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THE POETIC EDDA

Grímnismál

The Lay of Grímnir

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

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The Grímnismál (‘The Lay of Grímnir’) is one of the great mythological knowledge poems of the Poetic Edda. Its frame: King Geirröðr – once favoured by Odin as a foster-son over his own brother Agnarr – has a stranger in a dark-blue mantle, who calls himself only Grímnir, seized and tortured between two fires for eight nights. Only Agnarr, the king’s young son, brings him a horn to drink. In return Grímnir – Odin himself in disguise – reveals to the boy in long verses the hidden lore: the dwellings of the gods, the world-tree Yggdrasil and its creatures (the goat Heiðrún, the hart Eikþyrnir, the squirrel Ratatoskr, the dragon Níðhöggr), the Valkyries, the sun and moon, and at last his own many names. When he declares himself as Odin, the terrified Geirröðr falls upon his own sword. Old Norse text after the Codex Regius (ed. Guðni Jónsson), English after Henry Adams Bellows (1923) – both public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	<i>Heitr ertu, hripuðr, ok heldr til mikill; göngumk firr, funi! loði sviðnar, þótt ek á loft berak; brennumk feldr fyr.</i>	Hot art thou, fire! too fierce by far; Get ye now gone, ye flames! The mantle is burnt, though I bear it aloft, And the fire scorches the fur.
2	<i>Átta nætr sat ek milli elda hér, svá at mér manngi mat né bauð nema einn Agnarr, er einn skal ráða, Geirröðar sonr, Gotna landi.</i>	,Twixt the fires now eight nights have I sat, And no man brought meat to me, Save Agnar alone, and alone shall rule Geirröth’s son o’er the Goths.
3	<i>Heill skaltu, Agnarr, alls þik heilan biðr Veratýr vera; eins drykkjar þú skalt aldri betri gjöld geta.</i>	Hail to thee, Agnar! for hailed thou art By the voice of Veratyr; For a single drink shalt thou never receive A greater gift as reward.
4	<i>Land er heilagt, er ek liggja sé ásum ok alfum nær; en í Þrúðheimi skal Þórr vera unz of rjúfask regin.</i>	The land is holy that lies hard by The gods and the elves together; And Thor shall ever in Thruthheim dwell, Till the gods to destruction go.
5	<i>Ýdalir heita, þar er Ullr hefir sér of görva sali; Alfheim Frey gáfu í árdaga tívar at tannféi.</i>	Ydalir call they the place where Ull A hall for himself hath set; And Alfheim the gods to Freyr once gave As a tooth-gift in ancient times.

- 6** *Bær er sá inn þriði,
er blíð regin
silfri þökkðu sali;
Valaskjalf heitir,
er vélti sér
áss í árdaga.*
- A third home is there, with silver thatched
By the hands of the gracious gods:
Valaskjolf is it, in days of old
Set by a god for himself.
- 7** *Sökkvabekkr heitir inn fjórði,
en þar svalar knegu
unnir yfir glymja;
þar þau Óðinn ok Sága
drekka um alla daga
glöð ór gullnum kerum.*
- Sökkvabekk is the fourth, where cool waves flow,
And amid their murmur it stands;
There daily do Othin and Saga drink
In gladness from cups of gold.
- 8** *Glaðsheimr heitir inn fimmti,
þars in gullbjarta
Valhöll víð of þrumir;
en þar Hrofr kýss
hverjan dag
vápndauða vera.*
- The fifth is Glathsheim, and gold-bright there
Stands Valhall stretching wide;
And there does Othin each day choose
The men who have fallen in fight.
- 9** *Mjök er auðkennt,
þeim er til Óðins koma
salkynni at séa;
sköftum er rann reft,
skjöldum er salr þakiðr,
brynjum um bekki strát.*
- Easy is it to know for him who to Othin
Comes and beholds the hall;
Its rafters are spears, with shields is it roofed,
On its benches are breastplates strewn.
- 10** *Mjök er auðkennt,
þeir er til Óðins koma
salkynni at séa:
vargr hangir
fyr vestan dyrr,
ok drúpir örn yfir.*
- Easy is it to know for him who to Othin
Comes and beholds the hall;
There hangs a wolf by the western door,
And o'er it an eagle hovers.
- 11** *Prymheimr heitir inn sétti,
er Þjazi bjó,
sá inn ámáttki jötunn;
en nú Skaði byggvir,
skír brúðr goða,
fornar tóftir föður.*
- The sixth is Thrymheim, where Thjazi dwelt,
The giant of marvelous might;
Now Skathi abides, the god's fair bride,
In the home that her father had.
- 12** *Breiðablik eru in sjaundu,
en þar Baldr hefir
sér of gerva sali,
á því landi,
er ek liggja veit
fæsta feiknstafi.*
- The seventh is Breithablik; Baldr has there
For himself a dwelling set,
In the land I know that lies so fair,
And from evil fate is free.

- 13** *Himinbjörg eru in áttu,
en þar Heimdall
kveða valda véum;
þar vörðr goða
drekkir í væru ranni
glaðr inn góða mjöð.*
- Himinbjorg is the eighth, and Heimdall there
O'er men holds sway, it is said;
In his well-built house does the warder of heaven
The good mead gladly drink.
- 14** *Fólkvangr er inn níundi,
en þar Freyja ræðr
sessa kostum í sal;
halfan val
hon kýss hverjan dag,
en halfan Óðinn á.*
- The ninth is Folkvang, where Freyja decrees
Who shall have seats in the hall;
The half of the dead each day does she choose,
And half does Othin have.
- 15** *Glitnir er inn tíundi,
hann er gulli studdr
ok silfri þakðr it sama;
en þar Forseti
byggir flestan dag
ok svæfir allar sakir.*
- The tenth is Glitnir; its pillars are gold,
And its roof with silver is set;
There most of his days does Forseti dwell,
And sets all strife at end.
- 16** *Nóatún eru in elliftu,
en þar Njörðr hefir,
sér of görva sali;
manna þengill
inn meins vani
hátimbruðum hörgi ræðr.*
- The eleventh is Noatun; there has Njorth
For himself a dwelling set;
The sinless ruler of men there sits
In his temple timbered high.
- 17** *Hrísi vex
ok háu grasi
Víðars land viði;
en þar mögr of læzt
af mars baki
frækn at hefna föður.*
- Filled with growing trees and high-standing grass
Is Vithi, Vithar's land;
But there did the son from his steed leap down,
When his father he fain would avenge.
- 18** *Andhrímnir
lætr í Eldhrímn
Sæhrímn soðinn,
fleska bezt;
en þat fáir vitu,
við hvat einherjar alask.*
- In Eldhrimnir Andhrimnir cooks
Sæhrimnir's seething flesh,--
The best of food, but few men know
On what fare the warriors feast.
- 19** *Gera ok Freka
seðr gunntamiðr
hróðigr Herjaföður;
en við vín eitt
vápngöfugr
Óðinn æ lifir.*
- Freki and Geri does Heerfather feed,
The far-famed fighter of old:
But on wine alone does the weapon-decked god,
Othin, forever live.

- 20 *Huginn ok Muninn
fljúga hverjan dag
Jörmungrund yfir;
óumk ek of Hugin,
at hann aftr né komi-t,
þó sjámk meir of Munin.*
- O'er Mithgarth Hugin and Munin both
Each day set forth to fly;
For Hugin I fear lest he come not home,
But for Munin my care is more.
- 21 *Þýtr Þund,
unir Þjóðvitnis
fískr flóði í;
árstraumr þykkir
ofmikill
Valglaumni at vaða.*
- Loud roars Thund, and Thjothvitnir's fish
Joyously fares in the flood;
Hard does it seem to the host of the slain
To wade the torrent wild.
- 22 *Valgrind heitir,
er stendr velli á
heilög fyr helgum dyrum;
forn er sú grind,
en þat fáir vitu,
hvé hon er í lás of lokin.*
- There Valgrind stands, the sacred gate,
And behind are the holy doors;
Old is the gate, but few there are
Who can tell how it tightly is locked.
- 23 *Fimm hundruð dura
ok umb fjórum tögum,
svá hygg ek á Valhöllu vera;
átta hundruð Einherja
ganga senn ór einum durum,
þá er þeir fara við vitni at vega.*
- Five hundred doors and forty there are,
I ween, in Valhall's walls;
Eight hundred fighters through one door fare
When to war with the wolf they go.
- 24 *Fimm hundruð golfa
ok umb fjórum tögum,
svá hygg ek Bilskirnir með bugum;
ranna þeira,
er ek reft vita,
míns veit ek mest magar.*
- Five hundred rooms and forty there are
I ween, in Bilskirnir built;
Of all the homes whose roofs I beheld,
My son's the greatest meseemed.
- 25 *Heiðrún heitir geit,
er stendr höllu á
ok bítr af Læraðs limum;
skapker fylla
hon skal ins skíra mjaðar;
kná-at sú veig vanask.*
- Heithrun is the goat who stands by Heerfather's
hall,
And the branches of Lærað she bites;
The pitcher she fills with the fair, clear mead,
Ne'er fails the foaming drink.
- 26 *Eikþyrnir heitir hjörtr,
er stendr höllu á
ok bítr af Læraðs limum;
en af hans hornum
drýpr í Hvergelmi,
þaðan eigu vötn öll vega.*
- Eikthyrnir is the hart who stands by Heerfather's
hall
And the branches of Lærað he bites;
From his horns a stream into Hvergelmir drops,
Thence all the rivers run.

- 27 *Síð ok Víð,
Sækin ok Eikin,
Svöl ok Gunnþró,
Fjörm ok Fimbulþul,
Rín ok Rennandi,
Gipul ok Göpul,
Gömul ok Geirvimul,
þær hverfa um hodd goða,
þyn ok Vín,
Þöll ok Höll,
Gráð ok Gunnþorin.*
- Sith and Vith, Sækin and Ækin,
Svol and Fimbulthul, Gunnthro, and Fjorm,
Rin and Rinnandi,
Gipul and Gopul, Gomul and Geirvimul,
That flow through the fields of the gods;
Thyn and Vin, Thol and Hol,
Groth and Gunnthorin.
- 28 *Vína heitir ein,
önnur Vegsvinn,
þriðja Þjóðnuma,
Nyt ok Nöt,
Nönn ok Hrönn,
Slíð ok Hríð,
Sylgr ok Ylgr,
Víð ok Ván,
Vönd ok Strönd,
Gjöll ok Leiftr,
þær falla gumnum nær,
er falla til Heljar heðan.*
- Vino is one, Vegsvin another,
And Thjothnuma a third;
Nyt and Not, Non and Hron,
Slith and Hrith, Sylg and Ylg,
Vith and Von, Vond and Strond,
Gjol and Leipt, that go among men,
And hence they fall to Hel.
- 29 *Körmt ok Örmt
ok Kerlaugar tvær,
þær skal Þórr vaða
dag hvern,
er hann dæma ferr
at aski Yggdrasils,
því at ásbrú
brenn öll loga,
heilög vötn hlóa.*
- Kormt and Ormt and the Kerlaugs twain
Shall Thor each day wade through,
(When dooms to give he forth shall go
To the ash-tree Yggdrasil;)
For heaven's bridge burns all in flame,
And the sacred waters seethe.
- 30 *Glaðr ok Gyllir,
Glær ok Skeiðbrimir,
Silfrintopp ok Sinir,
Gísl ok Falhófnir,
Gulltoppr ok Léttfeti,
þeim ríða æsir jóm
dag hvern,
er þeir dæma fara
at aski Yggdrasils.*
- Glath and Gyllir, Gler and Skeithbrimir,
Silfrintopp and Sinir,
Gisl and Falhofnir, Golltopp and Lettfeti,
On these steeds the gods shall go
When dooms to give each day they ride
To the ash-tree Yggdrasil.
- 31 *Þrjár rætr
standa á þría vega
undan aski Yggdrasils;
Hel býr und einni,
annarri hrímpursar,
þriðju mennskir menn.*
- Three roots there are that three ways run
,Neath the ash-tree Yggdrasil;
,Neath the first lives Hel, ,neath the second the
frost-giants,
,Neath the last are the lands of men.

- 32 *Ratatoskr heitir íkorni,
er renna skal
at aski Yggdrasils,
arnar orð
hann skal ofan bera
ok segja Niðhöggi niðr.*
- 33 *Hirtir eru ok fjórir,
þeirs af hæfingar
gaghalsir gnaga:
Dáinn ok Dvalinn,
Duneyrr ok Duraprór.*
- 34 *Ormar fleiri liggja
und aski Yggdrasils,
en þat of hyggi hverr ósviðra apa:
Góinn ok Móinn,
þeir ro Grafvitnis synir,
Grábakr ok Grafvölluðr,
Ófnir ok Sváfnir,
hygg ek, at æ skyli
meiðs kvistu má.*
- 35 *Askr Yggdrasils
drýgir erfði
meira en menn um viti:
hjörtr bítr ofan,
en á hliðu fúnar,
skerðir Niðhöggr neðan.*
- 36 *Hrist ok Mist
vil ek, at mér horn beri,
Skeggjöld ok Skögul,
Hildr ok Þrúðr,
Hlökk ok Herfjötur,
Göll ok Geirönnul,
Randgríðr ok Ráðgríðr
ok Reginleif,
þær bera Einherjum öl.*
- 37 *Árvakr ok Alsviðr
þeir skulu upp heðan
svangir sól draga;
en und þeira bógum
fálu blíð regin,
æsir, ísarnkol.*
- Ratatosk is the squirrel who there shall run
On the ash-tree Yggdrasil;
From above the words of the eagle he bears,
And tells them to Nithhogg beneath.
- Four harts there are, that the highest twigs
Nibble with necks bent back;
Dain and Dvalin,
Duneyr and Dyrathror.
- More serpents there are beneath the ash
Than an unwise ape would think;
Goin and Moin, Grafvitnir's sons,
Grabak and Grafvolluth,
Ofnir and Svafnir shall ever, methinks,
Gnaw at the twigs of the tree.
- Yggdrasil's ash great evil suffers,
Far more than men do know;
The hart bites its top, its trunk is rotting,
And Nithhogg gnaws beneath.
- Hrist and Mist bring the horn at my will,
Skeggjöld and Skogul;
Hild and Thruth, Hlok and Herfjotur,
Gol and Geironul,
Randgrith and Rathgrith and Reginleif
Beer to the warriors bring.
- Arvak and Alsvith up shall drag
Weary the weight of the sun;
But an iron cool have the kindly gods
Of yore set under their yokes.

- 38** *Svalinn heitir,
hann stendr sólu fyrir,
skjöldr, skínanda goði;
björg ok brim,
ek veit, at brenna skulu,
ef hann fellr í frá.*
- In front of the sun does Svalin stand,
The shield for the shining god;
Mountains and sea would be set in flames
If it fell from before the sun.
- 39** *Sköll heitir ulfr,
er fylgir inu skírleita goði
tíl varna viðar,
en annarr Hati,
hann er Hróðvitnis sonr,
sá skal fyr heiða brúði himins.*
- Skoll is the wolf that to Ironwood
Follows the glittering god,
And the son of Hrothvitnir, Hati, awaits
The burning bride of heaven.
- 40** *Ór Ymis holdi
var jörð of sköpuð,
en ór sveita sær,
björg ór beinum,
baðmr ór hári,
en ór hausi himinn.*
- Out of Ymir's flesh was fashioned the earth,
And the ocean out of his blood;
Of his bones the hills, of his hair the trees,
Of his skull the heavens high.
- 41** *En ór hans brám
gerðu blíð regin
Miðgarð manna sonum,
en ór hans heila
váru þau in harðmóðgu
ský öll of sköpuð.*
- Mithgarth the gods from his eyebrows made,
And set for the sons of men;
And out of his brain the baleful clouds
They made to move on high.
- 42** *Ullar hylli
hefr ok allra goða
hverr er tekr fyrstr á funa,
því at opnir heimar
verða of ása sonum,
þá er hefja af hvera.*
- His the favor of Ull and of all the gods
Who first in the flames will reach;
For the house can be seen by the sons of the gods
If the kettle aside were cast.
- 43** *Ívalda synir
gengu í árdaga
Skíðblaðni at skapa,
skipa bezt,
skírum Frey,
nýtum Njarðar bur.*
- In days of old did Ivaldi's sons
Skithblathnir fashion fair,
The best of ships for the bright god Freyr,
The noble son of Njorth.
- 44** *Askr Yggdrasils,
hann er æðstr viðar,
en Skíðblaðnir skipa,
Óðinn ása,
en jóa Sleipnir,
Bílröst brúa,
en Bragi skalda,
Hábrók hauka,
en hunda Garmr.*
- The best of trees must Yggdrasil be,
Skithblathnir best of boats;
Of all the gods is Othin the greatest,
And Sleipnir the best of steeds;
Bifrost of bridges, Bragi of skalds,
Hobrok of hawks, and Garm of hounds.

- 45 *Svipum hef ek nú yppt
fyr sigtíva sonum,
við þat skal vilbjörg vaka;
öllum ásum
þat skal inn koma
Ægis bekki á,
Ægis drekku at.*
- To the race of the gods my face have I raised,
And the wished-for aid have I waked;
For to all the gods has the message gone
That sit in Ægir's seats,
That drink within Ægir's doors.
- 46 *Hétumk Grímr,
hétumk Gangleri,
Herjann ok Hjalmberi,
Þekkr ok Þriði,
Þundr ok Uðr,
Herblindi ok Hár.*
- Grim is my name, Gangleri am I,
Herjan and Hjalmberi,
Thekk and Thrithi, Thuth and Uth,
Helblindi and Hor;
- 47 *Saðr ok Svipall
ok Sanngetal,
Herteitr ok Hnikarr,
Bileygr, Báleygr,
Bölverkr, Fjölñir,
Grímr ok Grímnir,
Glapsviðr ok Fjölsviðr;*
- Sath and Svipal and Sanngetal,
Herteit and Hnikar,
Bileyg, Baleyg, Bolverk, Fjölñir,
Grim and Grímnir, Glapsvith, Fjölsvith.
- 48 *Síðhött, Síðskeggr,
Sigföðr, Hnikuðr,
Alföðr, Valföðr,
Atríðr ok Farmatýr;
einu nafni
hétumk aldregi,
síz ek með folkum fór.*
- Sithhott, Sithskegg, Sigfather, Hnikuth,
Allfather, Valfather, Atrith, Farmatyr:
A single name have I never had
Since first among men I fared.
- 49 *Grímnir mik hétu
at Geirröðar,
en Jalk at Ásmundar,
en þá Kjalar,
er ek kjálka dró,
Þrór þingum at,
Viðurr at vígum,
Óski ok Ómi,
Jafnhár ok Biflindi,
Göndlir ok Hárbarðr með goðum.*
- Grimnir they call me in Geirröth's hall,
With Asmund Jalk am I;
Kjalar I was when I went in a sledge,
At the council Thrór am I called,
As Vithur I fare to the fight;
Oski, Biflindi, Jafnhor and Omi,
Gondlir and Harbarth midst gods.
- 50 *Sviðurr ok Sviðrir
er ek hét at Sökkmímis,
ok dulðak þann inn aldna jötun,
þá er ek Miðvitnis vark
ins mæra burar
orðinn einbani.*
- I deceived the giant Sokkmimir old
As Svithur and Svithrir of yore;
Of Mithvitnir's son the slayer I was
When the famed one found his doom.

- 51 Ölr ertu, Geirröðr,
hefr þú ofdrukkit;
miklu ertu hnugginn,
er þú ert mínu gengi,
öllum Einherjum
ok Óðins hylli.
- 52 Fjölð ek þér sagðak,
en þú fátt of mant;
of þik véla vinir;
mæki liggja
ek sé míns vinar
allan í dreyra drifinn.
- 53 Eggmóðan val
nú mun Yggr hafa,
þitt veit ek líf of liðit;
úfar ro dísir,
nú knáttu Óðin sjá,
nalgasktu mik, ef þú megir.
- 54 Óðinn ek nú heiti,
Yggr ek áðan hét,
hétumk þundr fyr þat,
Vakr ok Skilfingr,
Váfuðr ok Hroftatýr,
Gautr ok Jalkr með goðum,
Ófnir ok Sváfnir,
er ek hygg, at orðnir sé
allir af einum mér.
- Drunk art thou, Geirröth, too much didst thou drink,
.....
Much hast thou lost, for help no more
From me or my heroes thou hast.
- Small heed didst thou take to all that I told,
And false were the words of thy friends;
For now the sword of my friend I see,
That waits all wet with blood.
- Thy sword-pierced body shall Ygg have soon,
For thy life is ended at last;
The maids are hostile; now Othin behold!
Now come to me if thou canst!
- Now am I Othin, Ygg was I once,
Ere that did they call me Thund;
Vak and Skilfing, Vofuth and Hroptatyr,
Gaut and Jalk midst the gods;
Ofnir and Svafnir, and all, methinks,
Are names for none but me.

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