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THE POETIC EDDA

Hymiskviða

The Lay of Hymir

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

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The Hymiskviða tells how the gods, feasting in the hall of the sea-giant Ægir, discover that no kettle is large enough to brew ale for them all. Ægir is bidden to host the feast — but first a mighty brewing cauldron must be found. On Týr's counsel, Thor and Týr journey east, beyond the Élivágar, to Týr's father, the hundred-headed and cunning giant Hymir, who owns a cauldron a mile deep. In the giant's house await tests of strength: Hymir's shattering pillars and Thor's enormous appetite, which devours two whole oxen. Then comes the famous fishing trip — Thor rows out to sea with an ox-head for bait and hauls up the Midgard Serpent itself before the line is cut. Back in the hall, Thor smashes Hymir's unbreakable cup against the giant's own skull, at last lifts the cauldron onto his head, and carries it off. When Hymir pursues him with a host of many-headed giants, Thor slays them with Mjölnir. The Old Norse text follows the Codex Regius (ed. Guðni Jónsson); the English rendering is by Henry Adams Bellows (1923) — both public domain.

	Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1	Ár valtfívar veiðar námu ok sumblsamir, aðr saðir yrði, hristu teina ok á hlaut sáu; fundu þeir at Ægis örkost hvera.	Of old the gods made feast together, And drink they sought ere sated they were; Twigs they shook, and blood they tried: Rich fare in Ægir's hall they found.
2	Sat bergbúi barnteitr fyr mjök glíkr megi miskorblinda; leit í augu Yggs barn í þrá: „Þú skalt ásum oft sumbl gera.“	The mountain-dweller sat merry as boyhood, But soon like a blinded man he seemed; The son of Ygg gazed in his eyes: 'For the gods a feast shalt thou forthwith get.'
3	Önn fekk jötni orðbægin halr, hugði at hefndum hann næst við goð, bað hann Sifjar ver sér færa hver, - „þanns ek öllum öl yðr of heita.“	The word-wielder toil for the giant worked, And so revenge on the gods he sought; He bade Sif's mate the kettle bring: 'Therein for ye all much ale shall I brew.'
4	Né þat máttu mærir tívar ok ginnregin of geta hvergi, unz af tryggðum Týr Hlórriða ástráð mikit einum sagði:	The far-famed ones could find it not, And the holy gods could get it nowhere; Till in truthful wise did Tyr speak forth, And helpful counsel to Hlorrithi gave.

- 5 „Býr fyr austan
Élivága
hundvíss Hymir
at himins enda;
á minn faðir
móðugr ketil,
rúmbrugðinn hver,
rastar djúpan.“
- 6 „Veiztu ef þiggjum
þann lögvelli?“
„Ef, vinr, vélar
vít gervum til.“
- 7 Fóru drjúgum
dag þann fram
Ásgarði frá,
unz til Egils kvámu;
híðí hann hafra
horngöfgasta;
hurfu at höllu,
er Hymir átti.
- 8 Mögr fann ömmu
mjök leiða sér,
hafði höfða
hundruð níu,
en önnur gekk
algullin fram
brúnhvít bera
bjórveig syni:
- 9 „Áttniðr jötna,
ek viljak ykk
hugfulla tvá
und hvera setja;
er minn fríi
mörgu sinni
glöggr við gesti,
görr ills hugar.“
- 10 En vaskapaðr
varð síðbúinn
harðráðr Hymir
heim af veiðum,
gekk inn í sal,
glumðu jöklar,
var karls, en kom,
kinnskógr frörinn.
- „There dwells to the east of Elivagar
Hymir the wise at the end of heaven;
A kettle my father fierce doth own,
A mighty vessel a mile in depth.’
- „May we win, dost thou think, this whirler of water?’
„Aye, friend, we can, if cunning we are.’
- Forward that day with speed they fared,
From Asgarth came they to Egil's home;
The goats with horns bedecked he guarded;
Then they sped to the hall where Hymir dwelt.
- The youth found his grandam, that greatly he
loathed,
And full nine hundred heads she had;
But the other fair with gold came forth,
And the bright-browed one brought beer to her son.
- „Kinsman of giants, beneath the kettle
Will I set ye both, ye heroes bold;
For many a time my dear-loved mate
To guests is wrathful and grim of mind.’
- Late to his home the misshapen Hymir,
The giant harsh, from his hunting came;
The icicles rattled as in he came,
For the fellow's chin-forest frozen was.

- 11** „Ver þú heill, Hymir,
í hugum góðum,
nú er sonr kominn
til sala þinna,
sá er vit vættum
af vegi löngum;
fylgir hánúm
hróðrs andskoti,
vinnr verliða;
Véurr heitir sá.
- „Hail to thee, Hymir! good thoughts mayst thou
have;
Here has thy son to thine hall now come;
For him have we waited, his way was long;
And with him fares the foeman of Hroth,
The friend of mankind, and Veur they call him.
- 12** Sé þú, hvar sitja
und salar gaffli,
svá forða sér,
stendr súl fyrir.“
Sundr stökk súla
fyr sjón jötuns,
en áðr í tvau
áss brotnaði.
- See where under the gable they sit!
Behind the beam do they hide themselves.'
The beam at the glance of the giant broke,
And the mighty pillar in pieces fell.
- 13** Stukku átta,
en einn af þeim
hverr harðsleginn
heill af þolli;
fram gengu þeir,
en forn jötunn
sjónum leiddi
sinn andskota.
- Eight fell from the ledge, and one alone,
The hard-hammered kettle, of all was whole;
Forth came they then, and his foes he sought,
The giant old, and held with his eyes.
- 14** Sagði-t hánúm
hugr vel þá,
er hann sá gýgjar græti
á golf kominn,
þar vátu þjórar
þrír of teknir,
bað senn jötunn
sjóða ganga.
- Much sorrow his heart foretold when he saw
The giantess' foeman come forth on the floor;
Then of the steers did they bring in three;
Their flesh to boil did the giant bid.
- 15** Hvern létu þeir
höfði skemmra
ok á seyði
síðan báru;
át Sifjar verr,
áðr sofa gengi,
einn með öllu
öxn tvá Hymis.
- By a head was each the shorter hewed,
And the beasts to the fire straight they bore;
The husband of Sif, ere to sleep he went,
Alone two oxen of Hymir's ate.

16 Þótti hárum
Hrungnis spjalla
verðr Hlórriða
vel fullmikill:
„Munum at aftni
öðrum verða
við veiðimat
vér þrír lifa.“

To the comrade hoary of Hrungrir then
Did Hlorrithi's meal full mighty seem;
,Next time at eve we three must eat
The food we have as the hunting's spoil.'

17 Véurr kvaðzk vilja
á vág róa,
ef ballr jötunn
beitr gæfi.
„Hverf þú til hjarðar,
ef þú hug trúir,
brjótr berg - Dana,
beitur sækja.

Fain to row on the sea was Veur, he said,
If the giant bold would give him bait.
,Go to the herd, if thou hast it in mind,
Thou slayer of giants, thy bait to seek;
For there thou soon mayst find, methinks,
Bait from the oxen easy to get.'

18 Þess vænti ek,
at þér myni-t
ögn af oxa
auðfeng vera.“
Sveinn sýsliga
sveif til skógar,
þar er uxi stóð
alsvartr fyrir.

Swift to the wood the hero went,
Till before him an ox all black he found;
From the beast the slayer of giants broke
The fortress high of his double horns.

19 Braut af þjóri
þurs ráðbani
hátún ofan
horna tveggja.
„Verk þykkja þín
verri miklu
kjóla valdi
en þú kyrr sitir.“

,Thy works, methinks, are worse by far,
Thou steerer of ships, than when still thou sittest.'

20 Bað hlunngota
hafra dróttinn
áttrunn apa
útar færa,
en sá jötunn
sína talði
líftla fýsi
at róa lengra.

The lord of the goats bade the ape-begotten
Farther to steer the steed of the rollers;
But the giant said that his will, forsooth,
Longer to row was little enough.

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

Two whales on his hook did the mighty Hymir
Soon pull up on a single cast;
In the stern the kinsman of Othin sat,
And Veur with cunning his cast prepared.

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

The warder of men, the worm's destroyer,
Fixed on his hook the head of the ox;
There gaped at the bait the foe of the gods,
The girdler of all the earth beneath.

23 *Dró djarfliga
dáðrakkr þórr
orm eitrfáan
upp at borði;
hamri kníði
hálfjall skarar
oðljótt ofan
ulfs hnitbróður.*

The venomous serpent swiftly up
To the boat did Thor, the bold one, pull;
With his hammer the loathly hill of the hair
Of the brother of Fenrir he smote from above.

24 *Hraungalkn hlumðu,
en hölkn þutu,
fór in forna
fold öll saman;
sökðisk síðan
sá fiskr í mar.*

The monsters roared, and the rocks resounded,
And all the earth so old was shaken;
Then sank the fish in the sea forthwith.

25 *Óteitr jötunn,
er aftr reru,
svá at ár Hymir
ekki mælti,
veifði hann ræði
veðrs annars til.*

Joyless as back they rowed was the giant;
Speechless did Hymir sit at the oars,
With the rudder he sought a second wind.

26 *„Mundu of vinna
verk halft við mik,
at þú heim hvali
haf til bæjar
eða flotbrúsa
festir okkarn.“*

„The half of our toil wilt thou have with me,
And now make fast our goat of the flood;
Or home wilt thou bear the whales to the house,
Across the gorge of the wooded glen?“

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

Hlorrithi stood and the stem he gripped,
And the sea-horse with water awash he lifted;
Oars and bailer and all he bore
With the surf-swine home to the giant's house.

28 Ok enn jötunn
um afrendi,
þrágirni vanr,
við þór sennti,
kvað-at mann ramman,
þótt róa kynni
kröfturligan,
nema kálk bryti.

His might the giant again would match,
For stubborn he was, with the strength of Thor;
None truly strong, though stoutly he rowed,
Would he call save one who could break the cup.

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

Hlorrithi then, when the cup he held,
Struck with the glass the pillars of stone;
As he sat the posts in pieces he shattered,
Yet the glass to Hymir whole they brought.

30 Unz þat in fríða
frilla kenndi
ástráð mikit,
eitt er vissi:
„Drep við haus Hymis,
hann er harðari,
kostmóðs jötuns
kálki hverjum.“

But the loved one fair of the giant found
A counsel true, and told her thought:
,Smite the skull of Hymir, heavy with food,
For harder it is than ever was glass.'

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

The goats' mighty ruler then rose on his knee,
And with all the strength of a god he struck;
Whole was the fellow's helmet-stem,
But shattered the wine-cup rounded was.

- 32 „Mörg veit ek mæti
mér gengin frá,
er ek kálki sé
ór knéum hrundit;“
karl orð of kvað:
„knákat ek segja
aftr ævagi,
þú ert, öðr, of heitt.
- 33 Þat er til kostar,
ef koma mættið
út ór óru
ölkjól hofi.“
Týr leitaði
tysvar hræra;
stóð at hváru
hverr kyrr fyrir.
- 34 Faðir Móða
fekk á þremi
ok í gegnum steig
golf niðr í sal;
hóf sér á höfuð upp
hver Sifjar verr,
en á hælum
hringar skullu.
- 35 Fóru-t lengi,
áðr líta nam
aftr Óðins sonr
einu sinni;
sá hann ór hreysum
með Hymi austan
folkdrótt fara
fjölhöfðaða.
- 36 Hóf hann sér af herðum
hver standanda,
veifði hann Mjöllni
morðgjörnum fram,
ok hraunhvala
hann alla drap.
- 37 Fóru-t lengi,
áðr liggja nam
hafr Hlórriða
halfdauðr fyrir;
var skær skökuls
skakkr á beini,
en því inn lævísi
Loki of olli.
- „Fair is the treasure that from me is gone,
Since now the cup on my knees lies shattered;’
So spake the giant: „No more can I say
In days to be, „Thou art brewed, mine ale.”
- „Enough shall it be if out ye can bring
Forth from our house the kettle here.’
Tyr then twice to move it tried,
But before him the kettle twice stood fast.
- The father of Mothi the rim seized firm,
And before it stood on the floor below;
Up on his head Sif’s husband raised it,
And about his heels the handles clattered.
- Not long had they fared, ere backwards looked
The son of Othin, once more to see;
From their caves in the east beheld he coming
With Hymir the throng of the many-headed.
- He stood and cast from his back the kettle,
And Mjollnir, the lover of murder, he wielded;
So all the whales of the waste he slew.
- Not long had they fared ere one there lay
Of Hlorrithi’s goats half-dead on the ground;
In his leg the pole-horse there was lame;
The deed the evil Loki had done.

38 *En ér heyrt hafið, -
hver kann of þat
goðmálugra
görr at skilja? -
hver af hraunbúa
hann laun of fekk,
er hann bæði galt
börn sín fyrir.*

But ye all have heard, — for of them who have
The tales of the gods, who better can tell? —
What prize he won from the wilderness-dweller,
Who both his children gave him to boot.

39 *Þróttöflugr kom
á þing goða
ok hafði hver,
þanns Hymir átti;
en véar hverjan
vel skulu drekka
ölðr at Ægis
eitt hörmeitið.*

The mighty one came to the council of gods,
And the kettle he had that Hymir's was;
So gladly their ale the gods could drink
In Ægir's hall at the autumn-time.

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