a straight way leads, Though far he have fared from thee.	To a false friend the footpath winds Though his house be on the highway. To a sure friend there is a short cut, Though he live a long way off.
35	A guest should depart, Not always stay in one place. The welcome becomes unwelcome, If he too long continues in another's house.	Forth shall one go,   nor stay as a guest In a single spot forever; Love becomes loathing   if long one sits By the hearth in another's home.	Get thee gone betimes; a guest should not Stay too long in one stead; Lief grows loath if too long one sits On bench, though in he was bidden.	The tactful guest will take his leave early, Not linger long: He starts to stink who outstays his welcome In a hall that is not his own.
36	One's own house is best, small though it be; At home is every one his own master. Though he but two goats possess, and a Straw-thatched cot, even that is better than begging.	Better a house,   though a hut it be, <sup>14</sup> A man is master at home; A pair of goats   and a patched-up roof Are better far than begging.	One's home is best though a hut it be: There a man is master and lord; Though but two goats thine and a thatched roof, 'tis far better than beg.	A small hut of one's own is better, A man is his master at home: A couple of goats and a corded roof Still are better than begging.
37	One's own house is best, small though it be, At home is every one his own master. Bleeding at heart is he, who has to ask for food At every meal-tide.	<sup>15</sup> Better a house,   though a hut it be, A man is master at home; His heart is bleeding   who needs must beg When food he fain would have.	One's home is best though a hut it be: There a man is master and lord; His heart doth bleed who has to beg The meat for his every meal.	A small hut of one's own is better, A man is his master at home: His heart bleeds in the beggar who must Ask at each meal for meat.
38	Leaving in the field his arms, Let no man go a foot's length forward; For it is hard to know when on the way a man May need his weapon.	Away from his arms   in the open field A man should fare not a foot; For never he knows   when the need for a spear Shall arise on the distant road.	From his weapons away no one should ever Stir one step on the field; For no one knows when need might have On a sudden a man of his sword.	A wayfarer should not walk unarmed, But have his weapons to hand: He knows not when he may need a spear, Or what menace meet on the road.
39	I have never found a man so bountiful, Or so hospitable that he refused a present; Or of his property so liberal That he scorned a recompense.	None so free with gifts   or food have I found That gladly he took not a gift, Nor one who so widely   scattered his wealth That of recompense hatred he had.	So freehanded never found I a man But would gladly take what is given; <sup>37</sup> Nor of his goods so ungrudging ever, To forego what is given him.	No man is so generous he will jib at accepting A gift in return for a gift, No man so rich that it really gives him Pain to be repaid.
40	Of the property which he has gained No man should suffer need; For the hated oft is spared what for the dear was destined. Much goes worse than is expected.	If wealth a man   has won for himself, Let him never suffer in need; Oft he saves for a foe   what he plans for a friend, <sup>16</sup> For much goes worse than we wish.	Of his worldly goods which he gotten hath Let a man not stint overmuch; Oft is lavished on foe what for friend was saved, For matters go often amiss.	Once he has won wealth enough, A man should not crave for more: What he saves for friends, foes may take; Hopes are often liars.
41	With arms and vestments friends should each other gladden, / Those which are in themselves most sightly. / Givers and requiters are longest friends, / If all [else] goes well. <sup>3</sup>	Friends shall gladden each other   with arms and garments, / As each for himself can see; Gift-givers' <sup>17</sup> friendships   are longest found, If fair their fates may be.	With weapons and weeds should friends be won, As one can see in themselves; <sup>38</sup> Those who give to each other will ay be friends, Once they meet half way.	With presents friends should please each other, With a shield or a costly coat: Mutual giving makes for friendship So long as life goes well,
42	To his friend a man should be a friend, And gifts with gifts requite. Laughter with laughter men should receive, But leasing with lying.	To his friend a man   a friend shall prove, And gifts with gifts requite; But men shall mocking   with mockery answer, And fraud with falsehood meet.	With his friends a man should be friends ever, And pay back gift for gift; Laughter for laughter <sup>39</sup> he learn to give, And eke lesing for lies.	A man should be loyal through life to friends, And return gift for gift, Laugh when they laugh, but with lies repay A false foe who lies.
43	To his friend a man should be a friend; To him and to his friend; But of his foe no man shall The friend's friend be.	To his friend a man   a friend shall prove, To him and the friend of his friend; But never a man   shall friendship make With one of his foeman's friends.	With his friend a man should be friends ever, With him and the friend of his friend; But foeman's friend befriend thou never, (and keep thee aloof from his kin). <sup>40</sup>	A man should be loyal through life to friends, To them and to friends of theirs, But never shall a man make offer Of friendship to his foes.
44	Know if thou hast a friend whom thou fully trustest, And from whom thou wouldst good derive, Thou shouldst blend thy mind with his, And gifts exchange, and often go to see him.	If a friend thou hast   whom thou fully wilt trust, And good from him wouldst get, Thy thoughts with his mingle,   and gifts shalt thou make, / And fare to find him oft.	If friend thou hast whom faithful thou deemest, And wishest to win him for thee: Ope thy heart to him nor withhold thy gifts, And fare to find him often.	If you find a friend you fully trust And wish for his good-will, Exchange thoughts, exchange gifts, Go often to his house.

45	If thou hast another, whom thou little trustest, Yet wouldst good from him derive, Thou shouldst speak him fair, but think craftily, And leasing pay with lying.	If another thou hast   whom thou hardly wilt trust, Yet good from him wouldst get, Thou shalt speak him fair,   but falsely think, And fraud with falsehood requite.	If another there be whom ill thou trustiest, Yet would'st get from him gain: Speak fair to him though false thou meanest, And pay him lesing for lies.	If you deal with another you don't trust But wish for his good-will, Be fair in speech but false in thought And give him lie for lie.
46	But of him yet further, whom thou little trustest, And thou suspectest his affection; before him thou Shouldst laugh, and contrary to thy thoughts speak: Requital should the gift resemble.	So is it with him   whom thou hardly wilt trust, And whose mind thou mayst not know; Laugh with him mayst thou,   but speak not thy mind, / Like gifts to his shalt thou give.	And eke his heed: if ill thou trust one, And hollow-hearted his speech: Thou shalt laugh with him and lure him on, And let him have tit for tat.	Even with one you ill-trust And doubt what he means to do, False words with fair smiles May get you the gift you desire.
47	I was once young, I was journeying alone, And lost my way; Rich I thought myself, when I met another. Man is the joy of man.	Young was I once,   and wandered alone, And nought of the road I knew; Rich did I feel   when a comrade I found, For man is man's delight.	Young was I once and went alone, And wandering lost my way; When a friend I found I felt me rich: Man is cheered by man.	Young and alone on a long road, Once I lost my way: Rich I felt when I found a another; Man rejoices in man.
48	Liberal and brave men live best, They seldom cherish sorrow; But a base-minded man dreads everything; The niggardly is uneasy even at gifts.	The lives of the brave   and noble are best, Sorrows they seldom feed; But the coward fear   of all things feels, And not gladly the niggard gives.	He who giveth gladly a goodly life leadeth, And seldom hath he sorrow; But the churlish wight is chary of all, And grudgingly parts with his gifts.	The generous and bold have the best lives, Are seldom beset by cares, But the base man sees bogies everywhere And the miser pines for presents.
49	My garments in a field I gave away To two wooden men: Heroes they seemed to be, when they got cloaks: Exposed to insult is a naked man.	My garments once   in a field I gave To a pair of carven poles; Heroes they seemed   when clothes they had, But the naked man is nought.	In the fields as I fared, (for fun) I hung My weeds on two wooden men; <sup>41</sup> They were reckoned folks when the rags they wore: Naked, a man is naught.	Two wooden stakes stood on the plain, On them I hung my clothes: Draped in linen, they looked well born, But, naked, I was a nobody
50	A tree withers that on a hill-top stands; Protects it neither bark nor leaves: Such is the man whom no one favours: Why should he live long?	On the hillside drear   the fir-tree dies, All bootless its needles and bark; It is like a man   whom no one loves,-- Why should his life be long?	The fir tree dies in the field that stands; Shields it nor bark nor bast; Thus eke the man who by all is shunned: Why should he linger in life?	The young fir that falls and rots Having neither needles nor bark, So is the fate of the friendless man: Why should he live long?
51	Hotter than fire love for five days burns Between false friends; But is quenched when the sixth day comes, And friendship is all impaired.	Hotter than fire   between false friends Does friendship five days burn; When the sixth day comes   the fire cools, And ended is all the love.	Than fire hotter for five days burneth Love between friends that are false; It dieth down when dawneth the sixth, Then all the sweetness turns sour.	Hotter than fire among false hearts burns Friendship for five days, But suddenly slackens when the sixth dawns: Feeble their friendship then.
52	Something great is not [always] to be given, Praise is often for a trifle bought. With half a loaf and a tilted vessel I got myself a comrade.	No great thing needs   a man to give, Oft little will purchase praise; With half a loaf   and a half-filled cup A friend full fast I made.	Not great things needs give to a man: Bringeth thanks oft a little thing; With half a loaf and a half-drained cup I won me oft worthy friend. <sup>42</sup>	A kind word need not cost much, The price of praise can be cheap: With half a loaf and an empty cup I found myself a friend,
53	Little are the sand-grains, little the wits, Little the minds of [some] men; For all men are not wise alike: Men are everywhere by halves.	A little sand   has a little sea, And small are the minds of men; Though all men are not   equal in wisdom, Yet half-wise only are all.	A little lake hath but little sand: <sup>43</sup> But small the mind of man; Not all men are equally wise, Each wight wanteth somewhat.	Little a sand-grain, little a dew drop, Little the minds of men: All men are not equal in wisdom, The half-wise are everywhere
54	Moderately wise should each one be, But never over-wise: Of those men the lives are fairest, Who know much well.	A measure of wisdom   each man shall have, But never too much let him know; The fairest lives   do those men live Whose wisdom wide has grown.	Middling wise every man should be: Beware of being too wise; Happiest in life most likely he Who knows not more than is needful.	It is best for man to be middle-wise, Not over cunning and clever: The learned man whose lore is deep Is seldom happy at heart.
55	Moderately wise should each one be, But never over-wise; For a wise man's heart is seldom glad, If he is all-wise who owns it.	<sup>18</sup> A measure of wisdom   each man shall have, But never too much let him know; For the wise man's heart   is seldom happy, If wisdom too great he has won.	Middling wise every man should be: Beware of being too wise; For wise man's heart is happy seldom, If too great the wisdom he won.	It is best for man to be middle-wise, Not over cunning and clever: The fairest life is led by those Who are deft at all they do.
56	Moderately wise should each one be, But never over-wise.	A measure of wisdom   each man shall have, But never too much let him know;	Middling wise every man should be: Beware of being too wise;	It is best for man to be middle-wise, Not over cunning and clever:

	His destiny let know no man beforehand; His mind will be freest from care.	Let no man the fate   before him see, For so is he freest from sorrow.	His fate let no one beforehand know Who would keep his heart from care.	No man is able to know his future, So let him sleep in peace.
57	Brand burns from brand until it is burnt out; Fire is from fire quickened. Man to man becomes known by speech, But a fool by his bashful silence.	A brand from a brand   is kindled and burned, And fire from fire begotten; And man by his speech   is known to men, And the stupid by their stillness.	Kindles brand from brand, and burns till all burnt it is: / Thus fire is kindled from fire; By the words of his mouth a man is known, But from his dumbness a dullard. <sup>44</sup>	Brand kindles till they broun out, Flame is quickened by flame: One man from another is known by his speech The simpleton by his silence.
58	He should early rise, who another's property Or life desires to have. Seldom a sluggish wolf gets prey, Or a sleeping man victory.	He must early go forth   who fain the blood Or the goods of another would get; The wolf that lies idle   shall win little meat, Or the sleeping man success.	Betimes must rise who would take another's Life and win his wealth; Lying down wolf never got the lamb, Nor sleeping wight slew his foe.	Early shall he rise who has designs On another's land or life: His prey escapes the prone wolf, The sleeper is seldom victorious.
59	Early should rise he who has few workers, And go his work to see to; Greatly is he retarded who sleeps the morn away. Wealth half depends on energy.	He must early go forth   whose workers are few, Himself his work to seek; Much remains undone   for the morning-sleeper, For the swift is wealth half won.	Betimes must rise who few reapers has, And see to the work himself; Much will miss in the morn who sleeps: For the brisk the race is half run.	Early shall he rise who rules few servants, And set to work at once: Much is lost by the late sleeper, Wealth is won by the swift,
60	Of dry planks and roof-shingles A man knows the measure; Of the fire-wood that may suffice, Both measure and time.	Of seasoned shingles   and strips of bark For the thatch let one know his need, And how much of wood   he must have for a month, Or in half a year he will use.	What lathes and logs will last him out, A man may reckon aright, And of wood to warm him how much he may want For many a winter month. <sup>45</sup>	A man should know how many logs And strips of bark from the birch To stock in autumn, that he may have enough Wood for his winter fires.
61	Washed and refected let a man ride to the Thing, Although his garments be not too good; Of his shoes and breeches let no one be ashamed, Nor of his horse, Although he have not a good one.	Washed and fed   to the council fare, But care not too much for thy clothes; Let none be ashamed   of his shoes and hose, Less still of the steed he rides, (Though poor be the horse he has.) <sup>19</sup>	Well-groomed and washed <sup>46</sup> wend to the Thing, Though they clothes be not the best; Of thy shoes and breeks be not ashamed, And still less of thy steed.	Washed and fed, one may fare to the Thing: Though one's clothes be the worse for wear, None need be ashamed of his shoes or hose, Nor of the horse he owns, Although no thoroughbred.
62	Gasps and gapes, when to the sea he comes, The eagle over old ocean; So is a man, who among many comes, And has few advocates.	<sup>20</sup> When the eagle comes   to the ancient sea, He snaps and hangs his head; So is a man   in the midst of a throng, Who few to speak for him finds.	With lowered head sweeps, to the sea when he comes, / The eagle o'er the billowing brine; Thus eke a man among a throng Who finds but few to befriend him. <sup>47</sup>	As the eagle who comes to the ocean shore, Sniffs and hangs her head, Dumfounded is he who finds at the Thing No supporters to plead his case.
63	Inquire and impart should every man of sense, Who will be accounted sage. Let one only know, a second may not; If three, all the world knows.	To question and answer   must all be ready Who wish to be known as wise; Tell one thy thoughts,   but beware of two,-- All know what is known to three.	Both ask and answer let everyone Who wishes to be deemed wise; Let one know it, nor none other: If three know, thousands will.	It is safe to tell a secret to one, Risky to tell it to two, To tell it to three is thoughtless folly, Everyone else will know.
64	His power should every sagacious man Use with discretion; For he will find, when among the bold he comes, That no one alone is doughtiest.	The man who is prudent   a measured use Of the might he has will make; He finds when among   the brave he fares That the boldest he may not be.	A wise man will not overweening be, And stake too much on his strength; When the mighty are met to match their strength, 'twill be found that first is no one. <sup>48</sup>	Moderate at council should a man be, Not brutal and over bearing: Among the bold the bully will find Others as bold as he.
65	Circumspect and reserved every man should be, And wary in trusting friends. Of the words that a man says to another He often pays the penalty.	(A man must be watchful   and wary as well, And fearful of trusting a friend.) <sup>21</sup> Oft for the words   that to others one speaks He will get but an evil gift.	(Watchful and wary everyone should be, Nor put too much trust in a friend;) The words by one unwarily spoken, Have undone oft a doughty man.	Often words uttered to another Have reaped an ill harvest.
66	Much too early I came to many places, But too late to others: The beer was drunk, or not ready: The disliked seldom hits the moment.	Too early to many   a meeting I came, And some too late have I sought; The beer was all drunk,   or not yet brewed; Little the loathed man finds.	Too late by far to some feasts I came; To others, all too soon; The beer was drunk, or yet unbrewed: Never hits it the hapless one right.	Too early to many homes I came, Too late, it seemed, to some; The ale was finished or else un-brewed, The unpopular cannot please.
67	Here and there I should have been invited, If I a meal had needed; Or two hams had hung, at that true friend's, Where of one I had eaten.	To their homes men would bid   me hither and yon, If at meal-time I needed no meat, Or would hang two hams   in my true friend's house, / Where only one I had eaten.	Here or there would they have me in, If no meat at the meal I craved, Or hung two hams in my good friend's home, After eating one of his own.	Some would invite me to visit their homes, But none thought I had eaten a whole joint, Just before with a friend who had two.

68	Fire is best among the sons of men, And the sight of the sun, If his health a man can have, With a life free from vice.	Fire for men   is the fairest gift, And power to see the sun; Health as well,   if a man may have it, And a life not stained with sin.	A bonny fire is a blessing to man, And eke the sight of the sun, His hearty health, if he holds it well, And to live one's life without shame.	These things are thought the best: Fire, the sight of the sun, Good health with the gift to keep it, And a life that avoids vice.
69	No man lacks everything, although his health be bad: / One in his sons is happy, One in his kin, one in abundant wealth, One in his good works.	All wretched is no man,   though never so sick; Some from their sons have joy, Some win it from kinsmen,   and some from their wealth, / And some from worthy works.	All undone is no one though at death's door he lie: Some with good sons are blessed, And some with kinsmen, or with coffers full, And some with deeds well-done.	Not all sick men are utterly wretched: Some are blessed with sons, Some with friends, some with riches, Some with worthy works.
70	It is better to live, even to live miserably; A living man can always get a cow. I saw fire consume the rich man's property, And death stood without his door.	It is better to live   than to lie a corpse, <sup>22</sup> The live man catches the cow; I saw flames rise   for the rich man's pyre, And before his door he lay dead.	Better alive (than lifeless be): To the quick fall ay the cattle; The hearth fire burned for the happy heir— Outdoors a dead man lay. <sup>49</sup>	It is always better to be alive, The living can keep a cow. Fire, I saw, warming a wealthy man, With a cold corpse at his door.
71	The halt can ride on horseback, the one-handed drive cattle; / The deaf fight and be useful: To be blind is better than to be burnt <sup>4</sup> No one gets good from a corpse.	The lame rides a horse,   the handless is herdsman, The deaf in battle is bold; The blind man is better   than one that is burned, No good can come of a corpse.	May the halt ride a horse, and the handless be herdsman, / The deaf man may doughtily fight, A blind man is better than a burned one, ay: Of what gain is a good man dead?	The halt can manage a horse, the handless a flock, The deaf be a doughty fighter, To be blind is better than to burn on a pyre: There is nothing the dead can do.
72	A son is better, even if born late, After his father's departure. Gravestones seldom stand by the way-side Unless raised by a kinsman to a kinsman.	A son is better,   though late he be born, And his father to death have fared; Memory-stones   seldom stand by the road Save when kinsman honors his kin.	To have a son is good, late-got though he be, And born when buried his father; Stones <sup>50</sup> see 'st thou seldom set by the roadside But by kith raised over kinsmen.	A son is a blessing, though born late To a father no longer alive: Stones would seldom stand by the highway If sons did not set them there.
73	Two are adversaries: the tongue is the bane of the head: / Under every cloak I expect a hand.	<sup>23</sup> Two make a battle,   the tongue slays the head; In each furry coat   a fist I look for.	<sup>51</sup> [Two will down one; of tongue is head's bane; A fist I fear 'neath every furry coat.	Two beat one, the tongue is head's bane, Pockets of fur hide fists.
74	At night is joyful he who is sure of travelling entertainment. [A ship's yards are short.] <sup>5</sup> Variable is an autumn night. Many are the weather's changes in five days, But more in a month.	He welcomes the night   whose fare is enough, (Short are the yards of a ship.) Uneasy are autumn nights; Full oft does the weather   change in a week, And more in a month's time.	Of the night is fain whose knapsack is full; Close are ship's quarters. <sup>52</sup> Fickle are the nights in fall; There's both fair and foul in five days' time— Still more so within a month.]	He welcomes the night who has enough provisions Short are the sails of a ship, Dangerous the dark in autumn, The wind may veer within five days, And many times in a month.
75	He [only] knows not who knows nothing, That many a one apes another. One man is rich, another poor: Let him not be thought blameworthy.	A man knows not,   if nothing he knows, That gold <sup>24</sup> oft apes begets; One man is wealthy   and one is poor, Yet scorn for him none should know.	He who knoweth nothing knoweth not, either, How wealth may warp a man's wit; One hath wealth when wanteth another, Though he bear no blame himself.	The half wit does not know that gold Makes apes of many men: One is rich, one is poor There is no blame in that.
76	Cattle die, kindred die, We ourselves also die; But the fair fame never dies Of him who has earned it.	Cattle die,   and kinsmen die, And so one dies one's self; But a noble name   will never die, If good renown one gets.	Cattle die and kinsmen die, Thyself eke soon wilt die; But fair fame will fade never, I ween, for him who wins it.	Cattle die, kindred die, Every man is mortal: But the good name never dies Of one who has done well
77	Cattle die, kindred die, We ourselves also die; But I know one thing that never dies,— Judgment on each one dead.	Cattle die,   and kinsmen die, And so one dies one's self; One thing now   that never dies, The fame of a dead man's deeds.	Cattle die and kinsmen die, Thyself eke soon wilt die; One thing, I wot, will wither never: The doom over each one dead.	Cattle die, kindred die, Every man is mortal: But I know one thing that never dies, The glory of the great dead
78	Full storehouses I saw at Dives' sons': Now bear they the beggar's staff. Such are riches; as is the twinkling of an eye: Of friends they are most fickle.	Among Fitjung's <sup>25</sup> sons   saw I well-stocked folds,— / Now bear they the beggar's staff; Wealth is as swift   as a winking eye, Of friends the falsest it is.	A full-stocked farm had some farmer's sons. <sup>53</sup> Now they stoop at the beggar's staff; In a twinkling fleeth trothless wealth, It is the ficklest of friends.	Fields and flocks had Fitjung's sons, Who now carry begging bowls: Wealth may vanish in the wink of an eye, Gold is the falsest of friends.
79	A foolish man, if he acquires Wealth or woman's love, Pride grows within him, but wisdom never: He goes on more and more arrogant.	An unwise man,   if a maiden's love Or wealth he chances to win, His pride will wax, but his wisdom never, Straight forward he fares in conceit.	The unwise man, once he calls his own Wealth or the love of a woman— His overweening waxes but his wit never— He haughtily hardens his heart.	In the fool who acquires cattle and lands, Or wins a woman's love, His wisdom wanes with his waxing pride, He sinks from sense to conceit.

## Part II. a. Proverbs (80-90) / b. Ensamples of Óðinn (91-110)

A dissertation on the faithlessness of women (stanzas 81-95), prefacing “Odin’s Examples” or “Odin’s Love Quests,” an account of the love-story of Odin and the daughter of Billingr (stanzas 96-102) and the story of how Odin got the mead of poetry from the maiden Gunnlöð (stanzas 103-110).

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
80	Then 'tis made manifest, If of runes thou questionest him, Those to the high ones known, Which the great powers invented, And the great talker painted, That he had best hold silence.	<sup>58</sup> Certain is that   which is sought from runes, That the gods so great have made, And the Master-Poet painted; [Certain is that which is sought from runes The runes] of the race of gods: Silence is safest and best.	'Tis readily found when the runes thou ask, Made by mighty gods Known to holy hosts, And dyed deep red by Óthin: That 'tis wise to waste no words. <sup>72</sup>	Now is answered what you ask of the runes, Graven by the gods, Made by the All Father, Sent by the powerful sage: It is best for man to remain silent.
81	At eve the day is to be praised, a woman after she is burnt, A sword after it is proved, a maid after she is married, Ice after it has passed away, beer after it is drunk.	<sup>59</sup> Give praise to the day at evening,   to a woman on her pyre, To a weapon which is tried,   to a maid at wed lock, To ice when it is crossed,   to ale that is drunk.	At eve praise the day, when burned down, a torch, A wife when wedded, a weapon when tried, Ice when over it, ale when 'tis drunk.	For these things give thanks at nightfall: The day gone, a guttered torch, A sword tested, the troth of a maid, Ice crossed, ale drunk.
82	In the wind one should hew wood, in a breeze row out to sea, In the dark talk with a lass: many are the eyes of day. In a ship voyages are to be made, but a shield is for protection, A sword for striking, but a damsel for a kiss.	When the gale blows hew wood,   in fair winds seek the water; Sport with maidens at dusk,   for day's eyes are many; From the ship seek swiftness,   from the shield protection, Cuts from the sword,   from the maiden kisses.	Fell wood in the wind, <sup>73</sup> in fair weather row out to sea, dally with girls in the dark— the day's eyes are many— choose a shield for shelter, a ship for speed, a sword for keenness, a girl for kissing.	Hew wood in wind-time, In fine weather sail, Tell in the night-time tales to house-girls, For too many eyes are open by day: From a ship expect speed, from a shield, cover, Keeness from a sword, But a kiss from a girl.
83	By the fire one should drink beer, on the ice slide; Buy a horse that is lean, a sword that is rusty; Feed a horse at home, but a dog at the farm.	By the fire drink ale,   over ice go on skates; Buy a steed that is lean,   and a sword when tarnished, The horse at home fatten,   the hound in thy dwelling.	By the fire drink ale, skate on the ice, Buy a bony steed, a rusty blade, Feed your horse at home, and your hound in his hutch.	Drink ale by the hearth, over ice glide, Buy a stained sword, buy a starving mare To fatten at home: and fatten the watch-dog.
84	In a maiden's words no one should place faith, Nor in what a woman says; / For on a turning wheel have their hearts been formed, And guile in their breasts been laid;	A man shall trust not   the oath of a maid, Nor the word a woman speaks; / For their hearts on a whirling   wheel were fashioned, And fickle their breasts were formed. <sup>60</sup>	A wench's words let no wise man trust, Nor trust the troth of a woman; For on whirling wheel <sup>74</sup> their hearts are shaped, And fickle and fitful their minds.	No man should trust a maiden's words, Nor what a woman speaks: Spun on a wheel were women's hearts, In their breasts was implanted caprice,
85	In a creaking bow, a burning flame, A yawning wolf, a chattering crow, A grunting swine, a rootless tree, A waxing wave, a boiling kettle,	<sup>61</sup> In a breaking bow   or a burning flame, A ravening wolf   or a croaking raven, In a grunting boar,   a tree with roots broken, In billowy seas   or a bubbling kettle,	A brittle bow, a burning fire, A gaping wolf, a grunting sow, A croaking crow, a kettle boiling, A rising sea, a rootless tree,	A snapping bow, a burning flame, A grinning wolf, a grunting boar, A raucous crow, a rootless tree, A breaking wave, a boiling kettle,
86	A flying dart, a falling billow, A one night's ice, a coiled serpent, A woman's bed-talk, or a broken sword, A bear's play, or a royal child,	In a flying arrow   or falling waters, In ice new formed   or the serpent's folds, In a bride's bed-speech   or a broken sword, In the sport of bears   or in sons of kings,	A flying dart, a foaming billow, Ice one night old, a coiled-up adder, A woman's bed-talk, a broken blade, The play of cubs, a king's scion, <sup>75</sup>	A flying arrow, an ebbing tide, A coiled adder, the ice of a night, A bride's bed talk, a broad sword, A bear's play, a prince's children,
87	A sick calf, a self-willed thrall, A flattering prophetess, a corpse newly slain, [A serene sky, a laughing lord, A barking dog, and a harlot's grief];	In a calf that is sick   or a stubborn thrall, A flattering witch   or a foe new slain. [In a light, clear sky   or a laughing throng, In the bowl of a dog   or a harlot's grief] <sup>62</sup>	A sickly calf, a self-willed thrall, The smooth words of a witch, warriors fresh-slain,	A witch's welcome, the wit of a slave, A sick calf, a corpse still fresh,

88	A brother's murderer, though on the high road met, A half-burnt house, an over-swift horse, (A horse is useless, if a leg be broken), No man is so confiding as to trust any of these.	<sup>63</sup> In a brother's slayer,   if thou meet him abroad, In a half-burned house,   in a horse full swift— One leg is hurt   and the horse is useless— None had ever such faith   as to trust in them all.	Thy brother's banesman, though it be on the road, <sup>76</sup> A half-burned house, a speedy horse— Worthless the steed if one foot he breaks— So trusting be no one to trust in these! <sup>77</sup>	A brother's killer encountered upon The highway, a house half-burned, A racing stallion who has wrenched a leg, Are never safe: let no man trust them.
89	An early sown field let no one trust, Nor prematurely in a son: Weather rules the field, and wit the son, Each of which is doubtful;	Hope not too surely   for early harvest, Nor trust too soon in thy son; The field needs good weather,   the son needs wisdom, / And oft is either denied.	Early-sown acres let none ever trust, Nor trust his son too soon: Undoes weather the one, unwisdom the other: Risk not thy riches on these.	Trust not an acre early sown, Nor praise a son too soon: Weather rules the acre, wit the son, Both are exposed to peril,
90	Such is the love of women, who falsehood meditate, / As if one drove not rough-shod, on slippery ice, / A spirited two-years old and unbroken horse; / Or as in a raging storm a helmless ship is beaten; / Or as if the halt were set to catch a reindeer in the thawing fell. <sup>54</sup>	90. The love of women   fickle of will Is like starting o'er ice   with a steed unshod, A two-year-old restive   and little tamed, Or steering a rudderless   ship in a storm, Or, lame, hunting reindeer   on slippery rocks.  * * *	The false love of woman, 'tis like to one Riding on ice with horse unroughshod— A brisk two-year-old, unbroken withal— Or in raging wind drifting rudderless, Like the lame outrunning the reindeer on bare rock.  * * *	To love a woman whose ways are false Is like sledding over slippery ice With unshod horses out of control, Badly trained two-year-olds, Or drifting rudderless on a rough sea, Or catching a reindeer with a crippled hand On a thawing hillside: think not to do it.
91	Openly I now speak, because I both sexes know: Unstable are men's minds towards women; 'Tis then we speak most fair when we most Falsely think: that deceives even the cautious.	Clear now will I speak,   for I know them both, Men false to women are found; When fairest we speak,   then falsest we think, Against wisdom we work with deceit.	Heed my words now, for I know them both: Mainsworn are men to women; We speak most fair when most false our thoughts, For that wiles the wariest wits.	Naked I may speak now for I know both: Men are treacherous too Fairest we speak when falsest we think: Many a maid is deceived.
92	Fair shall speak, and money offer, Who would obtain a woman's love. Praise the form of a fair damsel; He gets who courts her.	Soft words shall he speak   and wealth shall he offer / Who longs for a maiden's love, And the beauty praise   of the maiden bright; He wins whose wooing is best.	Fairly shall speak, nor spare his gifts, Who will win a woman's love, Shall praise the looks of the lovely maid: He who flatters will win the fair.	Gallantly shall he speak and gifts bring Who wishes for woman's love: Praise the features of the fair girl, Who courts well will conquer.
93	At love should no one ever Wonder in another: A beauteous countenance oft captivates the wise, which captivates not the foolish.	Fault for loving   let no man find Ever with any other; Oft the wise are fettered,   where fools go free, By beauty that breeds desire.	At the loves of a man to laugh is not meet For anyone ever; The wise oft fall, when fools yield not, To the lure of a lovely maid.	Never reproach another for his love: It happens often enough That beauty ensnares with desire the wise While the foolish remain unmoved.
94	Let no one wonder at another's folly, It is the lot of many. All-powerful desire makes of the sons of men Fools even of the wise.	Fault with another   let no man find For what touches many a man; Wise men oft   into witless fools Are made by mighty love.	'Tis not meet for men to mock At what befalls full many: A fair face oft makes fools of the wise By the mighty lure of love.	Never reproach the plight of another, For it happens to many men: Strong desire may stupefy heroes, Dull the wits of the wise
95	The mind only knows what lies near the heart, That alone is conscious of our affections. No disease is worse to a sensible man Than not to be content with himself.	The head alone knows   what dwells near the heart, A man knows his mind alone; No sickness is worse   to one who is wise Than to lack the longed-for joy.	One's self only known what is near one's heart, Each reads but himself aright; No sickness seems to sound mind worse Than to have lost all liking for life.	The mind alone knows what is near the heart, Each is his own judge: The worst sickness for a wise man Is to crave what he cannot enjoy.
96	That I experienced, when in the reeds I sat, Awaiting my delight. Body and soul to me was that discreet maiden: Nevertheless I possess her not.	<sup>64</sup> This found I myself,   when I sat in the reeds, And long my love awaited; As my life the maiden   wise I loved, Yet her I never had.	<sup>78</sup> That saw I well when I sat in the reeds, Awaiting the maid I wooed: More than body and soul was the sweet maid to me, / Yet I worked no my will with her.	So I learned when I sat in the reeds, Hoping to have my desire: Lovely was the flesh of that fair girl, But nothing I hoped for happened.
97	Billing's lass <sup>55</sup> on her couch I found, Sun-bright, sleeping. A prince's joy to me seemed naught, If not with that form to live.	Billing's daughter   I found on her bed, In slumber bright as the sun; Empty appeared   an earl's estate Without that form so fair.	Billing's daughter on her bed I found Sleeping, the sun-bright maid; A king's crown I craved not to wear, If she let me have her love.	I saw on a bed Billing's daughter, Sun white, asleep: No greater delight I longed for then Than to lie in her lovely arms.
98	"Yet nearer eve must thou, Odin, come, If thou wilt talk the maiden over; All will be disastrous, Unless we alone are privy to such misdeed."	"Othin, again   at evening come, If a woman thou wouldst win; Evil it were   if others than we Should know of such a sin."	"At eventide shalt, Óthin, come If thou wilt win me to wife: Unmeet it were if more than we two Know of this naughty thing."	"Come Odhinn, after nightfall If you wish for a meeting with me: All would be lost if anyone saw us And learned that we were lovers."

99	I returned, thinking to love, At her wise desire. I thought I should obtain Her whole heart and love.	Away I hastened,   hoping for joy, And careless of counsel wise; Well I believed   that soon I should win Measureless joy with the maid.	Back I went; to win her love I let myself be misled; For I did think, enthralled by love, To work my will with her.	Afire with longing; I left her then, Deceived by her soft words: I thought my wooing had won the maid, That I would have my way.
100	When next I came The bold warriors were all awake, With lights burning, and bearing torches: Thus was the way to pleasure closed.	So came I next   when night it was, The warriors all were awake; With burning lights   and waving brands I learned my luckless way.	When next I came at nighttime, then, All the warriors found I awake, With brands high borne and burning lights: Such the luckless end of my love tryst!	After nightfall I hurried back, But the warriors were all awake, Lights were burning, blazing torches: So false proved the path
101	But at the approach of morn, when again I came, The household all was sleeping; The good damsel's dog alone I found tied to the bed.	At morning then,   when once more I came, And all were sleeping still, A dog found   in the fair one's place, Bound there upon her bed.	Near morn when I once more did come, The folks were sound asleep; But a bitch found I the fair one had Bound fast on her bed!	Towards daybreak back I came The guards were sound asleep: I found then that the fair woman Had tied a bitch to her bed.
102	Many a fair maiden, when rightly known, Towards men is fickle: / That I experienced, When that discreet maiden I strove to seduce: Contumely of every kind That wily girl heaped upon me; Nor of that damsel gained I aught.	<sup>65</sup> Many fair maids,   if a man but tries them, False to a lover are found; That did I learn   when I longed to gain With wiles the maiden wise; Foul scorn was my meed   from the crafty maid, And nought from the woman I won.	Many a good maid, if you mark it well, Is fickle, though fair her word; That I quickly found when the cunning maid I lured to lecherous love; Every taunt and give she tried on me, And naught I had of her.	Many a girl when one gets to know her Proves to be fickle and false: That treacherous maiden taught me a lesson, The crafty woman covered me with shame; That was all I got from her.
103	At home let a man be cheerful, And towards a guest liberal; Of wise conduct he should be, Of good memory and ready speech; If much knowledge he desires, He must often talk on good. <sup>56</sup> Fimbulfambi he is called who' little has to say: Such is the nature of the simple.	<sup>66</sup> Though glad at home,   and merry with guests, A man shall be wary and wise; The sage and shrewd,   wide wisdom seeking, Must see that his speech be fair; A fool is he named   who nought can say, For such is the way of the witless.	<sup>79</sup> Glad in his home, to his guest cheerful, Yet shrewd should one be; Wise and weighty be the word of his mouth, If wise he would be thought. A ninny is he who naught can say, For such is the way of the witless.	Let a man with his guests be glad and merry, Modest a man should be; But talk well if he intends to be wise And expects praise from men: Fimbul fambi is the fool called; Unable to open his mouth.
104	The old Jotun I sought; now I am come back: Little got I there by silence; In many words I spoke to my advantage In Suttung's halls.	<sup>67</sup> I found the old giant,   now back have I fared, Small gain from silence I got; Full many a word,   my will to get, I spoke in Suttung's hall.	The old etin I sought—now am I back; In good stead stood me my speech; For with many words my wish I wrought In the hall of Suttungs' sons.	Fruitless my errand, had I been silent When I came to Suttung's courts: With spirited words I spoke to my profit In the hall of the aged giant.
105	Rati's mouth I caused to make a space, And to gnaw the rock; Over and under me were the Jotun's ways: Thus I my head did peril.	The mouth of Rati <sup>68</sup>   made room for my passage, And space in the stone he gnawed; Above and below   the giants' paths lay, So rashly I risked my head.	<sup>80</sup> With an auger I there ate my way, Through the rocks I made me room! Over and under were the etins' paths; <sup>81</sup> Thus dared I life and limbs.	Rati had gnawed a narrow passage, Chewed a channel through stone, A path around the roads of giants: I was like to lose my head
106	Gunnlod gave me, on her golden seat, A draught of the precious mead; A bad recompense I afterwards made her, For her whole soul, her fervent love.	Gunnloth gave   on a golden stool A drink of the marvelous mead; A harsh reward   did I let her have For her heroic heart, And her spirit troubled sore. <sup>69</sup>	Gunnloth gave me, her gold stood upon, A draught of the dear-bought mead; An ill reward I her after left For her faithful friendship, For her heavy heart.	Gunnlod sat me in the golden seat, Poured me precious mead: Ill reward she had from me for that, For her proud and passionate heart, Her brooding foreboding spirit.
107	Of a well-assumed form I made good use: Few things fail the wise; For Odhrærir is now come up To men's earthly dwellings.	The well-earned beauty   well I enjoyed, Little the wise man lacks; So Othrorir <sup>70</sup> now   has up been brought To the midst of the men of earth.	(Of the well-bought matter) <sup>82</sup> I made good use: To the wise now little is lacking; For Óthrerir now up is brought, And won for the lord-of-all-wights.	What I won from her I have well used: I have waxed in wisdom since I came back, Bringing to Asgard Odrerir, The sacred draught.
108	'Tis to me doubtful that I could have come From the Jotun's courts, Had not Gunnlod aided me, that good damsel, Over whom I laid my arm.	Hardly, methinks,   would I home have come, And left the giants' land, Had not Gunnloth helped me,   the maiden good, Whose arms about me had been.	Unharmd again had I hardly come Out of the etins' hall, If Gunnloth helped not, the good maiden, In whose loving arms I lay.	Hardly would I have come home alive From the garth of the grim troll, Had Gunnlod not helped me, the good woman, Who wrapped her arms around me.
109	On the day following came the Hrimthursar, To learn something of the High One, In the High One's hall:	The day that followed,   the frost-giants came, Some word of Hor <sup>71</sup> to win, (And into the hall of Hor:)	The day after, the etins fared Into Hár's high hall, To ask after Bolverk: <sup>83</sup> whether the Æsir among,	The following day the Frost Giants came, Walked into Har's hall to ask for Har's advice: Had Bolverk they asked, come back to his friends,

	After Bolverk they inquired, whether he with the gods were come, / Or Suttung had destroyed him?	Of Bolverk they asked,   were he back midst the gods, / Or had Suttung slain him there?	Or whether by Suttung slain.	Or had he been slain by Suttung?
110	Odin, I believe, a ring-oath <sup>57</sup> gave. Who in his faith will trust? Suttung defrauded, of his drink bereft, And Gunnlod made to weep!	On his ring swore Othin   the oath, methinks; Who now his troth shall trust? Suttung's betrayal   he sought with drink, And Gunnloth to grief he left.	An oath on the ring did Óthin swear: <sup>84</sup> How put trust in his troth? Suttung he swindled and snatched his drink, And Gunnloth he beguiled.	Odhinn, they said, swore an oath on his ring: Who from now on will trust him? By fraud at the feast he befuddled Suttung And brought grief to Gunnlod.

### Part III. Lay of Loddfáfnir (111-137)

The *Loddfáfnismál* is again gnomic, dealing with morals, ethics, correct action and codes of conduct. The section is directed to Loddfáfnir ("stray-singer").

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
111	Time 'tis to discourse from the preacher's chair. By the well of Urd I silent sat, I saw and meditated, I listened to men's words.  Of runes I heard discourse, and of things divine, Nor of graving them were they silent, Nor of sage counsels, at the High One's hall. In the High One's hall. I thus heard say:	<sup>85</sup> It is time to chant   from the chanter's stool; By the wells of Urth <sup>86</sup> I was, I saw and was silent,   I saw and thought, And heard the speech of Hor. <sup>87</sup>  (Of runes heard I words,   Nor were counsels wanting, At the hall of Hor, In the hall of Hor; Such was the speech I heard.)	'Tis time to chant on the sage's chair: At the well of Urth <sup>95</sup> I saw but said naught, I saw and thought, (Listened to Hár's lore); <sup>96</sup>  Of runes I heard men speak unraveling them, At the hall of Hár, In the hall of Hár, And so I heard them say:	It is time to sing in the seat of the wise, Of what at Urd's Well I saw in silence, Saw and thought on. Long I listened to men  Runes heard spoken, (counsels revealed.) At Har's hall, In Har's hall: There I heard this.
112	I counsel thee, Loddfáfnir, to take advice: Thou wilt profit if thou takest it. Rise not at night, unless to explore, Or art compelled to go out.	<sup>88</sup> I rede thee, Loddfáfnir!   and hear thou my rede, Profit thou hast if thou hearest, Great thy gain if thou learnest: Rise not at night,   save if news thou seekest, Or fain to the outhouse wouldst fare.	Hear thou, Loddfáfnir, <sup>97</sup> and heed it well, Learn it, 'twill lend thee strength, Follow it, 'twill further thee: At night rise not but to be ready for foe, Or to look for a spot to relieve thee.	Loddfáfnir, listen to my counsel: You will fare well if you follow it, It will help you much if you heed it. Never rise at night unless you need to spy Or to ease yourself in the outhouse.
113	I counsel thee, etc. In an enchantress's embrace thou mayest not sleep, So that in her arms she clasp thee.	I rede thee, etc. Beware of sleep   on a witch's bosom, Nor let her limbs ensnare thee.	Hear thou, etc. In a witch's arms beware of sleeping, Linking thy limbs with hers.	Loddfáfnir, listen, etc. Shun a woman, wise in magic, Her bed and her embraces:
114	She will be the cause that thou carest not for Thing or prince's words; Food thou wilt shun and human joys; Sorrowful wilt thou go to sleep.	Such is her might   that thou hast no mind For the council or meeting of men; Meat thou hatest,   joy thou hast not, And sadly to slumber thou farest.	She will cast her spell that thou carest not to go To meetings where men are gathered; Unmindful of meat, and mirthless, thou goest, And sleekest thy bed in sorrow.	If she cast a spell, you will care no longer To meet and speak with men, Desire no food, desire no pleasure, In sorrow fall asleep.
115	I counsel thee, etc. Another's wife entice thou never To secret converse.	I rede thee, etc. Seek never to win   the wife of another, Or long for her secret love.	Hear thou, etc. Beware lest the wedded wife of a man Thou lure to love with thee.	Loddfáfnir, listen, etc. Never seduce another's wife, Never make her your mistress.
116	I counsel thee, etc. By fell or firth if thou have to travel, Provide thee well with food.	I rede thee, etc. If o'er mountains or gulfs   thou fain wouldst go, Look well to thy food for the way.	Hear thou, etc. On fell or firth if to fare thee list, Furnish thee well with food.	Loddfáfnir, listen, etc. If you must journey to mountains and firths, Take food and fodder with you.
117	I counsel thee, etc. A bad man let thou never Know thy misfortunes; For from a bad man thou never wilt obtain A return for thy good will.	I rede thee, etc. An evil man   thou must not let Bring aught of ill to thee; For an evil man   will never make Reward for a worthy thought.	Hear thou, etc. Withhold the hardships which happen to thee From the knowledge of knaves; For, know thou, from knaves thou wilt never have Reward for they good wishes. <sup>98</sup>	Loddfáfnir, listen, etc. Never open your heart to an evil man When fortune does not favour you: From an evil man, if you make him your friend, You will get evil for good.

118	I saw mortally wound a man A wicked woman's words; A false tongue caused his death, And most unrighteously.	I saw a man   who was wounded sore By an evil woman's word; A lying tongue   his death-blow launched, And no word of truth there was.	A man I saw sorely bestead Through a wicked woman's words; Her baleful tongue did work his bane, Though good and unguilty he was.	I saw a warrior wounded fatally By the words of an evil woman Her cunning tongue caused his death, Though what she alleged was a lie.
119	I counsel thee, etc. If thou knowest thou hast a friend, Whom thou well canst trust, go oft to visit him; For with brushwood over-grown, and with high grass, / Is the way that no one treads.	I rede thee, etc. If a friend thou hast   whom thou fully wilt trust, Then fare to find him oft; For brambles grow   and waving grass On the rarely trodden road.	Hear thou, etc. If faithful friend thou hast found for thee, Then fare thou to find him full oft; Overgrown is soon with tall grass and bush The trail which is trod by no one.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. If you know a friend you can fully trust, Go often to his house Grass and brambles grow quickly Upon the untrodden track.
120	I counsel thee, etc. A good man attract to thee in pleasant converse; And salutary speech learn while thou livest.	I rede thee, etc. A good man find   to hold in friendship, And give heed to his healing charms.	Hear thou, etc. A good man seek thou to gain as thy friend, And learn to make thyself loved.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. With a good man it is good to talk, Make him your fast friend:
121	I counsel thee, etc. With thy friend be thou Never first to quarrel. Care gnaws the heart, if thou to no one Canst thy whole mind disclose.	I rede thee, etc. Be never the first   to break with thy friend The bond that holds you both; Care eats the heart   if thou canst not speak To another all thy thought.	Hear thou, etc. The first be not with a friend to break Who was faithful found to thee; For sorrow eateth the soul of him Who may not unburden his mind.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Cherish those near you, never be The first to break with a friend: Care eats him who can no longer Open his heart to another.
122	I counsel thee, etc. Words thou never shouldst exchange With a witless fool;	I rede thee, etc. Exchange of words   with a witless ape Thou must not ever make.	Hear thou, etc. Beware thou of bandying words With an unwise oaf,	110 But waste no words on a witless oaf, Nor sit with a senseless ape.
123	For from an ill-conditioned man thou wilt never get A return for good; But a good man will bring thee Favour by his praise.	For never thou mayst   from an evil man A good requital get; But a good man oft   the greatest love Through words of praise will win thee.	For from evil men not ever wilt thou Get reward for good; A good man, though, will gain for thee The love and liking of many.	An evil man, if you make him your friend, Will give you evil for good: A good man, if you make him your friend, Will praise you in every place. <sup>111</sup>
124	There is a mingling of affection, Where one can tell another all his mind. Everything is better than being with the deceitful. He is not another's friend who ever says as he says.	Mingled is love   when a man can speak To another all his thought; Nought is so bad   as false to be, No friend speaks only fair.	Then love is mingled when a man can say To a bosom friend what burdens him; Few things are worse than fickle mind: No friend he who but speaks thee fair.	Affection is mutual when men can open All their heart to each other: He whose words are always fair Is untrue and not to be trusted.
125	I counsel thee, etc. Even in three words quarrel not with a worse man: Often the better yields, when the worse strikes.	I rede thee, etc. With a worse man speak not   three words in dispute, / Ill fares the better oft When the worse man wields a sword.	Hear thou, etc. Not three words shalt with a sores man bandy; Oft the better man forbears When the worse man wounds thee. <sup>99</sup>	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Bandy no speech with a bad man: Often the better is beaten In a word fight by the worse.
126	I counsel thee, etc. Be not a shoemaker, nor a shaftmaker, Unless for thyself it be; For a shoe if ill made, or a shaft if crooked, Will call down evil on thee.	I rede thee, etc. A shoemaker be,   or a maker of shafts, For only thy single self; If the shoe is ill made,   or the shaft prove false, Then evil of thee men think.	Hear thou, etc. Neither shoemaker be nor shaftmaker, either, But it be for thyself: Let the shoe be ill shaped or the shaft not true, And they will wish thee woe.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Be not a cobbler nor a carver of shafts, Except it be for yourself: If a shoe fit ill or a shaft be crooked"; The maker gets curses and kicks.
127	I counsel thee, etc. Wherever of injury thou knowest, regard that injury as thy own; / And give to thy foes no peace.	I rede thee, etc. If evil thou knowest,   as evil proclaim it, And make no friendship with foes.	Hear thou, etc. If wrong was done thee let thy wrong be known, And fall on thy foes straightway.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. If aware that another is wicked, say so: Make no truce or treaty with foes.
128	I counsel thee, etc. Rejoiced at evil be thou never; But let good give thee pleasure.	I rede thee, etc. In evil never   joy shalt thou know, But glad the good shall make thee.	Hear thou, etc. In ill deeds not ever share, But be thou glad to do good.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Never share in the shamefully gotten, But allow yourself what is lawful.
129	I counsel thee, etc. In a battle look not up, (Like swine the sons of men then become) That men may not fascinate thee.	I rede thee, etc. Look not up   when the battle is on,-- (Like madmen the sons   of men become,--) <sup>89</sup> Lest men bewitch thy wits.	Hear thou, etc. Look not ever up, when fighting— For mad with fear <sup>100</sup> men then oft grow— Lest that warlocks bewitch thee.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Never lift your eyes and look up in battle, Lest the heroes enchant you, Who can change warriors suddenly into hogs,

130	I counsel thee, etc. If thou wilt induce a good woman To pleasant converse, Thou must promise fair, and hold to it: No one turns from good if it can be got.	I rede thee, etc. If thou fain wouldst win   a woman's love, And gladness get from her, Fair be thy promise   and well fulfilled; None loathes what good he gets.	Hear thou, etc. If thee list to gain a good woman's love And all the bliss there be, Thy troth shalt pledge, and truly keep: No one tires of the good he gets. <sup>101</sup>	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. With a good woman, if you wish to enjoy Her words and her good will, Pledge her fairly and be faithful to it: Enjoy the good you are given,
131	I counsel thee, etc. I enjoin thee to be wary, but not over wary; At drinking be thou most wary, and with another's wife; / And thirdly, that thieves delude thee not.	I rede thee, etc. I bid thee be wary,   but be not fearful; (Beware most with ale or another's wife, And third beware   lest a thief outwit thee.) <sup>90</sup>	Hear thou, etc. Be wary of thee, but not wary o'er much; Be most wary of ale and of other man's wife, And eke, thirdly, lest thieves outwit thee.	Be not over wary, but wary enough, First, of the foaming ale, Second, of a woman wed to another, Third, of the tricks of thieves.
132	I counsel thee, etc. With insult or derision treat thou never A guest or wayfarer.	I rede thee, etc. Scorn or mocking   ne'er shalt thou make Of a guest or a journey-goer.	Hear thou, etc. Never laugh at or mock, or make game of, Guest or wayfaring wight.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Mock not the traveler met On the road, Nor maliciously laugh at the guest:
133	They often little know, who sit within, Of what race they are who come.  Vices and virtues the sons of mortals Bear in their breasts mingled; No one is so good that no failing attends him, Nor so bad as to be good for nothing.	Oft scarcely he knows   who sits in the house What kind is the man who comes; None so good is found   that faults he has not, Nor so wicked that nought he is worth. <sup>91</sup>  [Evil and good   do men's sons ever "Mingled bear in their breasts.]	Those who sit within hall oft hardly know Of what kin be they who come; No man so flawless but some fault he has, Nor so wicked to be of no worth.  [Both foul and fair are found among men, Blended within their breasts.]	The sitters in the hall seldom know The kin of the new-comer: The best man is marred by faults, The worst is not without worth.
134	I counsel thee, etc. At a hoary speaker laugh thou never; Often is good that which the aged utter, Oft from a shriveled hide discreet words issue; From those whose skin is pendent And decked with scars, And who go tottering among the vile.	I rede thee, etc. Scorn not ever   the gray-haired singer, Oft do the old speak good; (Oft from shrivelled skin   come skillful counsels, Though it hang with the hides, And flap with the pelts, And is blown with the bellies.) <sup>92</sup>	Hear thou, etc. At hoary sage <sup>102</sup> sneer thou never: There is sense oft in old men's saws; Oft wisdom cometh out of withered bag <sup>103</sup> That hangs 'mongst the skins drying Under roof, with the rennet.	Never laugh at the old when they offer counsel, Often their words are wise: From shriveled skin, from scraggy things That hand among the hides And move amid the guts, Clear words often come.
135	I counsel thee, etc. Rail not at a guest, nor from thy gate thrust him; treat well the indigent; they will speak well of thee.	I rede thee, etc. Curse not thy guest,   nor show him thy gate, Deal well with a man in want.	Hear now, etc. Beshrew not the stranger, nor show him the door, But rather do good to the wretched.	Loddfafnir, listen, etc. Scoff not at guests nor to the gate chase them, But relieve the lonely and wretched,
136	Strong is the bar that must be raised to admit all. Do thou give a penny, Or they will call down on thee Every ill in thy limbs.	Strong is the beam   that raised must be To give an entrance to all; Give it a ring,   or grim will be The wish it would work on thee. <sup>93</sup>	That bar must be strong which unbars the door To each and every one: <sup>104</sup> Show the beggar your back lest, bearing thee grudge, he wish you all manner of mischief.	Heavy the beam above the door; Hang a horse-shoe on it Against ill-luck, lest it should suddenly Crash and crush your guests.
137	I counsel thee, etc. Wherever thou beer drinkest, Invoke to thee the power of earth; For earth is good against drink, fire for distempers, The oak for constipation, a corn-ear for sorcery, A hall for domestic strife. In bitter hates invoke the moon; / The biter for bite-injuries is good; But runes against calamity; Fluid let earth absorb.	I rede thee, etc. When ale thou drinkest   seek might of earth, (For earth cures drink,   and fire cures ills, The oak cures tightness,   the ear cures magic, Rye cures rupture,   the moon cures rage, Grass cures the scab,   and runes the sword-cut;) <sup>94</sup> The field absorbs the flood.	When ale thou drunkest invoke earth-strength; <sup>105</sup> [For earth is good 'against ale, 'gainst ague, fire, <sup>106</sup> 'gainst straining, <sup>107</sup> acorns, 'gainst witchery, steel, 'gainst house-strife, the elder, <sup>108</sup> 'gainst hate, <sup>109</sup> the moon, 'gainst the rabies, alum, 'gainst ill luck, runes—] For earth absorbs the humors all.	Medicines exist against many evils: Earth against drunkenness, heather against worms Oak against costiveness, corn against sorcery, Spurred rye against rupture, runes against bales The moon against feuds, fire against sickness, Earth makes harmless the floods.

## Part IV. The Rune Poem (138-146)

*Rúnatal* or *Óðins Rune Song*, *Rúnatáls-þáttir-Óðins*, is the section of the *Hávamál* where Odin reveals the origins of the runes.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
138	I know that I hung, on a wind-rocked tree, Nine whole nights, With a spear wounded, And to Odin offered, myself to myself; On that tree, of which no one knows From what root it springs.	<sup>113</sup> I ween that I hung   on the windy tree, <sup>114</sup> Hung there for nights full nine; With the spear I was wounded,   and offered I was To Óthin, myself to myself, On the tree that none   may ever know What root beneath it runs. <sup>115</sup>	I wot that I hung on the wind-tossed tree All of nights nine, Wounded by spear, bespoken to Óthin, Bespoken myself to myself, [Upon that tree of which none telleth From what roots it doth rise]. <sup>122</sup>	Wounded I hung on a wind-swept gallows For nine long nights, Pierced by a spear, pledged to Odhinn, Offered, myself to myself The wisest know not from whence spring The roots of that ancient road
139	Bread no one gave me, nor a horn of drink, Downward I peered, To runes applied myself, wailing learnt them, Then fell down thence.	None made me happy   with loaf or horn, And there below I looked; I took up the runes,   shrieking I took them, And forthwith back I fell.	Neither horn <sup>123</sup> they upheld nor handed me bread; I looked below me— Aloud I cried— Caught up the runes, caught them up wailing Thence to the ground fell again.	They gave me no bread, they gave me no mead, I looked down; With a loud cry I took up runes; From that tree I fell.
140	Potent songs nine from the famed son I learned Of Bolthorn, Bestla's sire, And a draught obtained of the precious mead, Drawn from Odhrærir.	<sup>116</sup> Nine mighty songs   I got from the son Of Bolthorn, Bestla's father; And a drink I got   of the goodly mead Poured out from Othrorir.	From the son of Bolthorn, <sup>124</sup> Bestla's father, I mastered mighty songs nine, And a drink I had of the dearest mead, Got from out of Óthrerir.	Nine lays of power I learned from the famous Bolthor, Bestla's father: He poured me a draught of precious mead, Mixed with magic Odrerir.
141	Then I began to bear fruit, and to know many things, / To grow and well thrive: Word by word I sought out words, Fact by fact I sought out facts.	Then began I to thrive,   and wisdom to get, I grew and well I was; Each word led me on   to another word, Each deed to another deed.	Then began I to grow and gain in insight, To wax eke in wisdom: One verse led on to another verse, One poem led on to the other poem.	Waxed and throve well; Word from word gave words to me, Deed from deed gave deeds to me,
142	Runes thou wilt find, and explained characters, Very large characters, very potent characters, Which the great speaker depicted, And the high powers formed, And the powers' prince graved:	<sup>117</sup> Runes shalt thou find,   and fateful signs, That the king of singers colored, And the mighty gods have made; Full strong the signs,   full mighty the signs That the ruler of gods doth write.	Runes wilt thou find, and rightly read, Of wondrous weight, of mighty magic, Which that dyed <sup>125</sup> the dread god, Which that made the holy hosts, And were etched by Óthin.	Runes you will find, and readable staves, Very strong staves, very stout staves, Staves that Bolthor stained, Made by mighty powers, Graven by the prophetic god,
143	Odin among the Æsir, but among the Alfar, Dain, And Dvalin for the dwarfs, Asvid for the Jotuns: Some I myself graved.	<sup>118</sup> Othin for the gods,   Dain for the elves, And Dvalin for the dwarfs, Alsvith for giants   and all mankind, And some myself I wrote.	Óthin <sup>126</sup> among Æsir, for alfs, Dáin, <sup>127</sup> Dvalin for the dwarfs, Alsvith <sup>128</sup> among etins, (but for earth-born men) <sup>129</sup> Wrought I some myself.	For the gods by Odhinn, for the elves by Dain, By Dvalin, too, for the dwarves, By Asvid for the hateful giants, And some I carved myself:
144	Knowest thou how to grave them? knowest thou how to expound them? Knowest thou how to depict them? knowest thou how to prove them? Knowest thou how to pray? knowest thou how to offer? Knowest thou how to send? <sup>112</sup> knowest thou how to consume?	<sup>119</sup> Knowest how one shall write,   knowest how one shall rede? Knowest how one shall tint,   knowest how one makes trial? Knowest how one shall ask,   knowest how one shall offer? Knowest how one shall send,   knowest how one shall sacrifice?	Know'st how to write, <sup>130</sup> know'st how to read, Know'st how to stain, how to understand Know'st how to ask, know'st how to offer, Know'st how to supplicate, know'st how to sacrifice?	Know how to cut them, know how to read them, Know how to stain them, know how to prove them, Know how to evoke them, know how to score them, Know how to send them; know how to send them,
145	'Tis better not to pray than too much offer; A gift ever looks to a return. 'Tis better not to send than too much consume. So Thund graved before the origin of men, Where he ascended, to whence he afterwards came.	<sup>120</sup> Better no prayer   than too big an offering, By thy getting measure thy gift; Better is none   than too big a sacrifice, So Thund of old wrote   ere man's race began, Where he rose on high   when home he came. <sup>121</sup>	'Tis better unasked than offered overmuch; For ay doth a gift look for gain; 'Tis better unasked than offered overmuch: Thus did Óthain write ere the earth began, When up he rose in after time.	Better not to ask than to over-pledge As a gift that demands a gift"; Better not to send than to slay too many, [Thund, before man was made, scratched them, Who rose first, fell thereafter] <sup>131</sup>

## Part V. Magic Charms (146-165)

The last section, the *Ljóðatal* enumerates eighteen charms (songs, *ljóð*), though the charms themselves are not given, just descriptions of their application or effect. They are counted in the manuscript using Roman numerals, though there is no explicit mention of runes or runic magic, excepting in the twelfth charm. Nevertheless, because of the *Rúnatal* preceding the list, the *Ljóðatal* has been associated with the runes, specifically with the sixteen letters of the Younger Futhark. However, Müllenhoff takes the final three charms (16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>) as late and obscure additions.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Hollander (1962)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
146	Those songs I know which the king's wife knows not / Nor son of man. Help the first is called, for that will help thee Against strifes and cares.	<sup>134</sup> The songs I know   that king's wives know not, Nor men that are sons of men; The first is called help,   and help it can bring thee In sorrow and pain and sickness.	Those spells I know which the spouses of kings <sup>149</sup> Wot not, nor earthly wight: “Help” one is hight, with which holpen thou’lt be In sorrow and care and sickness.	The first charm I know is unknown to rulers Or any of human kind; Help it is named, For help it can give in hours of sorrow and anguish.
147	For the second I know, what the sons of men require, / Who will as leeches live.	A second I know,   that men shall need Who leechcraft long to use; <sup>135</sup> . . . . . . . . . .	That other I know which all will need Who leeches list to be: (On the bark scratch them of bole in the woods Whose boughs bend to the east). <sup>150</sup>	I know a second that the sons of men Must learn who wish to be leeches.
148	For the third I know, <sup>132</sup> If I have great need to restrain my foes, The weapons' edge I deaden: Of my adversaries nor arms nor wiles harm aught.	A third I know,   if great is my need Of fetters to hold my foe; Blunt do I make   mine enemy's blade, Nor bites his sword or staff.	That third I know, if my need be great To fetter a foeman fell: <sup>151</sup> I can dull the swords of deadly foes, That nor wiles nor weapons avail. <sup>152</sup>	I know a third: in the thick of battle, If my need be great enough, It will blunt the edges of enemy swords, Their weapons will make no wounds.
149	For the fourth I know, If men place bonds on my limbs, I so sing that I can walk; The fetter starts from my feet, And the manacle from my hands.	A fourth I know,   if men shall fasten Bonds on my bended legs; So great is the charm   that forth I may go, The fetters spring from my feet, Broken the bonds from my hands.	The fourth I know, if foemen have Fettered me hand and foot: I chant a charm <sup>153</sup> the chains to break, So the fetters will fly off my feet, And off my hands the halter.	I know a fourth: it will free me quickly If foes should bind me fast With strong chains, a chant that makes Fetters spring from the feet, Bonds burst from the hands.
150	For the fifth I know, If I see a shot from a hostile hand, / A shaft flying amid the host, So swift it cannot fly that I cannot arrest it, If only I get sight of it.	A fifth I know,   if I see from afar An arrow fly 'gainst the folk; It flies not so swift   that I stop it not, If ever my eyes behold it.	That fifth I know, if from foeman's hand I see a spear sped into throng, Never so fast it flies but its flight I can stay, Once my eye lights on it.	I know a fifth: no flying arrow, Aimed to bring harm to men, Flies too fast for my fingers to catch it And hold it in mid-air.
151	For the sixth I know, if one wounds me With a green tree's roots; <sup>133</sup> Also if a man declares hatred to me, Harm shall consume them sooner than me.	A sixth I know,   if harm one seeks With a sapling's roots to send me; <sup>136</sup> The hero himself   who wreaks his hate Shall taste the ill ere I.	That sixth I know, if me someone wounds With runes on gnarled root written, Or rouses my wrath by reckless speech: Him blights shall blast, not me.	I know a sixth: it will save me if a man Cut runes on a sapling's roots With intent to harm; it turns the spell; The hater is harmed, not me.
152	For the seventh I know, if a lofty house I see blaze o'er its inmates, So furiously it shall not burn that I cannot save it. That song I can sing.	A seventh I know,   if I see in flames The hall o'er my comrades' heads; It burns not so wide   that I will not quench it, I know that song to sing.	That seventh I know, if o'er sleepers' heads I behold a hall on fire: However bright the blaze I can beat it down— That mighty spell I can speak.	I know a seventh: If I see the hall Ablaze around my bench mates, Though hot the flames, they shall feel nothing, If I choose to chant the spell.
153	For the eighth I know, What to all is useful to learn: Where hatred grows among the sons of men— That I can quickly assuage.	An eighth I know,   that is to all Of greatest good to learn; When hatred grows   among heroes' sons, I soon can set it right.	That eighth I know which to all men Is needful, and good to know: When hatred runs high, heroes among, Their strife I can settle full soon.	I know an eighth: that all are glad of, Most useful to men: If hate fester in the heart of a warrior, It will soon calm and cure him.
154	For the ninth I know, if I stand in need My bark on the water to save, I can the wind on the waves allay, And the sea lull.	A ninth I know,   if need there comes To shelter my ship on the flood; The wind I calm   upon the waves, And the sea I put to sleep.	That ninth I know: if need there be To guard a ship in a gale, The wind I calm, and the waves also, And wholly soothe the sea.	I know a ninth: when need I have To shelter my ship on the flood, The wind it calms, the waves it smoothes And puts the sea to sleep,
155	For the tenth I know, If I see troll-wives sporting in air, I can so operate that they will	A tenth I know,   what time I see House-riders <sup>137</sup> flying on high; So can I work   that wildly they go,	That tenth I know, if night-hags sporting I scan aloft in the sky: I scare them with spells so they scatter abroad,	I know a tenth: if troublesome ghosts Ride the rafters aloft, I can work it so they wander astray,

	Forsake their own forms, And their own minds.	Showing their true shapes, Hence to their own homes.	Heedless of their hides, <sup>154</sup> Heedless of their haunts.	Unable to find their forms, Unable to find their homes.
156	For the eleventh I know, if I have to lead My ancient friends to battle, Under their shields I sing, And with power they go Safe to the fight, safe from the fight; Safe on every side they go.	An eleventh I know,   if needs I must lead To the fight my long-loved friends; I sing in the shields,   and in strength they go Whole to the field of fight, Whole from the field of fight, And whole they come thence home. <sup>138</sup>	That eleventh I know, if I am to lead Old friends to the fray: Under buckler I chant that briskly they fare Hale and whole to battle, Hale and whole from battle: Hale wherever they are.	I know an eleventh: when I lead to battle Old comrades in-arms, I have only to chant it behind my shield, And unwounded they go to war, Unwounded they come from war, Unscathed wherever they are.
157	For the twelfth I know, if on a tree I see A corpse swinging from a halter, I can so grave and in runes depict, That the man shall walk, And with me converse.	A twelfth I know,   if high on a tree I see a hanged man swing; So do I write   and color the runes That forth he fares, And to me talks. <sup>139</sup>	That twelfth I know, if on tree I see A hanged one hoisted on high: Thus I write and the runes I stain That down he drops And tells me his tale. <sup>155</sup>	I know a twelfth: If a tree bear A man hanged in a halter, I can carve and stain strong runes That will cause the corpse to speak, Reply to whatever I ask.
158	For the thirteenth I know, if on a young man I sprinkle water, he shall not fall, Though he into battle come: That man shall not sink before swords.	A thirteenth I know,   if a thane full young With water I sprinkle well; <sup>140</sup> He shall not fall,   though he fares mid the host, Nor sink beneath the swords.	That thirteenth I know, if a thane's son I shall Wet with holy water: Never will he fall, though the fray be hot, Nor sink down, wounded by sword.	I know a thirteenth if I throw a cup Of water over a warrior, He shall not fall in the fiercest battle, Nor sink beneath the sword,
159	For the fourteenth I know, if in the society of men I have to enumerate the gods, Æsir and Alfár, I know the distinctions of all. This few unskilled can do.	A fourteenth I know,   if fain I would name To men the mighty gods; All know I well   of the gods and elves, Few be the fools know this.	That fourteenth I know, if to folk I shall sing And say of the gods: Æsir and alfs know I altogether— Of unlearned few have that lore.	I know a fourteenth, that few know: If I tell a troop of warriors / About the high ones, elves and gods, / I can name them one by one. (Few can the nit-wit name.)
160	For the fifteenth I know what the dwarf Thiodreyrir sang before Delling's doors. Strength he sang to the Æsir, and to the Alfár prosperity, / Wisdom to Hroptatyr.	<sup>141</sup> A fifteenth I know,   that before the doors Of Delling <sup>142</sup> sang Thjothrorir the dwarf; <sup>143</sup> Might he sang for the gods,   and glory for elves, And wisdom for Hroptatyr <sup>144</sup> wise.	That know I fifteenth which Thjóðrærir sang, The dwarf, before Delling's door: Gave to Æsir strength, to alfs victory By his song, and insight to Óthin.	I know a fifteenth, that first Thjodrerir Sang before Delling's doors, Giving power to gods, prowess to elves, Fore-sight to Hroptatyr Odhinn,
161	For the sixteenth I know, if a modest maiden's favour and affection I desire to possess, The soul I change of the white-armed damsel, And wholly turn her mind.	A sixteenth I know,   if I seek delight To win from a maiden wise; The mind I turn   of the white-armed maid, And thus change all her thoughts.	That sixteenth I know, if I seek me some maid, To work my will with her: The white-armed woman's heart I bewitch, And toward me I turn her thoughts.	I know a sixteenth: if I see a girl With whom it would please me to play, I can turn her thoughts, can touch the heart Of any white armed woman.
162	For the seventeenth I know, That that young maiden will reluctantly avoid me.	A seventeenth I know,   so that seldom shall go A maiden young from me; <sup>145</sup> · · · · · · · · · ·	That seventeenth I know, (if the slender maid's love I have, and hold her to me: Thus I sing to her) <sup>156</sup> that she hardly will Leave me for other man's love.	I know a seventeenth: if I sing it, The young girl will be slow to forsake me.
163	These songs, Loddafnir! Thou wilt long have lacked; Yet it may be good if thou understandest them, Profitable if thou learnest them.	Long these songs   thou shalt, Loddafnir, Seek in vain to sing; Yet good it were   if thou mightest get them, Well, if thou wouldst them learn, Help, if thou hadst them. <sup>146</sup>	In this lore wilt thou, Loddáfáfnir, be Unversed forever and ay: Thy weal were it, if this wisdom thine— 'Tis helpful, if heeded, 'Tis needful, if known.	To learn to sing them, Loddafnir, Will take you a long time, Though helpful they are if you understand them, Useful if you use them, Needful if you need them.
164	For the eighteenth I know that which I never teach To maid or wife of man, (All is better what one only knows. This is the closing of the songs) Save her alone who clasps me in her arms, Or is my sister.	An eighteenth I know,   that ne'er will I tell To maiden or wife of man,— The best is what none   but one's self doth know, So comes the end of the songs,— Save only to her   in whose arms I lie, Or who else my sister is. <sup>147</sup>	That eighteenth I know which to none I will tell, <sup>157</sup> Neither maid nor man's wife— 'Tis best warded if but one know it: This speak I last of my spells— But only to her in whose arms I lie, Or else to my sister also.	I know an eighteenth that I never tell To maiden or wife of man, A secret I hide from all Except the love who lies in my arms, Or else my own sister.
165	Now are sung the High-One's songs, In the High-One's hall, To the sons of men all-useful, But useless to the Jotuns' sons.	<sup>148</sup> Now are Hor's words   spoken in the hall, Kind for the kindred of men, Cursed for the kindred of giants: Hail to the speaker,   and to him who learns!	Now are Hár's sayings spoken in Hár's hall, Of help to the sons of men, Of harm to the sons of etins; Hail to whoever spoke them,	The Wise One has spoken words in the hall, Needful for men to know, Unneedful for trolls to know: Hail to the speaker,

	Hail to him who has sung them! Hail to him who knows them! May he profit who has learnt them! Hail to those who have listened to them!	Profit be his who has them! Hail to them who hearken!	Hail to whoever knows them! Gain they who grasp them, Happy they who heed them!	Hail to the knower, Joy to him who has understood, Delight to those who have listened.
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<sup>1</sup> Odin is the "High One." The poem is a collection of rules and maxims, and stories of himself, some of them not very consistent with our ideas of a supreme deity. [Thorpe's note]

<sup>2</sup> In the Copenhagen paper Ms. F. this strophe begins with the following three lines:--

Wit is needful / to him who travels far: [cf. Stanza 5]

harm seldom befalls the wary:

They are printed in the Stockholm edition of the original Afzelius and Bask, and in the Swedish translation by Afzelius.

<sup>3</sup> The sense of this line seems doubtful; I have adopted the version of Finn Magnusen.

<sup>4</sup> That is dead on the funeral pyre.

<sup>5</sup> This line is evidently an interpolation.

<sup>6</sup> This stanza is quoted by Snorri, the second line being omitted in most of the Prose Edda manuscripts.

<sup>7</sup> Probably the first and second lines had originally nothing to do with the third and fourth, the last two not referring to host or guest, but to the general danger of backing one's views with the sword.

<sup>8</sup> Lines 5 and 6 appear to have been added to the stanza.

<sup>9</sup> Some editors have combined this stanza in various ways with the last two lines of stanza 11, as in the manuscript the first two lines of the latter are abbreviated, and, if they belong there at all, are presumably identical with the first two lines of stanza 10.

<sup>10</sup> The heron: the bird of forgetfulness, referred to in line 1. Gunnloth: the daughter of the giant Suttung, from whom Odin won the mead of poetry. For this episode see stanzas 104-110.

<sup>11</sup> Fjalar: apparently another name for Suttung. This stanza, and probably 13, seem to have been inserted as illustrative.

<sup>12</sup> The first two lines are abbreviated in the manuscript, but are doubtless identical with the first two lines of stanza 24.

<sup>13</sup> The last two lines were probably added as a commentary on lines 3 and 4.

<sup>14</sup> The manuscript has "little" in place of "a hut" in line 1, but this involves an error in the initial-rhymes, and the emendation has been generally accepted.

<sup>15</sup> Lines 1 and 2 are abbreviated in the manuscript, but are doubtless identical with the first two lines of stanza 36.

<sup>16</sup> The key-word in line 3 is missing in the manuscript, but editors have agreed in inserting a word meaning "generous."

<sup>17</sup> In line 3 the manuscript adds "givers again" to "gift-givers."

<sup>18</sup> The first pairs of lines 55-56 are abbreviated in the manuscript.

<sup>19</sup> The fifth line is probably a spurious addition.

<sup>20</sup> This stanza follows stanza 63 in the manuscript, but there are marks therein indicating transposition.

<sup>21</sup> The manuscript indicates no lacuna at lines 1 and 2), but many editors have filled out the stanza with two lines from late paper manuscripts.

<sup>22</sup> The manuscript has "and a worthy life" in place of "than to lie a corpse" in line 1, but Rask suggested the emendation as early as 1818, and most editors have followed him.

<sup>23</sup> These seven lines are obviously a jumble. The two lines of stanza 73 not only appear out of place, but the verse form is unlike that of the surrounding stanzas. In 74, the second line is clearly interpolated, and line 1 has little enough connection with lines 3-5. It looks as though some compiler (or copyist) had inserted here various odds and ends for which he could find no better place.

<sup>24</sup> The word "gold" in line 2 is more or less conjectural, the manuscript being obscure. The reading in line 4 is also doubtful.

<sup>25</sup> Fitjung ("the Nourisher"): Earth.

<sup>26</sup> That is, to the host. Hospitality is one of the cardinal virtues of Germanic antiquity. The stranger, as a guest, is to be given a quick and friendly reception. The last two lines of the stanza are difficult.

<sup>27</sup> Water, for washing one's hands, and a towel were offered before a meal.

<sup>28</sup> Conjectural.

<sup>29</sup> Probably a later addition. See Sts. 10-11.

<sup>30</sup> Conjectural, as are a number of these homely sayings have to be interpreted *as sensum*.

<sup>31</sup> Apparently, the state of mind superinduced by the magic use of the heron's feathers. It has also been suggested that the allusion may be to the old-time scoop, usually in the shape of a long-necked bird, which floated on the butt in which the ale was served.

<sup>32</sup> The reference seems to be to Odin's adventure with Gunnloth, Sts. 104 ff. (in whose cave, however, he by no means loses the powers of his mind).

<sup>33</sup> Identical with Suttung (St.103), if the above reference is correct. See also *Völuspá*, St.41.

<sup>34</sup> The assembly, the meeting of all the people of a district, in which all suits of law were adjudged.

<sup>35</sup> Literally, "remains with his skin dry," having escaped a shower. For the meaning see Sts. 26-27.

<sup>36</sup> That is, what new foe, made over the cups.

<sup>37</sup> In return for his gifts.

<sup>38</sup> That is, as a result of the exchange of gifts.

<sup>39</sup> That is, the scornful laughing of enemies.

<sup>40</sup> Added by Hollander.

<sup>41</sup> Probably, wooden idols as signposts beside the road, intended to protect the wayfarer from evil powers.

<sup>42</sup> Which was Cyrus' means of gaining and retaining friends (Xenophon *Anabasis* 1, 9).

<sup>43</sup> This stanza presents great difficulties, and the translation is, therefore, tentative.

<sup>44</sup> The meaning seems to be that in the give and take of intercourse, when "one thought kindles another," it betrays stupidity to have nothing to say.

<sup>45</sup> One misses a stanza here telling of what man *cannot* forearm against.

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<sup>46</sup> English lacks a word for the one in the original here, meaning “having eaten one’s fill.”

<sup>47</sup> That is, he walks about anxiously, trying to find someone he may know or seek a favor from, like the vulture peering for his prey.

<sup>48</sup> See *Fáfnismál*, St.17.

<sup>49</sup> The meaning is, probably: however miserable (see St.69), life is preferable to death. If one is alive, some good fortune may always befall one; but once dead and “outdoors,” the warm fire will not cheer one, but only the “laughing heir.”

<sup>50</sup> That is, memorial stones.

<sup>51</sup> The following lines, as well as the following stanza, consisting of proverbs, seem interpolated.

<sup>52</sup> That is, for sleeping comfortably? Conjectural.

<sup>53</sup> Accepting Hj. Falk’s suggestion.

<sup>54</sup> From this line it appears that the poem is of Norwegian or Swedish origin, as the reindeer was unknown in Iceland before the middle of the 18th century, when it was introduced by royal command.

<sup>55</sup> The story of Odin and Billing’s daughter is no longer extant; but compare the story of Odin and Rinda in Saxo, p.126 (Muller & Veleschow edition).

<sup>56</sup> Thorpe places the final two lines as a separate stanza marked 104.

<sup>57</sup> In the pagan North oaths were taken on a holy ring or bracelet, as with us on the Gospels, a sacred ring being kept in the temple for the purpose.

<sup>58</sup> This stanza is certainly in bad shape, and probably out of place here. Its reference to runes as magic signs suggests that it properly belongs in some list of charms like the *Ljothatal* (stanzas 147-165). The stanza-form is so irregular as to show either that something has been lost or that there have been interpolations. The manuscript indicates no lacuna (after line 3), but Gering fills out the assumed gap as given in brackets.

<sup>59</sup> With this stanza the verse-form, as indicated in the translation, abruptly changes to Malahattr. What has happened seems to have been something like this: Stanza 79 introduces the idea of man’s love for woman.

Consequently some reciter or compiler (or possibly even a copyist) took occasion to insert at this point certain stanzas concerning the ways of women. Thus stanza 79 would account for the introduction of stanzas 81 and 82, which, in turn, apparently drew stanza 83 in with them. Stanza 84 suggests the fickleness of women, and is immediately followed--again with a change of verse-form--by a list of things equally untrustworthy (stanzas 85-90). Then, after a few more stanzas on love in the regular measure of the *Hávamol* (stanza 91-95), is introduced, by way of illustration, Othin’s story of his adventure with Billing’s daughter (stanzas 96-102). Some such process of growth, whatever its specific stages may have been, must be assumed to account for the curious chaos of the whole passage from stanza 81 to stanza 102.

<sup>60</sup> Lines 3 and 4 are quoted in the *Fostbraethrasaga*.

<sup>61</sup> Stanzas 85-88 and 90 are in Fornyrthislag, and clearly come from a different source from the rest of the *Hávamol*.

<sup>62</sup> The stanza is doubtless incomplete. Some editors add the bracketed lines from a late paper manuscript.

<sup>63</sup> This stanza follows stanza 89 in the manuscript. Many editors have changed the order, for while stanza 89 is pretty clearly an interpolation wherever it stands, it seriously interferes with the sense if it breaks in between 87 and 88.

<sup>64</sup> Here begins the passage (stanzas 96-102) illustrating the falseness of woman by the story of Óthin’s unsuccessful love affair with Billing’s daughter. Of this person we know nothing beyond what is here told, but the story needs little comment.

<sup>65</sup> Rask adds at the beginning of this stanza two lines from a late paper manuscript, running: "Few are so good | that false they are never / To cheat the mind of a man." He makes these two lines plus lines 1 and 2 a full stanza, and lines 3-6 a second stanza.

<sup>66</sup> With this stanza the subject changes abruptly, and apparently the virtues of fair speech, mentioned in the last three lines, account for the introduction, from what source cannot be known, of the story of Othin and the mead of song (stanzas 104-110).

<sup>67</sup> The giant Suttung ("the old giant") possessed the magic mead, a draught of which conferred the gift of poetry. Othin, desiring to obtain it, changed himself into a snake, bored his way through a mountain into Suttung’s home, made love to the giant’s daughter, Gunnloth, and by her connivance drank up all the mead. Then he flew away in the form of an eagle, leaving Gunnloth to her fate. While with Suttung he assumed the name of Bolverk ("the Evil-Doer").

<sup>68</sup> Rati ("the Traveller"): the gimlet with which Othin bored through the mountain to reach Suttung’s home.

<sup>69</sup> Probably either the fourth or the fifth line is a spurious addition.

<sup>70</sup> Othrorir: ("Exciter of Inspiration"?) here the name of the magic mead of skaldship itself, whereas in stanza 141 it is the name of the vessel containing it. Othin had no intention of bestowing any of the precious mead upon men, but as he was flying over the earth, hotly pursued by Suttung, he spilled some of it out of his mouth, and in this way mankind also won the gift of poetry.

<sup>71</sup> Hor: Othin ("the High One"). The frost-giants, Suttung’s kinsmen, appear not to have suspected Othin of being identical with Bolverk, possibly because the oath referred to in stanza 104 was an oath made by Othin to Suttung that there was no such person as Bolverk among the gods. The giants, of course, fail to get from Othin the information they seek concerning Bolverk, but Othin is keenly conscious of having violated the most sacred of oaths, that sworn on his ring.

<sup>72</sup> Which would undo the magic effect of consulting the runes.

<sup>73</sup> That is, probably, in the windy season, winter or spring, before the sap rises.

<sup>74</sup> Of the potter.

<sup>75</sup> His promises?

<sup>76</sup> That is, though you meet him on the main-travelled road, in the presence of others. Stanzas 88 and 89 are transposed, following Dietrich’s proposal.

<sup>77</sup> “He’s mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse’s health, a boy’s love, or a whore’s oath.” *King Lear* III, 6, 18-19.

<sup>78</sup> There is hardly any connection to be found with the preceding stanza. Stanzas 96-102 recount Óthin’s love escapade with Billing’s daughter who is, possibly, identical with Gunnloth (St.13).

<sup>79</sup> This stanza no doubt originally belonged to the series giving rules of conduct. It is used here to introduce another, and more successful, amorous adventure of Óthin: in his quest for the “mead of skaldship” he discovers that the precious drink is hidden in a mountain where it is guarded by the giantess Gunnloth, the daughter of Suttung. With an auger he bores a hole and creeps through in the form of a snake. Gunnloth allows him to stay with her for three days and permits him to drink of the mead. After his escape he spews it out into vessels held ready by the gods. True skalds are allowed a drink of it (cf. *Skáldskaparmál*, Ch.1).

<sup>80</sup> Stanzas 105 and 106 are interchanged, following Sijmons.

<sup>81</sup> Kenning for “rocks.”

<sup>82</sup> Following Egilsson’s emendation.

<sup>83</sup> Bolverk: “Evildoer,” Óthin’s name, assumed while among the giants. This conclusion differs from the one in *Skáldskaparmál*.

<sup>84</sup> That such a person was not among the gods; or that he acknowledged Gunnloth as his wedded wife? The oath on the ring attached to the heathen altar was a specially solemn one.

<sup>85</sup> With this stanza begins the Loddafnismol (stanzas 111-138). Loddafnir is apparently a wandering singer, who, from his "chanter’s stool," recites the verses which he claims to have received from Othin.

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<sup>86</sup> Wells of Urth: cf. *Voluspo* 19 and note. Urth ("the Past") is one of the three Norns. This stanza is apparently in corrupt form, and editors have tried many experiments with it, both in rejecting lines as spurious and in rearranging the words and punctuation. It looks rather as though the first four lines formed a complete stanza, and the last four had crept in later.

<sup>87</sup> The phrase translated "the speech of Hor" is "Hova mol," later used as the title for the entire poem.

<sup>88</sup> Lines 1-3 are the formula, repeated (abbreviated in the manuscript) in most of the stanzas, with which Othin prefaces his counsels to Loddafnir, and throughout this section, except in stanzas 111 and 138, Loddafnir represents himself as simply quoting Othin's words. The material is closely analogous to that contained in the first eighty stanzas of the poem. In some cases (e. g., stanzas 117, 119, 121, 126 and 130) the formula precedes a full four-line stanza instead of two (or three) lines.

<sup>89</sup> The line is apparently interpolated.

<sup>90</sup> The final two lines probably were inserted from a different poem.

<sup>91</sup> Many editors reject the last two lines of this stanza as spurious, putting the first two lines at the end of the preceding stanza. Others, attaching lines 3 and 4 to stanza 132, insert as the first two lines of stanza 133 the following two lines from a late paper manuscript.

<sup>92</sup> Presumably the last four lines have been added to this stanza, for the parallelism in the last three makes it probable that they belong together. The wrinkled skin of the old man is compared with the dried skins and bellies of animals kept for various purposes hanging in an Icelandic house.

<sup>93</sup> This stanza suggests the dangers of too much hospitality. The beam (bolt) which is ever being raised to admit guests becomes weak thereby. It needs a ring to help it in keeping the door closed, and without the ability at times to ward off guests a man becomes the victim of his own generosity.

<sup>94</sup> The list of "household remedies" in this stanza is doubtless interpolated. Their nature needs no comment here.

<sup>95</sup> There the gods assembled for countil (see *Völuspá*, St.19, and *Grímnismál*, St.30).

<sup>96</sup> Accepting Müllenhoff's emendation. See St.165.

<sup>97</sup> This is probably the name of the sage or singer (*pul*) who pretends to have had the following redes of Óthin addressed to him at a meeting of the gods, beginning on a mock-serious note.

<sup>98</sup> "Good wishes" are here to be understood, it seems, as kind dispositions toward him one confides in.

<sup>99</sup> On slight provocation.

<sup>100</sup> The panic fear which (according to the old Norwegian *King's Mirror*, Ch.11) often seizes young and inexperienced warriors.

<sup>101</sup> That is, she will be true to you in turn.

<sup>102</sup> In the original, *pul*.

<sup>103</sup> The old man's wrinkled mouth is humorously compared to a bag. See *Hamismál*, St.27, where the metaphor again suggests the rustic interior of the following lines.

<sup>104</sup> The meaning seems to be: only a strong bolt can last in the door which is unbarred to everyone. In other words, do not be too generous and hospitable. The line following is to be understood *in malem partem*.

<sup>105</sup> That is, as a remedy against any injurious effect therefrom. The bracketed lines, containing several folk-medicinal remedies, are undoubtedly a later addition. Their translation is, for the most part, conjectural.

<sup>106</sup> Probably, in the form of a glowing iron.

<sup>107</sup> That is, tenesmus, relieved by the astringent decoction from acorns.

<sup>108</sup> In folklore, the elder-bush exercises a pacifying influence.

<sup>109</sup> Some ailments, such as rickets and the king's evil, were thought to be superinduced by "hate," that is, by the evil eye.

<sup>110</sup> Auden-Taylor place these two lines as the final part of St.120. I have transposed them here to match the others.

<sup>111</sup> Auden-Taylor divide these four lines into two separate stanzas.

<sup>112</sup> Probably, send them (the runes) forth on their several missions.

<sup>113</sup> With this stanza begins the most confusing part of the *Hávamál*: the group of eight stanzas leading up to the *Ljóthatal*, or list of charms. Certain paper manuscripts have before this stanza a title: "Othin's Tale of the Runes." Apparently stanzas 138, 139 and 141 are fragments of an account of how Othin obtained the runes; 140 is erroneously inserted from some version of the magic mead story (cf. stanzas 104-110); and stanzas 142-145 are from miscellaneous sources, all, however, dealing with the general subject of runes. With stanza 146 a clearly continuous passage begins once more.

<sup>114</sup> The windy tree: the ash Yggdrasil (literally "the Horse of Othin," so called because of this story), on which Othin, in order to win the magic runes, hanged himself as an offering to himself, and wounded himself with his own spear.

<sup>115</sup> Lines 5 and 6 have presumably been borrowed from *Svipdagsmol*, St.30 (but see note below).

<sup>116</sup> This stanza, interrupting as it does the account of Othin's winning the runes, appears to be an interpolation. The meaning of the stanza is most obscure. Bolthorn was Othin's grandfather, and Bestla his mother. We do not know the name of the uncle here mentioned, but it has been suggested that this son of Bolthorn was Mimir (cf. *Völuspá*, 27-28 and 47). In any case, the nine magic songs which he learned from his uncle seem to have enabled him to win the magic mead (cf. stanzas 104-110). Concerning Othrorir, here used as the name of the vessel containing the mead, cf. stanza 107 and note.

<sup>117</sup> This and the following stanza belong together, and in many editions appear as a single stanza. They presumably come from some lost poem on the authorship of the runes. Lines 2 and 3 follow line 4 in the manuscript; the transposition was suggested by Bugge. The king of singers: Othin. The magic signs (runes) were commonly carved in wood, then colored red.

<sup>118</sup> Dain and Dvalin: dwarfs; cf. *Völuspá*, 14, and note. Dain, however, may here be one of the elves rather than the dwarf of that name. The two names also appear together in *Grimnismol*, 33, where they are applied to two of the four harts that nibble at the topmost twigs of Yggdrasil. Alsivith ("the All Wise") appears nowhere else as a giant's name. Myself: Othin. We have no further information concerning the list of those who wrote the runes for the various races, and these four lines seem like a confusion of names in the rather hazy mind of some reciter.

<sup>119</sup> This Malahattr stanza appears to be a regular religious formula, concerned less with the runes which one "writes" and "tints" (cf. stanza 79) than with the prayers which one "asks" and the sacrifices which one "offers" and "sends." Its origin is wholly uncertain, but it is clearly an interpolation here. In the manuscript the phrase "knowest?" is abbreviated after the first line.

<sup>120</sup> This stanza as translated here follows the manuscript reading, except that a gap is assumed between lines 3 and 4. In Vigfusson and Powell's *Corpus Poeticum Boreale* the first three lines have somehow been expanded into eight. The last two lines are almost certainly misplaced; Bugge suggests that they belong at the end of stanza 143.

<sup>121</sup> Thund: another name for Othin. When home he came: presumably after obtaining the runes as described in stanzas 138-139.

<sup>122</sup> These lines seem to have gotten here from *Fjölsvinnsmál*, St.14.

<sup>123</sup> Drinking horn.

<sup>124</sup> In *Gylfaginning*, Ch.5, we learn that the giant Bolthorn had a daughter Bestla who, by Bur, becomes the mother of Óthin, Vili, and Vé. It has been conjectured that the wise Mimir is this giant's son (see note 115). Thus, Óthin's wisdom is derived from three sources: from his self-sacrifice, from Mimir's well, and from a drink out of Óthrerir (see St.107).

<sup>125</sup> That is, with blood, which is thought especially potent in magic.

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<sup>126</sup> Supply “wrought runes.”

<sup>127</sup> See “The Catalogue of Dwarfs” (*Völuspá* 9-16).

<sup>128</sup> “The All-Wise.” Compare Alvis, the dwarf (“Alvísmál”).

<sup>129</sup> Conjecturally supplied by Gering.

<sup>130</sup> The runes: they were scratched into wood, stone, or bone. The translation of the following lines is mainly conjectural. They deal with the correct making and interpretation of runes, and with their proper use in sacrifice and magic.

<sup>131</sup> Auden-Taylor follow Bugge in placing the final two lines after stanza 143 (though as a separate stanza), but I have removed them here for continuity.

<sup>132</sup> The miraculous powers here ascribed by Odin to himself bear, in many instances, a remarkable similarity to those attributed to him by Snorri.

<sup>133</sup> The ancient inhabitants of the North believed that the roots of trees were particularly fitted for hurtful trolldom, or witchcraft, and that wounds caused thereby were mortal. In India a similar superstition prevails of the hurtfulness of the roots of trees.

<sup>134</sup> With this stanza begins the *Ljóthatal*, or list of charms. The magic songs themselves are not given, but in each case the peculiar application of the charm is explained. The passage, which is certainly approximately complete as far as it goes, runs to the end of the poem. In the manuscript and in most editions line 4 falls into two half-lines, running: "In sickness and pain | and every sorrow."

<sup>135</sup> Second, etc., appear in the manuscript as Roman numerals. The manuscript indicates no gap after line 2.

<sup>136</sup> The sending of a root with runes written thereon was an excellent way of causing death. So died the Icelandic hero Grettir the Strong (*Grettis Saga*, Ch.81 ff.).

<sup>137</sup> House-riders: witches, who ride by night on the roofs of houses, generally in the form of wild beasts. Possibly one of the last two lines is spurious.

<sup>138</sup> The last line looks like an unwarranted addition, and line 4 may likewise be spurious.

<sup>139</sup> Lines 4-5 are probably expanded from a single line.

<sup>140</sup> The sprinkling of a child with water was an established custom long before Christianity brought its conception of baptism (see *Rígsþula*, St.7).

<sup>141</sup> This stanza, according to Mullenhoff, was the original conclusion of the poem, the phrase "a fifteenth" being inserted only after stanzas 161-164 had crept in.

<sup>142</sup> Delling: (Kenning for “Dawn”?), a seldom mentioned god who married Not (Night) [See *Vafþrúðnismál*, St.25]. Their son was Dag (Day).

<sup>143</sup> Thjothrorir: not mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>144</sup> Hroptatyr: Othin.

<sup>145</sup> Some editors have combined these two lines with stanza 163. Others have assumed that the gap follows the first half-line, making "so that...from me" the end of the stanza.

<sup>146</sup> This stanza is almost certainly an interpolation, and seems to have been introduced after the list of charms and the *Loddfafnismol* were combined in a single poem, for there is no other apparent excuse for the reference to Loddfafnir at this point. The words "if thou mightest get them" are a conjectural emendation.

<sup>147</sup> This stanza is almost totally obscure. The third and fourth lines look like interpolations.

<sup>148</sup> In the manuscript this stanza comes at the end of the entire poem, although most recent editors have followed Mullenhoff in shifting it to a position after stanza 137, ending the *Loddfáfismál*, as it appears to conclude the passage introduced by the somewhat similar stanza 111.

<sup>149</sup> Who are credited with secret knowledge: for instance, Sigdrifa, Grímhild, Guthrún.

<sup>150</sup> These are the “limb runes.” See *Sigrdrífumál*, St.12, from which these lines are supplied by Hollander.

<sup>151</sup> That is, by magic.

<sup>152</sup> On this stanza, see *Rígsþula*, St.44.

<sup>153</sup> Consisting also of “runes.”

<sup>154</sup> That is, of their own “skins,” or forms, which they leave behind on their rides. The incantations cause the witches to forget both their original forms and their homes.

<sup>155</sup> Óthin seeks the wisdom of the dead.

<sup>156</sup> Supplied by Hollander.

<sup>157</sup> This is, perhaps, the same unfathomable secret Óthin whispered in Baldr’s ear as he lay dead (*Vafþrúðnismál*, St.54).

## **Hávamál (Sayings of Hár)**

Translated by James Alan Chisholm, 2005

Excerpted from The Eddas, Keys to the Mysteries of the North,  
published by The Troth.

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.

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 from the cup  
though he drink mead in the hall 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.

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 flyting  
when guest mocks guest.  
He who grins at the feast  
does not know that he chatters among foes.

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.

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.

He who gives gladly lives the best life,  
and seldom has sorrow.  
But the unwise suspect all  
and always pine for gifts.

49.

I gave my clothes to two tree-men  
in the field.  
Men they seemed with clothes.  
Shameful the naked hero.

50.

The young fir tree dies that stands  
sheltered by neither bark nor needle in the field  
Such is a man whom none love.  
Why should such a man live longer?

51.

Hotter than fire friendship burns  
for five days between false friends.  
But it slackens on the sixth  
and the friendship goes awry.

52.

Give not great gifts.  
You can win praise with little.  
Half a loaf and half a cup  
won me fellowship.

53.

A small lake has a little sand.  
The minds of men are small  
and not all men are equally wise.  
No man is whole.

54.

Middle wise should each man be  
and not over wise.  
The fairest life is had  
by the one who knows many things well.

55.

Middle wise should each man be  
and not over-wise.  
A wise man's heart is seldom glad  
when he has got himself great wisdom.

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.

All who are wise in rede  
shall not be overly forceful.  
He finds, who walks among the stout,  
that no one is the strongest.

65.

— — — —  
Words spoken by one to another  
often bring an evil reward.

66.

Far too early I arrived at many steads,  
But too late at others,  
The ale was already drunk or yet unbrewed.  
The loathed find little among the folk.

67.

Here and there they had me in their homes,  
if I was not hungry for meat  
or hung two hams for the true friend  
for the one I had eaten.

68.

Fire is better for the sons of men  
and the sight of the sun.  
Good health also, if a man can keep it  
and live without shame.

69.

A man is not entirely bereft  
though his health is poor.  
Some are blessed with sons, some by friends,  
some by wealth and others by good works.

70.

Better to be alive and happy.  
The quick always get the cattle.  
The fire burned for the wealthy man,  
but the dead man lays outside.

71.

A halt man can ride a horse. The handless  
can be herdsmen. The deaf can fight bravely,  
a blind man is better than a burned man,  
and a dead man is of no use.

72.

Better to have a son, though born late  
after the father has passed away.  
Stones seldom stand by the roads  
unless raised by kin for kin.

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.

Hew wood in the wind, row out to sea in good weather,  
play with a maid in the dark, for many are the eyes of  
the day. Look for speed in a ship, and for cover from a  
shield. Get a sword for hewing and a maid for kissing.

83.

Drink ale by the fire, skate on the ice,  
buy a lean steed, and a rusty blade,  
feed your horse at home and your hound at home.

84.

Let no man trust a maiden's words,  
nor the talk of a woman,  
for their hearts were shaped on a spinning wheel,  
and falsehood lurks in their breasts.

85.

A brittle bow, a burning fire,  
a grinning wolf, a singing crow,  
a grunting boar, a rootless tree,  
a swelling wave, a boiling kettle,

86.

A flying arrow, a crashing wave,  
night old ice, a coiled snake,  
a bride's bed talk, a broken sword,  
the play of bears, a king's son,

87.

A sick calf, an uppity thrall,  
the pleasant talk of a volva, the fresh fallen warrior.

88.

Early sown acres should no man trust,  
nor too soon a son.  
Weather ruins the acres, and stupidity the son.  
Each of these is a risk.

89.

Your brother's slayer, though met on the road,  
a half-burned house, or too swift a horse.  
A steed is worthless, if it breaks on foot.  
One must not be so trusting, as to trust in these.

90.

Such is the love of a woman whose heart is false.  
Like riding unshod horses over slippery ice,  
or poorly trained two year olds,  
or drifting rudderless on heavy seas,  
or like a halt reindeer on a slippery fell.

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.

I went back thinking she loved me,  
but I was misled.  
I thought that I would have  
great pleasure and all her heart.

100.

So I came the next night  
and the warriors were all awake  
bearing bright brands, their torches alight,  
I worked not my will.

101.

Near morning I went in again  
when the folk were asleep.  
But I found a bitch bound  
to the fair maid's bed.

102.

Many a good maid proves false hearted  
when you get to know her. I found that out  
when I lured the wise woman in lust.  
The clever maiden had sport of me  
with all manner of mockery,  
and I had not my way with her.

103.

Glad in his household and cheerful with guests  
and wise let a man be.  
He should be thoughtful and eloquent  
if he wants to be learned in lore and praised as such.  
The man who has little to say is deemed an idiot.  
That is the lot of fools.

104.

The old ettin I sought, now I am back  
I would have gotten little, had I been silent.  
I spoke many words to work my will  
in Suttung's hall.

105.

The auger bored and made me room  
gnawed through stone,  
over and under were  
the ettin ways.  
Thus I risked my head.

106.

Gunnloth gave me, as I sat on her golden seat,  
a drink of the dear won mead.

An evil reward I dealt her afterwards,  
for her goodwill, and her heavy-heart.

107.

Dear bought, I put it to good use.

For the wise little is lacking.

Othroerir has been brought up  
to the ve of the gods.

108.

I would hardly have come out alive

from the garth of the ettins,

had I not enjoyed the good woman Gunnloth  
in whose arms I lay.

109.

The next day rime Thurses

strode out to ask rede

of Har in Har's Hall,

asking about Bolverk, whether he was among the Gods  
or had been slain by Suttung.

110.

I know that Odin swore an oath on a ring,

How shall his troth be trusted?

He robbed Suttung and took his sumble.

To Gunnloth he brought sorrow.

111.

It is time to sing on the sage's seat

at Urth's well.

I saw and was silent, I watched and thought.

I heard the speech of men, I heard talk of runes.

They were not silent at council.

At Har's hall, in Har's hall

I heard them speak.

112.

I give you rede Loddafnir, heed it well!

You will use it if you learn it,

it will get you good, if you understand it.

Do not rise at night, except to spy,

or to find the outhouse.

113.

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.  
Do not sleep in the arms of a woman skilled in black arts  
such that she locks her limbs with yours.

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,  
and you will have healing songs while you live.

121.

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 be the first to forsake a friend.  
Sorrow eats the heart  
of he who can no longer speak  
his mind to anyone.

122.

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 bandy words  
with stupid apes.

123.

You will never get any good  
from an evil man.  
But a good man will get you  
the love and goodwill of many.

124.

When each can speak all his mind to the other,  
friendship is shared.  
Anything is better than fickleness.  
He is no friend, whose words are always fair.

125.

I give you rede Loddfafnir, heed it well!  
You will use it, if you learn it,  
it will do you good if you understand it.  
Bandy not three words with a lesser man.  
Often the better man fails  
when the worse gets hostile.

126.

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.  
Be not a maker of shoes or a shaper of shafts,  
unless they are for yourself.  
If the shoe is ill shaped, or the shaft is not straight,  
they will wish you ill.

127.

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 know that someone is evil, say so.  
Never give friendship to your enemies.

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.

I give you rede Loddafnir, heed it well!  
You will use it, if you learn it,  
it will get you good if you understand it.  
Never laugh at the hoary sage.  
The old often speak wisely and clearly.  
Wise speech oft comes from the dried skin  
that hangs with the hides,  
dangling with the furs  
and swinging among the bushes.

135.

I give you rede Loddafnir, heed it well!  
You will use it, if you learn it,  
it will get you good if you understand it.  
Do not abuse a guest, or drive him out the door.  
Instead, do well for the wretched.

136.

The beam must be sturdy, that is unbarred  
for all who ride up.  
Deal out rings or he  
will wish you all sorts of trouble.

137.

I give you rede Loddafnir, heed it well!  
You will use it, if you learn it,  
it will get you good if you understand it.  
When you drink ale, call on the main of the earth,  
for earth is good against ale, but fire against diseases.  
Oak is good against costiveness, grain against wizardry  
bearded rye against feuds. They say the moon is good  
against hate. Alum use for rabies and runes against evil.  
The earth draws off floods.

138.

I know that I hung, on a wind swept tree  
for all of nine nights,  
wounded by spear, and given to Odin,  
myself to myself,  
on that tree of which no man knows  
from what root it rises.

139.

They dealt me no bread, nor drinking horn.  
I looked down, I drew up the runes,  
screaming I took them up,  
and fell back from there.

140.

Fimbul spells I got from the famous  
Son of Bolthor the father of Bestla.  
I had a drink of the dear mead  
that was drawn from Othroerir.

141.

Then I began to grow  
and waxed well in wisdom.  
One word led me to another,  
one work led me to another.

142.

You will find runes, meaningful staves,  
very powerful staves,  
very strong staves,  
that Fimbul dyed,  
that the Ginnregin shaped,  
that the God Hropt carved.

143.

Odin among the Aesir, but Dain for the elves,  
Dvalinn for the dwarves,  
Asvith for the ettins.  
I carved some myself.

144.

Know how to carve them, know how to read them,  
know how to stain them, know how to wield them,  
know how to ask them, know how to bloody them,  
know how to send them, know how to sacrifice them.

145.

It is better not to ask, than to sacrifice too much.  
A gift always looks for a gift.  
It is better unsent, than over sacrificed.  
So Thund carved before the doom of mankind.  
He rose up and came back after that.

146.

I know those magical songs, not known  
by the wives of kings, or any human.  
One is called help and will help you  
in all sickness, sorrow and affliction.

147.

I know another that is needed by the sons of men,  
who want to be leeches.

148.

I know a third for the event  
that I should be in dire need of fettering a foe.  
I can dull the blades of my attackers  
so that they can strike by neither weapon or wile.

149.

I know a fourth,  
so that if bonds bind my limbs,  
I can get free.  
Fetters spring from my feet,  
and bonds from my hands.

150.

I know a fifth. If a foe shoots a shaft  
into the host, it cannot fly  
so fast that I cannot stop it,  
if I catch sight of it.

151.

I know a sixth. If some thane attacks me,  
with the wood of a young root,  
he who says he hates me will get hurt,  
but I will be unharmed.

152.

I know a seventh. If I see  
a fire high on the hall  
around my bench companions,  
I can help them by singing the spell.

153.

I know an eighth. It is useful  
for all who know it,  
Whenever hatred flares up among warriors' sons,  
I am able to quell it.

154.

I know a ninth. If need arises,  
to save my ship on the flood,  
I can still the wind, and calm the waves,  
put the entire sea to sleep.

155.

I know a tenth. If I see ghost-riders  
sporting in the sky, I can work it  
that the wild ones fare away.  
So their shapes (ham) shall fare home,  
so their spirits fare home.

156.

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 fare from battle whole,  
they are whole, wherever they go.

157.

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.

158.

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.

159.

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.

160.

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.

161.

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.

162.

I know a Seventeenth to keep her  
from shirking me for any other man.  
Mind this Loddafnir,  
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.



## **Hávamál (Sayings of Hár)**

Translated by Lee M. Hollander, 1986

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Press

1) Have they eyes about thee when thou enterest  
be wary alway, be watchful alway,  
for one never knoweth when need will be  
to meet hidden foe in the hall.

2) All hail to the givers! A guest hath come  
say where shall he sit?  
In haste is he to the hall who cometh  
to find a place by the fire.

3) The warmth seeketh who hath wandered long  
and is numb about the knees;  
meat and dry clothes the man needeth  
over the fells who hath fared.

4) A drink needeth to full dishes who cometh,  
a towel, and the prayer to partake;  
good bearing eke, to be well liked  
and be bidden to banquet again.

5) Of his wit hath need who widely fareth--  
a dull wit will do at home;  
a laughingstock he who lacketh words  
amongst smart wits when he sits.

6) To be bright of brain let no man boast,  
but take good heed of his tongue;  
the sage and silent come seldom to grief  
as they fare amongst folk in the hall.  
{More faithful friend findest thou never  
than shrewd head on thy shoulders.}

7) The wary guest to wassail who comes  
listens that he may learn,  
opens his ears, casts his eyes about;  
thus wards him the wise man 'gainst harm.

8) Happy is he who hath won him  
the love and liking of all;  
for hard it is one's help to seek  
from the mind of another man.

9) Happy is he who hath won him  
both winning ways and wisdom;  
for ill it is oft who asketh help  
from the wit and words of another.

10) Better burden bearest thou nowise  
than shrewd head on they shoulders;  
in good stead will it stand amongst stranger folk,  
and shield when unsheltered thou art.

11) Better burden bearest thou nowise  
than shrewd head on they shoulders;  
but with worsen food farest thou never  
than an overmuch of mead.

12) For good it is not, though good it is thought,  
mead for the sons of men;  
the deeper he drinks the dimmer grows  
the mind of many a man.

13) the heron of heedlessness hovers o'er the feast;  
and stealeth the minds of men.  
With that fowl's feathers fettered I was  
when I was Gunnloth's guest.

14) Drunk I became, dead drunk, forsooth,  
when I was with wise Fjalar;  
That bout is best from which back fetches  
each man his mind full clear.

15) Let us all be sparing in words,  
and bold in battle;  
glad and wholesome the hero be  
till comes his dying day.

16) The unwise man thinks that he ay will live  
if from fighting he flees;  
but the ails and aches of old age dog him  
though spears have spared him.

17) The fool but gapes when to folks he comes,  
he mumbles and mopes;  
soon is seen, when his swill he had,  
what the mind of the man is like.

18) Only he is aware who hath wandered much,  
and far hath been afield;  
what manner of man be he whom he meets,  
if himself be not wanting in wit.

19) The cup spurn not, yet be sparing withal:  
say what is needful or naught;  
for ill breeding upbraids thee no man  
if soon thou goest to sleep.

20) The greedy guest gainsays his head  
and eats until he is ill;  
his belly oft maketh a butt of a man  
on bench 'midst the sage when he sits.

21) The herd to know when from home they shall,  
and gang from the grass to their stalls;  
but the unwise man will not ever learn  
how much his maw will hold.

22) The ill-minded man who meanly thinks,  
flees at both foul and fair;  
he does not know, as know he ought,  
that he is not free from flaws.

23) The unwise man waketh all night,  
thinking of this and that-  
tosses, sleepless, and is tired at morn:  
nor lighter for that is load.

24) the unwise man weens that all  
who laugh with him, like him too;  
nor sees their scorn, though they sneer at him,  
on bench 'midst the sag when he sits.

25) The unwise man weens that all  
that laugh with him like him too;  
but then he finds, when to the Thing he comes,  
few spokesman to speed his cause.

26) The unwise man wens he knows all,  
if from harm he is far at home;  
but knows not ever what answer to make  
when others ask him aught.

27) The unwise man amongst others who comes,  
let him be sparing of speech;  
for no one knows that naught is in him,  
but he opens his mouth too much.

28) Clever is he who is keen to ask,  
and eke to answer , all men;  
'tis hard to hide from the hearing of men  
what is on everyone' slips.

29) Much at random oft rambles he  
whose tongue does ever tattle;  
a talker's tongue, unless tamed it be,  
will often work him woe.

30) No mock make though of any man,  
though thou comest amongst the kinsmen;  
he knowing weens him whom no one has asked,  
and dry-shod hies him home.

31) A wise man he who hies him betimes  
from the man who likes to mock;  
for at table who teases can never tell  
what foe he might have to fight.

32) Many a man means no ill,  
yet teases the other at table;  
strife will ever start amongst men  
when guest clashes with guest.

33) An early meal ay a man should get him,  
lest famished he come to the feast;  
he sits and stuffs as thought starved he were,  
and naught he says to his neighbours.

34) To false friend ay a far way 'tis,  
though his roof be reared by the road;  
to stanch friend ay a straight way leads,  
though far he have fared from thee.

35) Get thee gone betimes; a guest should not  
stay too long in one stead;  
life grows loath if too long one sits  
on bench, though in he was bidden.

36) One's home is best, though hut it be:  
there a man is master and lord;  
Though but two goats thine and a thatched roof,  
'tis far better than beg.

37) One's home is best thought a hut it be:  
there a man is master and lord;  
his heart doth bleed who has to beg  
the meat for his every meal.

38) From his weapons away no one should ever  
stir one step on the field;  
for no one knows when need might have  
on a sudden a man of his sword.

39) So freehanded never found I a man  
but would gladly take what is given;  
not of his goods so ungrudging ever,  
to forego what is given him.

40) Of his worldly goods which he gotten hath  
let a man not stint overmuch;  
oft is lavished on foe what for friend was saved,  
for matters go often amiss.

41) With weapons and weds should friends be won,  
as one can see in themselves;  
those who give to each other will ay be friends,  
once they meet half way.

42) With his friend a man should be friends ever,  
and pay back gift for gift;  
laughter afore laughter he learn to give,  
and eke lesing for lies.

43) With his friend a man should be friends ever,  
and with him the friend of his friend;  
but foeman's friend befriend thou never,  
(and keep thee aloof from his kin)

44) If friend thou hast whom faithful thou deemest,  
and wishest to win him for thee;  
ope thy heart to him nor withhold thy gifts,  
and fare to find him often.

45) If another there be whom ill thou trusteth,  
yet would'st get from him gain;  
speak fair to him though false thou meanest,  
and pay him lesing for lies.

46) And eke this heed: if ill thou trust one,  
and hollow-hearted his speeck;  
thou shalt laugh with him and lure him on,  
and let him have tit for tat.

47) Young was I once and went along,  
and wandering lost my way;  
when a friend I found I felt me rich:  
man is cheered by man.

48) He who giveth gladly a goodly life leadeth,  
and seldom hath he sorrow;  
but the churlish wight is chary of all,  
and grudgingly parts with his gifts.

49) In the fields as I fared, (for fun) I hung  
my weeds on two wooden men;  
they were reckoned folks when the rags they wore:  
naked, a man is naught.

50) The fir tree dies in the field that stands:  
shields it nor bark nor bast;  
thus eke the man who by all is shunned  
why should he linger in life?

51) Than fire hotter for five days burneth  
love between friends that are false;  
it dieth down when dawneth the sixth,  
then all the sweetness turns sour.

52) Not great things needs give to a man:  
bringeth thanks oft a little thing.  
with half a loaf and a half-drained cup  
i won me oft worthy friend.

53) A little lake hath but little sand:  
but small the mind of man;  
not all men are equally wise,  
each wight wanteth somewhat.

54) Middling wise every man should be:  
beware of being too wise;  
happiest in life most likely he  
who knows not more than is needful.

55) Middling wise every man should be:  
beware of being too wise;  
for wise man's heart is happy seldom,  
if too great the wisdom he won.

56) Middling wise every man should be:  
beware of being too wise;  
his fate let no one beforehand know  
who would keep his heart from care.

57) Kindles brand from brand, and burns till all burnt it is;  
thus fire is kindled from fire;  
by the words of his mouth a man is known,  
but from his dullness a dullard.

58) Betimes must rise who would take another's  
life and win his wealth;  
lying down wolf never got the lamb,  
nor sleeping wight slew his foe.

59) Betimes must rise who few reapers has,  
and see to the work himself;  
much will miss in the morn who sleeps;  
for the brisk the race is half run.

60) What lathes and logs will last him out,  
a man may reckon aright;  
and of wood to warm him how much he may want  
for many a winter month.

61) Well-groomed and washed wend thee to the Thing,  
though thy clothes be not the best;  
of thy shoes and breeks be not ashamed,  
and still less of they steed.

62) With lowered head sweeps, to the sea when he comes,  
the eagle o'er the billowing brine;  
thus eke the man amongst a throng  
who finds him but few to befriend him.

63) Both ask and answer let everyone  
who wishes to be deemed wise;  
let one know it, nor none other;  
if three know, thousands will.

64) A wise man will not overweening be,  
and stake too much on his strength;  
when the mighty are met to match their strength,  
'twill be found that first is no one.

65) (Watchful and wary everyone should be,  
nor put too much trust in a friend:)  
the words by one unwarily spoken,  
have undone oft a doughty man.

66) Too late by far to some feasts I came;  
to others, all too soon;  
the beer was drunk, or yet unbrewed;  
never hits it the hapless one aright.

67) Here or there would they have me in,  
if no meat at the meal I craved;  
or hung two hams in my good friend's home,  
after eating one of his own.

68) A bonny fire is a blessing to man,  
and eke the sight of the sun;  
his hearty health, if he holds it well,  
and to live one's life without shame.

69) All undone is no one though at death's door he lie:  
some with good sons are blessed,  
and some with kinsmen, or with coffers full,  
and some with deeds well-done.

70) Better alive (than lifeless be):  
too quick fall ay the cattle;  
the hearth fire<sup>3</sup> burned for the happy heir--  
outdoors a dead man lay.

71) May the halt ride a horse, and the handless be herdsman,  
the deaf man may doughtily fight;  
a blind man is better than a burned one, ay:  
of what good is a good man dead?

72) To have a son is good, late-got though he be  
and borne when buried his father;  
stones see'st thou seldom set by the roadside  
but by kith raised over kin.

73) [Two will down one; of tongue is head's bane;  
a fist I fear 'neath every furry coat.

74) Of the night is fain whose knapsack is full;  
close are ship's quarters.  
Fickle are the nights in fall;  
there's both fair and foul in five days' time--still more so within a month]

75) He who knoweth nothing knoweth not, either,  
how wealth may warp a man's wit;  
one hath wealth when wanteth another,  
though he bear no blame himself.

76) Cattle die, and kinsmen die,  
thysel<sup>3</sup> eke soon wilt die;  
but fair fame will fade never:  
I ween, for him who wins it.

77) Cattle die and kinsmen die,  
thysself eke soon wilt die;  
one thing, I wot, will wither never:  
the doom over each one dead.

78) A full stocked farm had some farmer's sons.  
Now they stoop at the beggar's staff;  
in a twinkling fleeth trothless wealth,  
it is the ficklest of friends.

79) The unwise man, once he calls his own  
wealth or the love of a woman--  
his overweening waxes but his wit never--  
he haughtily hardens his heart.

80) 'Tis readily found when the runes thou ask,  
made by mighty Gods, known to holy hosts,  
and dyed deep red by Othin:  
that 'tis wise to waste no words.

81) At eve praise the day,  
when burned down, a torch,  
a wife when bedded, a weapon when tried,  
ice when over it, ale when 'tis drunk.

82) Fell wood in the wind, in fair weather row out to sea,  
dally with girls in the dark--the days' eyes are many--  
choose a shield for shelter, a ship for speed,  
a sword for keenness, a girl for kissing.

83) By the fire drink ale, skate on the ice,  
buy a bony steed, a rusty blade,  
feed your horse at home,  
and your hound in his hutch.

84) A wench's words let no wise man trust,  
nor trust the troth of a woman;  
for on whirling wheel their hearts are shaped,  
and fickle and fitful their minds.

85) A brittle bow, a burning fire,  
a gaping wolf, a grunting sow,  
a croaking crow, a kettle boiling,  
a rising sea, a rootless tree

86) A flying dart, a foaming billow,  
ice one night old, a coiled-up adder,  
a woman's bed-talk, a broken blade,  
the play of cubs, a king's scion,

87) A sickly calf, a self-willed thrall,  
the smooth words for a witch, warriors fresh-slain,

88) Thy brother's banesman, though it be on the road,  
a half-burned house, a speedy hose--  
worthless the steed if one foot he breaks--  
so trusting be no one to trust in these!

89) Early-sown acres, let none ever trust,  
nor trust his son too soon:  
undoes weather the one, unwisdom the other:  
risk not thy riches on these.

90) The false love of a woman, 'tis like to one  
riding on ice with horse unshod--  
a brisk two-year-old, unbroken withal--  
or in raging wind drifting rudderless,  
like the lame outrunning the reindeer on bare rock.

91) Heed my words now, for I know them both:  
mainsworn are men to women;  
we speak most fair when most foul our thoughts,  
for that wiles the wariest wits.

92) Fairly shall speak, nor spare his gifts,  
who will win a woman's love,  
shall praise the looks of the lovely maid:  
he who flatters shall win the fiar.

93) At the loves of a man to laugh is not meet  
for anyone ever;  
the wise oft fall, when fools yield not,  
to the lure of a lovely maid.

94) 'Tis not meet for men to mock at what  
befalls full many;  
a fair face oft makes fools of the wise  
by the mighty lure of love.

95) One's self only knows what is near one's heart,  
each reads but himself aright;  
no sickness seems to sound mind worse  
than to have lost all liking for life.

96) That saw I well when I sat in the reeds,  
awaiting the maid I wooed;  
more than body and soul was the sweet maid to me,  
yet I worked not my will with her.

97) Billing's daughter on her bed I found  
sleeping, the sun-bright maid;  
a king's crown I craved not to wear,  
if she let me have her love.

98) "At eventide shalt, Othin, come  
if thou wilt win me to wife:  
unmeet it were if more than we two  
know of this naughty thing"

99) Back I went; to win her love  
I let myself be misled;  
for I did think, enthralled by love,  
to work my will with her.

100) When next I came at nighttime, then,  
all the warriors found I awake,  
with brands high borne and burning lights;  
such the luckless end of my love tryst!

101) Near morn when I once more did come,  
the folks were sound asleep;  
but a bitch found I the fair one had  
bound fast on her bed!

102) Many a good maid, if you mark it well,  
is fickle, though fair her word;  
that I quickly found when the cunning maid  
I lured to lecherous love;  
every taunt and gibe she tried on me,  
and naught I had of her.

103) Glad in his home, to his guest cheerful,  
yet shrewd should one be:  
wise and weighty be the word of his mouth,  
if wise he would be thought.  
A ninny is he who naught can say,  
for such is the way of the witless.

104) The old etin I sought--now I am back;  
in good stead stood my my speech;  
for with many words my wish I wrought  
in the hall of Suttungs' sons.

105) With an auger I there ate my way,  
through the rocks I made me room!  
over and under were the etins' paths;  
thus dared I life and limb.

106) Gunnloth gave me, her gold stool upon,  
a draught of the dear-bought mead;  
an ill reward I her after left  
for her faithful friendship, for her heavy heart.

107) (Of the well-bought matter) I made good use:  
to the wise now little is lacking;  
for Öthrærir now up is brought,  
and won for the lord-of-all-wights.

108) Unharmed again had I hardly come  
out of the etins' hall,  
if Gunnloth helped not, the good maiden,  
in whose loving arms I lay.

109) the day after, the etins fared  
into Har's high hall,  
to ask after Bolverk: whether the Æsir among,  
or whether by Suttung slain.

110) An oath on the ring did Othin swear;  
how put trust in his troth?  
Suttung he swindled and snatched his drink,  
and Gunnloth he beguiled.

111) 'Tis time to chant on the sage's chair:  
at the well of Urth  
I saw but said naught, I saw and thought,  
(listened to Har's lore);  
Of runes I heard men speak unraveling them,  
at the hall of Har  
in the hall of Har  
and so I heard them say:

112) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
at night rise not but to be ready for foe,  
or to look for a spot to relieve thee.

113) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
in a witch's arms beware of sleeping  
linking thy limbs with hers

114) She will cast her spell that thou carest not to go  
to meetings where men are gathered;  
unmindful of meat, and mirthless, thou goest,  
and seekest they bed in sorrow.

115) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
beware lest the wedded wife of a man  
thou lure to love with thee.

116) hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
on fell or firth if to fare thee list,  
furnish thee well with food.

117) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
withhold the hardships which happen to thee  
from the knowledge of knaves;  
for, know thou, from knaves thou wilt never have  
reward for thy good wishes.

118) A man I saw sorely bestead,  
through a wicked woman's words;  
her baleful tongue did work his bane,  
though good and unguilty he was.

119) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
If faithful friend thou hast found for thee,  
then fare thou to find him full oft;  
overgrown is soon with tall grass and bush  
the trail which is trod by no one.

120) hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
a good man seek thou to gain as thy friend,  
and learn to make thyself loved.

121) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
the first be not with a friend to break  
who was faithful found to thee;  
for sorrow eateth the soul of him  
who may not unburden his mind.

122) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
beware thou of bandying words  
with an unwise oaf,

123) For from evil man not ever wilt thou  
get reward for good;  
a good man, though, will gain for thee  
the love and liking of many.

124) Then love is mingled when a man can say  
toa bosom friend what burdens him;  
few things are worse than fickle mind:  
no friend who but speaks thee fair.

125) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
not three words shalt with a worse man bandy;  
oft the better man forbears  
when the worse man wounds thee.

126) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
neither shoemaker be nor shaftmaker, either,  
but it be for thyself:  
let the shoe be ill shaped or the shaft not true,  
and they will wish thee woe.

127) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
if wrong was done thee let thy wrong be known,  
and fall on they foes straightaway.

128) hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
in ill deeds not ever share,  
but be thou glad to do good.

129) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
look not ever up, when fighting--  
for mad with fear men then oft grow--  
lest that warlocks bewitch thee.

130) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
if thee list to gain a good woman's love  
and all the bliss there be,  
thy troth shalt pledge, and truly keep:  
no one tires of the good he gets.

131) Hear thou, Loddfafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
be wary of thee, but not wary o' ver much;  
be most wary of ale and of other man's wife,  
and eke, thirdly, lest thieves outwit thee.

132) Hear thou, Loddfafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
never laugh at or mock, or make game of,  
guest or wayfaring with.

133) Those who sit within hall oft hardly know  
of what kin be they who come;  
no man so flawless but some fault he has,  
[both foul and fair are found among men,  
blended within their breasts]

134) Hear thou, Loddfafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
at hoary sage sneer thou never:  
there is sense oft in old men's saws;  
oft wisdom cometh out of withered bag  
that hangs 'mongst the skins drying  
under roof, with the rennet.

135) Hear thou, Loddfafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
beshrew not the stranger, nor show him the door,  
but rather do good to the wretched.

136) That bar must be strong which unbars the door  
to each and every one:  
show the beggar your back lest, bearing thee grudge,  
he wish you all manner of mischief.

137) Hear thou, Loddafnir, and heed it well,  
learn it, 'twill lend thee strength,  
follow it, 'twill further thee:  
when ale thou drinkest invoke earth-strength;  
[for earth is good 'gainst ale, 'gainst ague, fire,  
'gainst straining, acorns, 'gainst witchery, steel,  
'gainst house-strife, the elder, 'gainst hate, the moon,  
'gainst rabies, alum,. 'gainst ill luck, runes--]  
for earth absorbs the humours all.

138) I wot that I hung on the wind-tossed tree  
all of nights nine,  
wounded by spear, bespoken to Othin,  
bespoken myself to myself,  
[upon that tree of which none telleth  
from what roots it doth rise]

139) Neither horn they upheld nor handed me bread;  
I looked below me--aloud I cried--  
caught up the runes, caught them up wailing,  
thence to the ground fell again.

140) From the son of Bolthorn, Bestla's father,  
I mastered mighty songs nine,  
and a drink I had, of the dearest mead,  
got from out of Óthráerir.

141) Then began I to grow and gain in insight,  
to wax eke in wisdom:  
One verse led on to another verse,  
one poem led on to the other poem.

142) Runes wilt thou find, and rightly read,  
of wondrous weight,  
of mighty magic,  
which that dyed the dread God,  
which that made the holy hosts,  
and were etched by Othin.

143) Othin among Æsir, for alfs, Dain,  
Dvalin for the dwarfs,  
Alsvith among etins, (but for earth-borne men)  
wrought I some myself.

144) Know'st how to write, know'st how to read,  
know'st how to stain, how to understand,  
know'st how to ask, know'st how to offer,  
know'st how to supplicate, know'st how to sacrifice?

145) 'Tis better unasked than offered overmuch;  
for ay doth a gift look for gain;  
'tis better unasked than offered overmuch:  
thus did Othin write ere the earth began,  
when up he rose in after time.

146) Those spells I know which the spouses of kings  
wot not, nor earthly wight:  
"Help" one is hight, with which holpen thou'lt be  
in sorrow and care and sickness.

147) That other I know which all will need  
who leeches list to be:  
(on the bark scratch them of bole in the woods  
whose boughs bend to the east).

148) That third I know, if my need be great  
to fetter a foeman fell:  
I can dull the swords of deadly foes,  
that nor wiles nor weapons avail.

149) that fourth I know, if foemen have  
fettered me hand and foot:  
I chant a charm the chains to break,  
so the fetters fly off my feet,  
and off my hands the halter.

150) That fifth I know, if from foemans's hand  
I see a spear sped into throng,  
never so fast it flies but its flight I can stay,  
once my eye lights on it.

151) that sixth I know, if me someone wounds  
with runes on gnarled root written,  
or rouses my wrath by reckless speech:  
him blights shall blast, not me.

152) That seventh I know, if o'er sleepers' heads  
I behold a hall on fire:  
however bright the blaze I can beat it down--  
that mighty spell I can speak.

153) That eighth I know which to all men is  
needful, and good to know:  
when hatred runs high, heroes among,  
their strife I can settle full soon.

154) That ninth I know: if need there be  
to guard a ship in a gale,  
the wind I can calm, and the waves also,  
and wholly soothe the sea.

155) That tenth I know, if night-hags sporting  
I scan aloft in the sky:  
I scare them with spells so they scatter abroad,  
heedless of their hides,  
heedless of their haunts.

156) That eleventh I know, if I am to lead  
old friends to the fray:  
under buckler I chant that briskly they fare  
hale and whole to battle,  
hale and whole from battle:  
hale where ever they are.

157) That twelfth I know, if on tree I see  
a hanged one hoisted on high:  
thus I write and the runes I stain  
that down he drops  
and tells me his tale.

158) That thirteenth I know if a thane's son I shall  
wet with holy water:  
never will he fall, though the fray be hot,  
nor sink down, wounded by sword.

159) That fourteenth I know, if to folk I shall  
sing and say of the Gods:  
Æsir and alfs know I altogether--  
of unlearned few have that lore.

160) That know I fifteenth which Thjothrærir sang,  
the dwarf, before Delling's door:  
gave to Æsir strength, to alfs victory  
by his song, and insight to Othin.

161) That sixteenth I know, if I seek me some maid,  
to work my will with her:  
the white-armed woman's heart I bewitch,  
and toward me I turn her thoughts.

162) That seventeenth I know, (if the slender maid's love  
I have, and hold her to me:  
this I sing to her) that she hardly will  
leave me for other man's love.

163) In this lore wilt thou, Loddafafnir, be  
unversed forever and ay:  
thy weal were it, if this wisdom thine--  
'tis helpful, if heeded,  
'tis needful, if known.

164) That eighteenth I know which to none I will tell,  
neither maid nor man's wife--  
'tis best warded I but one know it:  
this speak I last of my spells--  
but only to her in whose arms I lie,  
or else to my sister also.

165) Now are Har's sayings spoken in Har's hall,  
of help to the sons of men,  
of harm to the sons of etins;  
hail to whoever spoke them, hail to whoever knows them!  
Gain they who grasp them,  
happy they who heed them!



# **Havamal (Words of the High one)**

Translated by W H Auden and P B Taylo

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# Havamal (Words of the High one)

Translated by W H Auden and P B Taylo

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Young and alone on a long road,  
Once I lost my way:  
Rich I felt when I found another;  
Man rejoices in man,

A kind word need not cost much,  
The price of praise can be cheap:  
With half a loaf and an empty cup  
I found myself a friend,

Two wooden stakes stood on the plain,  
On them I hung my clothes:  
Draped in linen, they looked well born,  
But, naked, I was a nobody

Too early to many homes I came,  
Too late, it seemed, to some:  
The ale was finished or else un-brewed,  
The unpopular cannot please,

Some would invite me to visit their homes,  
But none thought I needed a meal,  
As though I had eaten a whole joint,  
Just before with a friend who had two

The man who stands at a strange threshold,  
Should be cautious before he cross it,  
Glance this way and that:  
Who knows beforehand what foes may sit  
Awaiting him in the hall?

Greetings to the host,  
The guest has arrived,  
In which seat shall he sit?  
Rash is he who at unknown doors  
Relies on his good luck,

Fire is needed by the newcomer  
Whose knees are frozen numb;  
Meat and clean linen a man needs  
Who has fared across the fells,

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Water, too, that he may wash before eating,  
Handcloth's and a hearty welcome,  
Courteous words, then courteous silence  
That he may tell his tale,

Who travels widely needs his wits about him,  
The stupid should stay at home:  
The ignorant man is often laughed at  
When he sits at meat with the sage,

Of his knowledge a man should never boast,  
Rather be sparing of speech  
When to his house a wiser comes:  
Seldom do those who are silent Make mistakes;  
mother wit Is ever a faithful friend,

A guest should be courteous  
When he comes to the table  
And sit in wary silence,  
His ears attentive,  
his eyes alert:  
So he protects himself,

Fortunate is he who is favoured in his lifetime  
With praise and words of wisdom:  
Evil counsel is often given  
By those of evil heart,

Blessed is he who in his own lifetime  
Is awarded praise and wit,  
For ill counsel is often given  
By mortal men to each other,

Better gear than good sense  
A traveller cannot carry,  
Better than riches for a wretched man,  
Far from his own home,

Better gear than good sense  
A traveller cannot carry,  
A more tedious burden than too much drink  
A traveller cannot carry,

Less good than belief would have it  
Is mead for the sons of men:  
A man knows less the more he drinks,  
Becomes a befuddled fool,

I-forget is the name men give the heron  
Who hovers over the fast:  
Fettered I was in his feathers that night,

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

When a guest in Gunnlod's court

Drunk I got, dead drunk,  
When Fjalar the wise was with me:  
Best is the banquet one looks back on after,  
And remembers all that happened,

Silence becomes the Son of a prince,  
To be silent but brave in battle:  
It befits a man to be merry and glad  
Until the day of his death,

The coward believes he will live forever  
If he holds back in the battle,  
But in old age he shall have no peace  
Though spears have spared his limbs

When he meets friends, the fool gapes,  
Is shy and sheepish at first,  
Then he sips his mead and immediately  
All know what an oaf he is,  
He who has seen and suffered much,  
And knows the ways of the world,  
Who has travelled', can tell what spirit  
Governs the men he meets,  
Drink your mead, but in moderation,  
Talk sense or be silent:  
No man is called discourteous who goes  
To bed at an early hour

A gluttonous man who guzzles away  
Brings sorrow on himself:  
At the table of the wise he is taunted often,  
Mocked for his bloated belly,

The herd knows its homing time,  
And leaves the grazing ground:  
But the glutton never knows how much  
His belly is able to hold,

An ill tempered, unhappy man  
Ridicules all he hears,  
Makes fun of others, refusing always  
To see the faults in himself

Foolish is he who frets at night,  
And lies awake to worry'  
A weary man when morning comes,  
He finds all as bad as before,

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

The fool thinks that those who laugh  
At him are all his friends,  
Unaware when he sits with wiser men  
How ill they speak of him.

The fool thinks that those who laugh  
At him are all his friends:  
When he comes to the Thing and calls for support,  
Few spokesmen he finds

The fool who fancies he is full of wisdom  
While he sits by his hearth at home.  
Quickly finds when questioned by others .  
That he knows nothing at all.

The ignorant booby had best be silent  
When he moves among other men,  
No one will know what a nit-wit he is  
Until he begins to talk;  
No one knows less what a nit-wit he is  
Than the man who talks too much.

To ask well, to answer rightly,  
Are the marks of a wise man:  
Men must speak of men's deeds,  
What happens may not be hidden.

Wise is he not who is never silent,  
Mouthing meaningless words:  
A glib tongue that goes on chattering  
Sings to its own harm.

A man among friends should not mock another:  
Many believe the man  
Who is not questioned to know much  
And so he escapes their scorn.  
An early meal a man should take  
Before he visits friends,  
Lest, when he gets there,  
he go hungry,  
Afraid to ask for food.

The fastest friends may fall out  
When they sit at the banquet-board:  
It is, and shall be, a shameful thing  
When guest quarrels with guest,

The wise guest has his way of dealing  
With those who taunt him at table:  
He smiles through the meal,  
not seeming to hear

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

The twaddle talked by his foes.

The tactful guest will take his leave Early,  
not linger long:  
He starts to stink who outstays his welcome  
In a hall that is not his own.

A small hut of one's own is better,  
A man is his master at home:  
A couple of goats and a corded roof  
Still are better than begging.

A small hut of one's own is better,  
A man is his master at home:  
His heart bleeds in the beggar who must  
Ask at each meal for meat.

A wayfarer should not walk unarmed,  
But have his weapons to hand:  
He knows not when he may need a spear,  
Or what menace meet on the road.

No man is so generous he will jib at accepting  
A gift in return for a gift,  
No man so rich that it really gives him  
Pain to be repaid.

Once he has won wealth enough,  
A man should not crave for more:  
What he saves for friends, foes may take;  
Hopes are often liars.

With presents friends should please each other,  
With a shield or a costly coat:  
Mutual giving makes for friendship,  
So long as life goes well,  
A man should be loyal through life to friends,  
To them and to friends of theirs,  
But never shall a man make offer  
Of friendship to his foes.

A man should be loyal through life to friends,  
And return gift for gift,  
Laugh when they laugh,  
but with lies repay  
A false foe who lies.

If you find a friend you fully trust  
And wish for his good-will,  
exchange thoughts,  
exchange gifts,

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Go often to his house.

If you deal with another you don't trust  
But wish for his good-will,  
Be fair in speech but false in thought  
And give him lie for lie.

Even with one you ill-trust  
And doubt what he means to do,  
False words with fair smiles  
May get you the gift you desire.

To a false friend the footpath winds  
Though his house be on the highway.  
To a sure friend there is a short cut,  
Though he live a long way off.

Hotter than fire among false hearts burns  
Friendship for five days,  
But suddenly slackens when the sixth dawns:  
Feeble their friendship then.

The generous and bold have the best lives,  
Are seldom beset by cares,  
But the base man sees bogies everywhere  
And the miser pines for presents.

The young fir that falls and rots  
Having neither needles nor bark,  
So is the fate of the friendless man:  
Why should he live long?

Little a sand-grain, little a dew drop,  
Little the minds of men:  
All men are not equal in wisdom,  
The half-wise are everywhere

It is best for man to be middle-wise,  
Not over cunning and clever:  
The fairest life is led by those  
Who are deft at all they do.

It is best for man to be middle-wise,  
Not over cunning and clever:  
No man is able to know his future,  
So let him sleep in peace.

It is best for man to be middle-wise,  
Not over cunning and clever:  
The learned man whose lore is deep  
Is seldom happy at heart.

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Brand kindles brand till they burn out,  
Flame is quickened by flame:  
One man from another is known by his speech  
The simpleton by his silence.  
Early shall he rise who has designs  
On another's land or life:  
His prey escapes the prone wolf,  
The sleeper is seldom victorious.

Early shall he rise who rules few servants,  
And set to work at once:  
Much is lost by the late sleeper,  
Wealth is won by the swift.

A man should know how many logs  
And strips of bark from the birch  
To stock in autumn, that he may have enough  
Wood for his winter fires.

Washed and fed,  
one may fare to the Thing:  
Though one's clothes be the worse for Wear,  
None need be ashamed of his shoes or hose,  
Nor of the horse he owns,  
Although no thoroughbred.

As the eagle who comes to the ocean shore,  
Sniffs and hangs her head,  
Dumfounded is he who finds at the Thing  
No supporters to plead his case.

It is safe to tell a secret to one,  
Risky to tell it to two,  
To tell it to three is thoughtless folly,  
Everyone else will know.

Often words uttered to another  
Have reaped an ill harvest:  
Two beat one, the tongue is head's bane,  
Pockets of fur hide fists.

Moderate at council should a man be,  
Not brutal and over bearing:  
Among the bold the bully will find  
Others as bold as he.

These things are thought the best:  
Fire, the sight of the sun,  
Good health with the gift to keep it,  
And a life that avoids vice.

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Not all sick men are utterly wretched:  
Some are blessed with sons,  
Some with friends,  
some with riches,  
Some with worthy works.

The halt can manage a horse,  
the handless a flock,  
The deaf be a doughty fighter,  
To be blind is better than to burn on a pyre:  
There is nothing the dead can do.

It is always better to be alive,  
The living can keep a cow.  
Fire, I saw, warming a wealthy man,  
With a cold corpse at his door.

A son is a blessing, though born late  
To a father no longer alive:  
Stones would seldom stand by the highway  
If sons did not set them there.

He welcomes the night who has enough provisions  
Short are the sails of a ship,  
Dangerous the dark in autumn,  
The wind may veer within five days,  
And many times in a month.

The half wit does not know that gold  
Makes apes of many men:  
One is rich, one is poor  
There is no blame in that.

Cattle die, kindred die,  
Every man is mortal:  
But the good name never dies  
Of one who has done well

Cattle die, kindred die,  
Every man is mortal:  
But I know one thing that never dies,  
The glory of the great dead

Fields and flocks had Fitjung's sons,  
Who now carry begging bowls:  
Wealth may vanish in the wink of an eye,  
Gold is the falsest of friends.

In the fool who acquires cattle and lands,  
Or wins a woman's love,  
His wisdom wanes with his waxing pride,

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

He sinks from sense to conceit.

Now is answered what you ask of the runes,  
Graven by the gods,  
Made by the All Father,  
Sent by the powerful sage:  
It is best for man to remain silent.

For these things give thanks at nightfall:  
The day gone, a guttered torch,  
A sword tested, the troth of a maid,  
Ice crossed, ale drunk.

Hew wood in wind-time,  
in fine weather sail,  
Tell in the night-time tales to house-girls,  
For too many eyes are open by day:  
From a ship expect speed, from a shield, cover,  
Keenness from a sword,  
but a kiss from a girl.

Drink ale by the hearth, over ice glide,  
Buy a stained sword, buy a starving mare  
To fatten at home: and fatten the watch-dog.

Trust not an acre early sown,  
Nor praise a son too soon:  
Weather rules the acre, wit the son,  
Both are exposed to peril,

A snapping bow, a burning flame,  
A grinning wolf, a grunting boar,  
A raucous crow, a rootless tree,  
A breaking wave, a boiling kettle,  
A flying arrow, an ebbing tide,  
A coiled adder, the ice of a night,  
A bride's bed talk, a broad sword,  
A bear's play, a prince's children,  
A witch's welcome, the wit of a slave,  
A sick calf, a corpse still fresh,  
A brother's killer encountered upon  
The highway a house half-burned,  
A racing stallion who has wrenched a leg,  
Are never safe: let no man trust them.

No man should trust a maiden's words,  
Nor what a woman speaks:  
Spun on a wheel were women's hearts,  
In their breasts was implanted caprice,

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

To love a woman whose ways are false  
Is like sledding over slippery ice  
With unshod horses out of control,  
Badly trained two-year-olds,  
Or drifting rudderless on a rough sea,  
Or catching a reindeer with a crippled hand  
On a thawing hillside: think not to do it.

Naked I may speak now for I know both:  
Men are treacherous too  
Fairest we speak when falsest we think:  
many a maid is deceived.

Gallantly shall he speak and gifts bring  
Who wishes for woman's love:  
praise the features of the fair girl,  
Who courts well will conquer.

Never reproach another for his love:  
It happens often enough  
That beauty ensnares with desire the wise  
While the foolish remain unmoved.

Never reproach the plight of another,  
For it happens to many men:  
Strong desire may stupefy heroes,  
Dull the wits of the wise

The mind alone knows what is near the heart,  
Each is his own judge:  
The worst sickness for a wise man  
Is to crave what he cannot enjoy.

So I learned when I sat in the reeds,  
Hoping to have my desire:  
Lovely was the flesh of that fair girl,  
But nothing I hoped for happened.

I saw on a bed Billing's daughter,  
Sun white, asleep:  
No greater delight I longed for then  
Than to lie in her lovely arms.

"Come" Odhinn, after nightfall  
If you wish for a meeting with me:  
All would be lost if anyone saw us  
And learned that we were lovers."

Afire with longing" I left her then,  
Deceived by her soft words:  
I thought my wooing had won the maid,

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

That I would have my way.

After nightfall I hurried back,  
But the warriors were all awake,  
Lights were burning, blazing torches:  
So false proved the path

Towards daybreak back I came  
The guards were sound asleep:  
I found then that the fair woman  
Had tied a bitch to her bed.

Many a girl when one gets to know her  
Proves to be fickle and false:  
That treacherous maiden taught me a lesson,  
The crafty woman covered me with shame"  
That was all I got from her.

Let a man with his guests be glad and merry,  
Modest a man should be"  
But talk well if he intends to be wise  
And expects praise from men:  
Fimbul fambi is the fool called "  
Unable to open his mouth.  
Fruitless my errand, had I been silent  
When I came to Suttung's courts:  
With spirited words I spoke to my profit  
In the hall of the aged giant.

Rati had gnawed a narrow passage,  
Chewed a channel through stone,  
A path around the roads of giants:  
I was like to lose my head

Gunnlod sat me in the golden seat,  
Poured me precious mead:  
Ill reward she had from me for that,  
For her proud and passionate heart,  
Her brooding foreboding spirit.

What I won from her I have well used:  
I have waxed in wisdom since I came back,  
bringing to Asgard Odrerir,  
the sacred draught.

Hardly would I have come home alive  
From the garth of the grim troll,  
Had Gunnlod not helped me, the good woman,  
Who wrapped her arms around me.

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

The following day the Frost Giants came,  
Walked into Har's hall To ask for Har's advice:  
Had Bolverk they asked, come back to his friends,  
Or had he been slain by Suttung?

Odhinn, they said, swore an oath on his ring:  
Who from now on will trust him?  
By fraud at the feast he befuddled Suttung  
And brought grief to Gunnlod.

It is time to sing in the seat of the wise,  
Of what at Urd's Well I saw in silence,  
saw and thought on.  
Long I listened to men  
Runes heard spoken, (counsels revealed.)  
At Har's hall, In Har's hall:  
There I heard this.

Loddfafnir, listen to my counsel:  
You will fare well if you follow it,  
It will help you much if you heed it.

Never rise at night unless you need to spy  
Or to ease yourself in the outhouse.

Shun a woman, wise in magic,  
Her bed and her embraces:  
If she cast a spell, you will care no longer  
To meet and speak with men,  
Desire no food, desire no pleasure,  
In sorrow fall asleep.

Never seduce anothers wife,  
Never make her your mistress.

If you must journey to mountains and firths,  
Take food and fodder with you.

Never open your heart to an evil man  
When fortune does not favour you:  
From an evil man, if you make him your friend,  
You will get evil for good.

I saw a warrior wounded fatally  
By the words of an evil woman  
Her cunning tongue caused his death,  
Though what she alleged was a lie.

If you know a friend you can fully trust,  
Go often to his house  
Grass and brambles grow quickly

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Upon the untrodden track.

With a good man it is good to talk,  
Make him your fast friend:  
But waste no words on a witless oaf,  
Nor sit with a senseless ape.

Cherish those near you, never be  
The first to break with a friend:  
Care eats him who can no longer  
Open his heart to another.

An evil man, if you make him your friend,  
Will give you evil for good:  
A good man, if you make him your friend"  
Will praise you in every place,

Affection is mutual when men can open  
All their heart to each other:  
He whose words are always fair  
Is untrue and not to be trusted.

Bandy no speech with a bad man:  
Often the better is beaten  
In a word fight by the worse.

Be not a cobbler nor a carver of shafts,  
Except it be for yourself:  
If a shoe fit ill or a shaft be crooked"  
The maker gets curses and kicks.

If aware that another is wicked, say so:  
Make no truce or treaty with foes.

Never share in the shamefully gotten,  
But allow yourself what is lawful.

Never lift your eyes and look up in battle,  
Lest the heroes enchant you,  
who can change warriors  
Suddenly into hogs,  
With a good woman, if you wish to enjoy  
Her words and her good will,  
Pledge her fairly and be faithful to it:  
Enjoy the good you are given,

Be not over wary, but wary enough,  
First, of the foaming ale,  
Second, of a woman wed to another,  
Third, of the tricks of thieves.

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Mock not the traveller met On the road,  
Nor maliciously laugh at the guest:  
Scoff not at guests nor to the gate chase them,  
But relieve the lonely and wretched,

The sitters in the hall seldom know  
The kin of the new-comer:  
The best man is marred by faults,  
The worst is not without worth.

Never laugh at the old when they offer counsel,  
Often their words are wise:  
From shrivelled skin, from scraggy things  
That hand among the hides  
And move amid the guts,  
Clear words often come.

Heavy the beam above the door;  
Hang a horse-shoe On it  
Against ill-luck, lest it should suddenly  
Crash and crush your guests.

Medicines exist against many evils:  
Earth against drunkenness, heather against worms  
Oak against costiveness, corn against sorcery,  
Spurred rye against rupture, runes against bales  
The moon against feuds, fire against sickness,  
Earth makes harmless the floods.

Wounded I hung on a wind-swept gallows  
For nine long nights,  
Pierced by a spear, pledged to Odhinn,  
Offered, myself to myself  
The wisest know not from whence spring  
The roots of that ancient rood

They gave me no bread,  
They gave me no mead,  
I looked down;  
with a loud cry  
I took up runes;  
from that tree I fell.

Nine lays of power  
I learned from the famous Bolthor, Bestla's father:  
He poured me a draught of precious mead,  
Mixed with magic Odrerir.

Waxed and throve well;  
Word from word gave words to me,  
Deed from deed gave deeds to me,

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

Runes you will find, and readable staves,  
Very strong staves,  
Very stout staves,  
Staves that Bolthor stained,  
Made by mighty powers,  
Graven by the prophetic god,

For the gods by Odhinn, for the elves by Dain,  
By Dvalin, too, for the dwarves,  
By Asvid for the hateful giants,  
And some I carved myself:  
Thund, before man was made, scratched them,  
Who rose first, fell thereafter

Know how to cut them, know how to read them,  
Know how to stain them, know how to prove them,  
Know how to evoke them, know how to score them,  
Know how to send them" know how to send them,

Better not to ask than to over-pledge  
As a gift that demands a gift"  
Better not to send than to slay too many,

The first charm I know is unknown to rulers  
Or any of human kind;  
Help it is named,  
for help it can give In hours of sorrow and anguish.

I know a second that the sons of men  
Must learn who wish to be leeches.

I know a third: in the thick of battle,  
If my need be great enough,  
It will blunt the edges of enemy swords,  
Their weapons will make no wounds.

I know a fourth:  
it will free me quickly  
If foes should bind me fast  
With strong chains, a chant that makes Fetters spring from the feet,  
Bonds burst from the hands.

I know a fifth: no flying arrow,  
Aimed to bring harm to men,  
Flies too fast for my fingers to catch it  
And hold it in mid-air.

I know a sixth:  
it will save me if a man  
Cut runes on a sapling's Roots  
With intent to harm; it turns the spell;

Havamal (Words of the High one)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

The hater is harmed, not me.

If I see the hall  
Ablaze around my bench mates,  
Though hot the flames, they shall feel nothing,  
If I choose to chant the spell.

I know an eighth:  
that all are glad of,  
Most useful to men:  
If hate fester in the heart of a warrior,  
It will soon calm and cure him.

I know a ninth:  
when need I have  
To shelter my ship on the flood,  
The wind it calms, the waves it smoothes  
And puts the sea to sleep,

I know a tenth:  
if troublesome ghosts  
Ride the rafters aloft,  
I can work it so they wander astray,  
Unable to find their forms,  
Unable to find their homes.

I know an eleventh:  
when I lead to battle Old comrades in-arms,  
I have only to chant it behind my shield,  
And unwounded they go to war,  
Unwounded they come from war,  
U unscathed wherever they are.

I know a twelfth:  
If a tree bear  
A man hanged in a halter,  
I can carve and stain strong runes  
That will cause the corpse to speak,  
Reply to whatever I ask.

I know a thirteenth  
if I throw a cup Of water over a warrior,  
He shall not fall in the fiercest battle,  
Nor sink beneath the sword,

I know a fourteenth, that few know:  
If I tell a troop of warriors  
About the high ones, elves and gods,  
I can name them one by one.  
(Few can the nit-wit name.)

## Havamal (Words of the High one)

I know a fifteenth,  
that first Thjodrerir  
Sang before Delling's doors,  
Giving power to gods, prowess to elves,  
Fore-sight to Hroptatyr Odhinn,

I know a sixteenth:  
if I see a girl  
With whom it would please me to play,  
I can turn her thoughts, can touch the heart  
Of any white armed woman.

I know a seventeenth:  
if I sing it,  
the young Girl will be slow to forsake me.

I know an eighteenth that I never tell  
To maiden or wife of man,  
A secret I hide from all  
Except the love who lies in my arms,  
Or else my own sister.

To learn to sing them, Loddafafnir,  
Will take you a long time,  
Though helpful they are if you understand them,  
Useful if you use them,  
Needful if you need them.

The Wise One has spoken words in the hall,  
Needful for men to know,  
Unneedful for trolls to know:

Hail to the speaker,  
Hail to the knower,  
Joy to him who has understood,  
Delight to those who have listened.