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THE POETIC EDDA

Hyndluljóð

The Lay of Hyndla

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

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The goddess Freyja wakes the giantess Hyndla („She-Dog“) in her cave and, with coaxing words, asks her to ride with her to Valhöll. In truth she wants to trace the ancestry of her protégé Óttar: he has wagered his whole inheritance against Angantýr and must prove his noble descent. Freyja has turned Óttar into a boar with golden bristles, and it is on him that she rides. Hyndla sees through the disguise and mocks the goddess — she is no lover of giant-brides — yet in the end she recites Óttar's long lineage, crowded with famous heroes and divine houses: the Skjöldungs, Ylfings, Völsungs, the kin of Sigurth and the Gjukungs. Embedded within it is the so-called ‚Shorter Völuspá‘, a brief sketch of the gods and the history of the world, from the death of Baldr to the coming fire. At last Freyja, raising flames, forces the reluctant giantess to hand Óttar a draught of memory, so that on the third morning he may recite the whole succession. The sources: the Old Norse after the edition of Guðni Jónsson (the poem survives only in Flateyjarbók), the English after Henry Adams Bellows (1923) — both public domain.

Old Norse	English – H. A. Bellows (1923)
1 <i>Vaki mær meyja, vaki mín vina, Hyndla systir, er í helli býr; nú er rökkur rökkra, ríða vit skulum til Valhallar ok til vés heilags.</i>	Maiden, awake! wake thee, my friend, My sister Hyndla, in thy hollow cave! Already comes darkness, and ride must we To Valhall to seek the sacred hall.
2 <i>Biðjum Herjaföðr í hugum sitja, hann geldr ok gefr gull verðungu; gaf hann Hermóði hjalm ok brynju, en Sigmundi sverð at þiggja.</i>	The favor of Heerfather seek we to find, To his followers gold he gladly gives; To Hermoth gave he helm and mail-coat, And to Sigmund he gave a sword as gift.
3 <i>Gefr hann sigr sumum, en sumum aura, mælsku mörgum ok mannvit fírum; byri gefr hann brögnum, en brag skaldum, gefr hann mannsemi mörgum rekki.</i>	Triumph to some, and treasure to others, To many wisdom and skill in words, Fair winds to the sailor, to the singer his art, And a manly heart to many a hero.
4 <i>Þórr mun hon blóta, þess mun hon biðja, at hann æ við þik einart láti; þó er hánum ótítt við jötuns brúðir.</i>	Thor shall I honor, and this shall I ask, That his favor true mayst thou ever find; Though little the brides of the giants he loves.

- 5 *Nú taktu ulf þinn
einn af stalli,
lát hann renna
með runa mínum.
Seinn er göltr þinn
goðveg troða,
vilka-ek mar minn
mætan hlæða.*
- From the stall now one of thy wolves lead forth,
And along with my boar shalt thou let him run;
For slow my boar goes on the road of the gods,
And I would not weary my worthy steed.
- 6 *Flá ertu, Freyja,
er þú freistar mín,
vísar þú augum
á oss þannig,
er þú hefir ver þinn
í valsinni
Óttar unga
Innsteins bur.*
- Falsely thou askest me, Freyja, to go,
For so in the glance of thine eyes I see;
On the way of the slain thy lover goes with thee,
Ottar the young, the son of Instein.
- 7 *Dulin ertu, Hyndla,
draums ætlak þér,
er þú kveðr ver minn
í valsinni,
þar er göltr glóar
Gullinbursti,
Hildisvíni,
er mér hagir gerðu,
dvergar tveir,
Dáinn ok Nabbi.*
- Wild dreams, methinks, are thine when thou sayest
My lover is with me on the way of the slain;
There shines the boar with bristles of gold,
Hildisvini, he who was made
By Dain and Nabbi, the cunning dwarfs.
- 8 *Senn vit ór söðlum
sitja vit skulum
ok um jöfra
ættir dæma,
gumna þeira,
er frá goðum kvámu.*
- Now let us down from our saddles leap,
And talk of the race of the heroes twain;
The men who were born of the gods above.
- 9 *Þeir hafa veðjat
Vala malmi
Óttarr ungi
ok Angantýr;
skylt er at veita,
svá at skati inn ungi
föðurleifð hafi
eftir frændr sína.*
- A wager have made in the foreign metal
Ottar the young and Angantyr;
We must guard, for the hero young to have,
His father's wealth, the fruits of his race.

10 Hörg hann mér gerði
hlaðinn steinum,
- nú er grjót þat
at gleri orðit; -
rauð hann í nýju
nauta blóði;
æ trúði Óttarr
á ásynjur.

For me a shrine of stones he made, —
And now to glass the rock has grown; —
Oft with the blood of beasts was it red;
In the goddesses ever did Ottar trust.

11 Nú láttu forna
níðja talða
ok upp bornar
ættir manna:
hvat ek Skjöldunga,
hvat ek Skilfinga,
hvat er Öðlinga,
hvat er Ylfinga,
hvat er höldborit,
hvat er hersborit
mest manna val
und Miðgarði?

Tell to me now the ancient names,
And the races of all that were born of old:
Who are of the Skjoldungs, who of the Skilfings,
Who of the Othlings, who of the Ylfings,
Who are the free-born, who are the high-born,
The noblest of men that in Mithgarth dwell?

12 Þú ert, Óttarr,
borinn Innsteini,
en Innsteinn var
Alfi inum gamla,
Alfr var Ulfi,
Ulfr Sæfara,
en Sæfari
Svan inum rauða.

Thou art, Ottar, the son of Instein,
And Instein the son of Alf the Old,
Alf of Ulf, Ulf of Sæfari,
And Sæfari's father was Svan the Red.

13 Móður átti faðir þinn
menjum göfga,
hygg ek, at hon hét
Hlédís gyðja;
Fróði var faðir þeirar,
en Fríund móðir;
öll þótti ætt sú
með yfirmönnum.

Thy mother, bright with bracelets fair,
Hight, methinks, the priestess Hledis;
Frothi her father, and Friauf her mother; —
Her race of the mightiest men must seem.

14 Auði var áðr
öflgastr manna,
Halfdan fyrri
hæstr Skjöldunga;
fræg váru folkvíg,
þau er framir gerðu,
hvarfla þóttu hans verk
með himins skautum.

Of old the noblest of all was Ali,
Before him Halfdan, foremost of Skjoldungs;
Famed were the battles the hero fought,
To the corners of heaven his deeds were carried.

15 *Eflðisk hann við Eymund
æðstan manna,
en hann vá Sigtrygg
með svölum eggjum,
eiga gekk Almveig,
æðsta kvinna,
ólu þau ok áttu
átján sonu.*

Strengthened by Eymund, the strongest of men,
Sigtrygg he slew with the ice-cold sword;
His bride was Almveig, the best of women,
And eighteen boys did Almveig bear him.

16 *Þaðan eru Skjöldungar,
þaðan Skilfingar,
þaðan Öðlingar,
þaðan Ynglingar,
þaðan höldbörir,
þaðan hersborir,
mest manna val
und Miðgarði;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Hence come the Skjoldungs, hence the Skilfings,
Hence the Othlings, hence the Ynglings,
Hence come the free-born, hence the high-born,
The noblest of men that in Mithgarth dwell:
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

17 *Var Hildigunnr
hennar móðir,
Sváfu barn
ok sækonungs;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.
Varðar, at viti svá.
Viltu enn lengra?*

Hildigun then her mother hight,
The daughter of Svava and Sækonung;
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!
It is much to know, — wilt thou hear yet more?

18 *Dagr átti Þóru
drengja móður,
ólusk í ætt þar
æðstir kappar:
Fraðmarr ok Gyrðr
ok Frekar báðir,
Ámr ok Jösurmarr,
Alfr inn gamli.
Varðar, at viti svá.
Viltu enn lengra?*

The mate of Dag was a mother of heroes,
Thora, who bore him the bravest of fighters,
Frathmar and Gyrth and the Frekis twain,
Am and Jofurmar, Alf the Old;
It is much to know, — wilt thou hear yet more?

19 *Ketill hét vinr þeira,
Klypps arfbegi,
var hann móðurfaðir
móður þinnar;
þar var Fróði
fýrr en Kári,
inn eldri var
Alfr of getinn.*

Her husband was Ketil, the heir of Klypp,
He was of thy mother the mother's-father;
Before the days of Kari was Frothi,
And born of Hild was Hoalf then.

20 *Nanna var næst þar
Nökkva dóttir,
var mögr hennar
mágr þíns föður;
fyrnð er sú mægð,
fram tel ek lengra;
kunna ek báða
Brodd ok Hörvi;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Next was Nanna, daughter of Nokkvi,
Thy father's kinsman her son became;
Old is the line, and longer still,
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

21 *Ísolfr ok Ásolfr
Ölmóðs synir
ok Skúrhildar
Skekkils dóttur;
skaltu til telja
skatna margra;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Isolf and Osof, the sons of Olmoth,
Whose wife was Skurhild, the daughter of Skekkil,
Count them among the heroes mighty,
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

22 *Gunnarr balkr,
Grímr arðskafi,
járnskjöldr Þórir,
Ulfr gínandi.*

Gunnar the Bulwark, Grim the Hardy,
Thorir the Iron-shield, Ulf the Gaper.

23 *[Hervarðr, Hjörvarðr,
Hrani, Angantýr],
Búi ok Brámi,
Barri ok Reifnir,
Tindr ok Tyrfingr,
ok tveir Haddingjar;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Hervarth, Hjorvarth, Hrani, Angantyr,
Bui and Brami, Barri and Reifnir,
Tind and Tyrfing, the Haddings twain, —
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

24 *Austr í Bolm
váru bornir
Arngríms synir
ok Eyfuru,
brökun var berserkja,
böl margs konar,
um lönd ok um lög
sem logi færi;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Eastward in Bolm were born of old
The sons of Arngrim and Eyfura;
With berserk-tumult and baleful deed
Like fire o'er land and sea they fared,
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

25 *Kunnak báða
Brodd ok Hörvi;
váru þeir í hirð
Hrolfs ins gamla.
Allir bornir
frá Jörmunreki,
Sigurðar mági,
- hlýð þú sögu minni, -
fólkum grimms,
þess er Fáfnir vá.*

Brodd and Hörvir both did I know;
In the household they were of Hrolf the Old.
All were sprung from Jormunrek,
The kinsman of Sigurth, — hear well what I say, —
The foe of hosts, and Fafnir's slayer.

26 *Sá var vísir
frá Völsungi
ok Hjördís
frá Hrauðungi,
en Fylimi
frá Öðlingum;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

From Volsung's seed was the hero sprung,
And Hjordis was born of Hrauthung's race,
And Eyllimi from the Othlings came, —
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

27 *Gunnarr ok Högni,
Gjúka arfar,
ok it sama Guðrún,
systir þeira;
eigi var Gutþormr
Gjúka ættar,
þó var hann bróðir
beggja þeira;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Gunnar and Hogni, the heirs of Gjuki,
And Guthrun as well, who their sister was;
But Gotthorm was not of Gjuki's race,
Although the brother of both he was:
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

28 *Haraldr hilditönn
borinn Hræreki
slöngvanbauga,
sonr var hann Auðar,
Auðr djúpúðga
Ívars dóttir,
en Ráðbarðr var
Randvers faðir;
þeir váru gumnar
goðum signaðir;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*

Harald Battle-tooth of Auth was born,
Hrörek the Ring-giver her husband was;
Auth the Deep-minded was Ivar's daughter,
But Rathbarth the father of Randver was:
And all are thy kinsmen, Ottar, thou fool!

- 29 *Váru ellifu
æsir taldir,
Baldr er hné
við bana þúfu;
þess lézk Váli
verðr at hefna
síns bróður,
sló hann handbana;
allt er þat ætt þín,
Óttarr heimski.*
- Eleven in number the gods were known,
When Baldr o'er the hill of death was bowed;
And this to avenge was Vali swift,
When his brother's slayer soon he slew.
- 30 *Var Baldrs faðir
Burs arfþegi;
Freyr átti Gerði,
hon var Gymis dóttir,
jötna ættar,
ok Aurboðu;
þó var Þjazi
þeira frændi,
skautgjarn jötunn,
hans var Skaði dóttir.*
- The father of Baldr was the heir of Bur.
Freyr's wife was Gerth, the daughter of Gymir,
Of the giants' brood, and Aurbotha bore her;
To these as well was Thjazi kin,
The dark-loving giant; his daughter was Skathi.
- 31 *Mart segjum þér
ok munum fleira;
vörumz at víti svá;
viltu enn fleira?*
- Much have I told thee, and further will tell;
There is much that I know; — wilt thou hear yet
more?
- 32 *Haki var Hveðnu
höti beztr sona,
en Hveðnu var
Hjörvarðr faðir;
Heiðr ok Hrossþjófr
Hrímnis kindar.*
- Of Hvethna's sons was Haki the best,
And Hjorvarth the father of Hvethna was.
Heith and Hrossthjof, the children of Hrimnir.
- 33 *Eru vödur allar
frá Viðolfi,
vitkar allir
frá Vilmeiði,
skilberendr
frá Svarthöfða,
jötnar allir
frá Ymi komnir.*
- The sybils arose from Vitholf's race,
From Vilmeith all the seers are,
And the workers of charms are Svarthofthi's
children,
And from Ymir sprang the giants all.
- 34 *Mart segjum þér
ok munum fleira;
vörumz at víti svá;
viltu enn lengra?*
- Much have I told thee, and further will tell;
There is much that I know; — wilt thou hear yet
more?

35 Varð einn borinn
í árdaga
rammaukinn mjök
rögna kindar;
níu báru þann
naðgöfgan mann
jötna meyjar
við jarðar þröm.

One there was born in the bygone days,
Of the race of the gods, and great was his might;
Nine giant women, at the world's edge,
Once bore the man so mighty in arms.

36 Mart segjum þér
ok munum fleira;
vörumz at viti svá;
viltu enn lengra?

Much have I told thee, and further will tell;
There is much that I know; — wilt thou hear yet
more?

37 Hann Gjalp um bar,
hann Greip um bar;
bar hann Eistla
ok Eyrgjafa,
hann bar Ulfrún
ok Angeyja,
Imdr ok Atla
ok Járnsaxa.

Gjolph there bore him, Greip there bore him,
Eistla bore him, and Eyrgjafa,
Ulfrun bore him, and Angeyja,
Imth and Atla, and Jarnsaxa.

38 Sá var aukinn
jarðar megni,
svalköldum sæ
ok sonar dreyra.

Strong was he made with the strength of earth,
With the ice-cold sea, and the blood of swine.

39 Mart segjum þér
ok munum fleira;
vörumz at viti svá;
viltu enn lengra?

Much have I told thee, and further will tell;
There is much that I know; — wilt thou hear yet
more?

40 Ól ulf Loki
við Angrboðu,
en Sleipni gat
við Svaðilfara;
eitt þótti skars
allra feiknast,
þat var bróður frá
Býleists komit.

The wolf did Loki with Angrbotha win,
And Sleipnir bore he to Svathilfari;
The worst of marvels seemed the one
That sprang from the brother of Byleist then.

41 Loki af hjarta
lindi brenndu,
fann hann hálfsviðinn
hugstein konu;
varð Loptr kviðugr
af konu illri;
þaðan er á foldu
flagð hvert komit.

A heart ate Loki, — in the embers it lay,
And half-cooked found he the woman's heart; —
With child from the woman Lopt soon was,
And thence among men came the monsters all.

42 *Haf gengr hríðum
við himin sjálfan,
líðr lönd yfir,
en lopt bilar;
þaðan koma snjóvar
ok snarir vindar;
þá er í ráði
at regn um þrjóti.*

The sea, storm-driven, seeks heaven itself,
O'er the earth it flows, the air grows sterile;
Then follow the snows and the furious winds,
For the gods are doomed, and the end is death.

43 *Varð einn borinn
öllum meiri,
sá var aukinn
jarðar megni;
þann kveða stilli
stórauðgastan,
sif sífjaðan
sjötum gjörföllum.*

One there was born, the best of all,
And strong was he made with the strength of earth;
The proudest is called the kinsman of men
Of the rulers all throughout the world.

44 *Þá kemr annar
enn máttkari,
þó þori ek eigi
þann at nefna;
fáir sjá nú
fram um lengra
en Óðinn man
ulfi mæta.*

Then comes another, a greater than all,
Though never I dare his name to speak;
Few are they now that farther can see
Than the moment when Othin shall meet the wolf.

45 *Ber þú minnisöl
mínum gesti,
svá hann öll muni
orð at tína
þessar ræðu
á þriðja morgni,
þá er þeir Angantýr
ættir rekja.*

To my boar now bring the memory-beer,
So that all thy words, that well thou hast spoken,
The third morn hence he may hold in mind,
When their races Ottar and Angantyr tell.

46 *Snúðu braut heðan,
sofa lystir mik,
fær þú fátt af mér
fríðra kosta;
hleypr þú, Óðs vina,
úti á náttum,
sem með höfrum
Heiðrún fari.*

Hence shalt thou fare, for fain would I sleep,
From me thou gettest few favors good;
My noble one, out in the night thou leapest
As Heithrun goes the goats among.

47 *Rannt at Óði
ey þreyjandi,
skutusk þér fleiri
und fyrirskyrtu;
hleypr þú, Óðs vina,
úti á náttum,
sem með höfrum
Heiðrún fari.*

To Oth didst thou run, who loved thee ever,
And many under thy apron have crawled;
My noble one, out in the night thou leapest,
As Heithrun goes the goats among.

48 *Ek slæ eldi
of íviðju,
svá at þú eigi kemsk
á braut heðan.*

Around the giantess flames shall I raise,
So that forth unburned thou mayst not fare.

49 *Hyr sé ek brenna,
en hauður loga,
verða flestir
fjörlausn þola;
ber þú Óttari
bjór at hendi
eitri blandinn mjök,
illu heilli.*

Flames I see burning, the earth is on fire,
And each for his life the price must lose;
Bring then to Ottar the draught of beer,
Of venom full for an evil fate.

50 *Orðheill þín
skal engu ráða,
þóttú, brúðr jötuns,
bölvi heitir;
hann skal drekka
dýrar veigar;
bið ek Óttari
öll goð duga.*

Thine evil words shall work no ill,
Though, giantess, bitter thy baleful threats;
A drink full fair shall Ottar find,
If of all the gods the favor I get.

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