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THE POETIC EDDA

Baldrs draumar

Baldr's Dreams

Old Norse · English – H. A. Bellows (1923)

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Baldr, the fairest and best of the gods, is troubled by dark and ominous dreams that seem to foretell his death. The gods gather in council, yet none can read the omen. So Odin saddles his eight-legged steed Sleipnir and rides down to Niflhel, the murky realm of the dead. At its gate the blood-stained hound of hell howls at him, but the Allfather rides on until he reaches the high hall of Hel. Before the eastern grave-mound of a long-dead seeress he chants the spells of the dead and forces the völvu to speak from beyond the grave. Unwillingly she reveals that the benches of the hall already stand decked with mead for Baldr, that blind Hoth will strike him down, and that Vali — grown to manhood in a single night — will avenge him. When Odin asks who the mourning women are, the seeress sees through his disguise: she knows him for Odin himself and falls silent until the end of the world. The Old Norse text follows the edition of Guðni Jónsson; the English rendering is by Henry Adams Bellows (1923) — both in the public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	<i>Senn váru æsir allir á þingi ok ásynjur allar á máli, ok um þat réðu ríkir tívar, hví væri Baldri ballir draumar.</i>	Once were the gods together met, And the goddesses came and council held, And the far-famed ones the truth would find, Why baleful dreams to Baldr had come.
2	<i>Upp reis Óðinn, alda gautr, ok hann á Sleipni söðul of lagði; reið hann niðr þaðan niflheljar til; mætti hann hvelpi, þeim er ór helju kom.</i>	Then Othin rose, the enchanter old, And the saddle he laid on Sleipnir's back; Thence rode he down to Niflhel deep, And the hound he met that came from hell.
3	<i>Sá var blóðugr um brjóst framan ok galdrs föður gól of lengi; fram reið Óðinn, foldvegr dunði; hann kom at hávu Heljar ranni.</i>	Bloody he was on his breast before, At the father of magic he howled from afar; Forward rode Othin, the earth resounded Till the house so high of Hel he reached.
4	<i>Þá reið Óðinn fyrir austan dyrr, þar er hann vissi völu leiði; nam hann vittugri valgaldr kveða, unz nauðig reis, nás orð of kvað:</i>	Then Othin rode to the eastern door, There, he knew well, was the wise-woman's grave; Magic he spoke and mighty charms, Till spell-bound she rose, and in death she spoke:

- 5 "Hvat er manna þat
mér ókunnra,
er mér hefir aukit
erfitt sinni?
Var ek snivin snævi
ok slegin regni
ok drifin döggu,
dauð var ek lengi."
- 6 "Vegtamr ek heiti,
sonr em ek Valtams;
segðu mér ór helju,
ek mun ór heimi:
Hveim eru bekkir
baugum sánir,
flet fagrlic
flóuð gulli?"
- 7 "Hér stendr Baldri
of brugginn mjöðr,
skírar veigar,
liggr skjöldr yfir,
en ásmegir
í ofvæni;
nauðug sagðak,
nú mun ek þegja."
- 8 "Þegj-at-tu, völv,
þik vil ek fregna,
unz alkunna,
vil ek enn vita:
Hverr mun Baldri
at bana verða
ok Óðins son
aldri ræna?"
- 9 "Höðr berr hávan
hróðrbaðm þinig,
hann mun Baldri
at bana verða
ok Óðins son
aldri ræna;
nauðug sagðak,
nú mun ek þegja."
- "What is the man,
to me unknown,
That has made me travel
the troublous road?
I was snowed on with snow,
and smitten with rain,
And drenched with dew;
long was I dead."
- "Vegtam my name,
I am Valtam's son;
Speak thou of hell,
for of heaven I know:
For whom are the benches
bright with rings,
And the platforms gay
bedecked with gold?"
- "Here for Baldr
the mead is brewed,
The shining drink,
and a shield lies o'er it;
But their hope is gone
from the mighty gods.
Unwilling I spake,
and now would be still."
- "Wise-woman, cease not!
I seek from thee
All to know
that I fain would ask:
Who shall the bane
of Baldr become,
And steal the life
from Othin's son?"
- "Hoth thither bears
the far-famed branch,
He shall the bane
of Baldr become,
And steal the life
from Othin's son.
Unwilling I spake,
and now would be still."

10 "Þegj-at-tu, völv,
þik vil ek fregna,
unz alkunna,
vil ek enn vita:
Hverr mun heift Heði
hefnt of vinna
eða Baldrs bana
á bál vega?"

"Wise-woman, cease not!
I seek from thee
All to know
that I fain would ask:
Who shall vengeance win
for the evil work,
Or bring to the flames
the slayer of Baldr?"

11 "Rindr berr Vála
í vestrsölum,
sá mun Óðins sonr
einnættir vega:
hönd of þvær
né höfuð kembir,
áðr á bál of berr
Baldrs andskota;
nauðug sagðak,
nú mun ek þegja."

"Rind bears Vali
in Vestrsalir,
And one night old
fights Othin's son;
His hands he shall wash not,
his hair he shall comb not,
Till the slayer of Baldr
he brings to the flames.
Unwilling I spake,
and now would be still."

12 "Þegj-at-tu, völv,
þik vil ek fregna,
unz alkunna,
vil ek enn vita:
Hverjar ro þær meyjar,
er at muni gráta
ok á himin verpa
halsa skautum?"

"Wise-woman, cease not!
I seek from thee
All to know
that I fain would ask:
What maidens are they
who then shall weep,
And toss to the sky
the yards of the sails?"

13 "Ert-at-tu Vegtamr,
sem ek hugða,
heldr ertu Óðinn,
aldinn gautr."
"Ert-at-tu völv
né vís kona,
heldr ertu þriggja
þursa móðir."

"Vegtam thou art not,
as erstwhile I thought;
Othin thou art,
the enchanter old."
"No wise-woman art thou,
nor wisdom hast;
Of giants three
the mother art thou."

14 "Heim ríð þú, Óðinn,
ok ver hróðigr,
svá komir manna
meir aftr á vit,
er lauss Loki
líðr ór böndum
ok ragna rök
rjúfendr koma."

"Home ride, Othin,
be ever proud;
For no one of men
shall seek me more
Till Loki wanders
loose from his bonds,
And to the last strife
the destroyers come."

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