



'Who dares 31  
 in dark nights 32  
 when the cock crows 35  
 to enter black forests 33  
 where tall giants 34  
 hiss in the dark, 36  
 like when monstrous whales 37  
 fizz underneath the Arctic Ocean;  
 when urns shiver  
 in the hour of death; 40  
 when spirits are rising;  
 when wolves in the grove  
 swallow their prey;  
 when old dragons  
 are alert in the pitch darkness; 45  
 when bad consciousness is gnawing;  
 when innocents are crying;  
 when the murderer is acting;  
 and the night is throwing its clothing  
 upon the damp blood?' 50

With red eyes  
 in the frightening forehead  
 he peers piercingly  
 amongst masses of spruce;  
 his gaze turns in all directions 55  
 except for the direction of the sky,  
 where the northern lights sparkle.

With cunning glances  
 he sets forth 59  
 with his hairy feet 61  
 from the sinuosity of the rock. 60  
 'A drink would please me!' 62  
 his voice declares,  
 'I smell, I smell  
 human blood!' 65

And he hastens towards  
 the shivering young woman.  
 His eye, shimmering  
 of wrath, throws a glance  
 on the graceful, 70  
 but immediately it turns milder;  
 her gracefulness makes  
 his eye suddenly confused;  
 and flames of lust  
 rise from their sleep. 75  
 They ignite in full force -  
 and Svanhild shakes from fear.

‘Fear not, o Beauty!’		
Thus he cunningly speaks,	78	
‘I am the uncontested overlord	80	
of all trolls.	79	
Come, join me in my cave	81	
where a hundred dwarves		
forge yellow bracelets		
as well as the armour of giants;	85	
where red-coloured gold		
in the veins of the mountain		
glitteringly greets you,		
come, forget your tears!’		
‘Thou strong giant!	90	
If indeed you possess power,		
then show your might		
through the victory of piety;		
and kill my pain		
by bringing me, wretched that I am,	95	
to the heart of Harald;		
stifle the wrath of the night.		
Darkness led us apart.		
Like me, the Brave One		
has gone astray	100	
amongst the trolls of the dark’.		
‘I possess treasures!		
This you shall witness yourself.		
I shall wreath in gold		
the forehead of your Harald;	105	
of that we shall drink		of that: namely, of his skull, wreathed in gold
our festive beer,		
in accordance with the ancient		
customs of the mountain trolls’.		
Young Svanhild turns pale	110	
and shivers sorely;		
stoops to the ground		
with heavy tears.		
With loathsome glance		
and lips smiling	115	
he drags the pale woman	117	
with him down into the cave.	116	
She shivers, falters,	118	
and fear rises.		
In dark grooves	120	
with cheerful tones,		
she hears the songs		
of female giants.		
And behold, ten beautiful		
girls with torches in their hands	125	

draw closer with a smile,  
with golden locks and a white skin;  
each of them smiling gracefully,  
while darkness swiftly flees.

And proudly the high halls           130  
lift themselves;  
in crevices of the cliffs  
rubies brag;  
the gold shimmers strongly  
in the hillside of the mountain,       135  
silver glints palely  
in the white marble.

And the light blazes  
and darkness makes way,  
and in a chamber                       140  
three other girls  
are weaving a dress,  
utterly splendid and wonderful,  
but Svanhild shivers.                 145

‘Behold’, the giant shouts,  
‘your wedding dress!  
Forget the one on the heath.  
How can you cry?  
Soon it will be ready.                 150  
Let us hasten.  
You are worthy of me;  
join me to the rest place!  
Where roses smell,  
where harps chirp,                     155  
where ethers breathe,  
there shall you adorn  
the proud bed.  
My heart is raging!  
I want to possess you                 160  
in spite of all Æsir’.

Æsir: the gods in Norse mythology

What power seethes?  
What boulders alarmingly?  
Behold, lightning fizzes!  
Listen, thunder roars!                 165  
And the storm is crying  
as it whiningly makes way,  
the night departs in haste,  
and the sun is smiling.

From the bow in the sky             170  
by the glow of Hlidskialf  
the god Odin caught sight  
of the tears of the Noble One.

Hlidskialf: the high seat of Odin



and unafraid hastens  
to the places  
where trolls find their rest  
and Svanhild sobs. 225

In dark grooves  
he hears the songs 228  
of female giants 229  
with their ugly tones. 227  
And without fear 230  
he beholds trolls  
banging their swords  
on shields of flint  
that emit  
sparks so great 235  
that the cave every once in a while  
loses its darkness.

The walls squeeze him  
rough and narrow as they are.  
Bits of rock, hanging 240  
from the ceiling above, shiver.  
And the red blood  
of the unavenged dead  
trickle out from the crevices;  
and lightning blinds him 245  
and dragons in the thickets of thistles  
rush past him.

Yet, unafraid Harald  
with the hammer of the god  
hastens to his goal, 250  
he knows it will not fail.

And lightning shimmers  
with bloodlike flames,  
and in a chamber  
where darkness gives way, 255  
he beholds without fear  
three female giants.  
Without bones in their spine  
they shiver as they stoop  
on iron chairs, 260  
and spool and weave  
with skinny arms  
a wedding dress  
made from the intestines of humans.

Yet, unafraid Harald 265  
with the hammer of the god  
hastens to his goal,  
he knows it will not fail.

<p>And the barking of a dog drowns the song!</p> <p>He walks on the skin of the Midgard Serpent.</p> <p>Light fades, torches blaze, the mouth of Fenris is gaping -</p> <p>The giants faint!</p> <p>Yet, unafraid Harald with the hammer of the god hastens to his goal, he knows it will not fail.</p> <p>And indeed it does not!</p> <p>In the crevices of the rock where the night never switches places with the day; see how the giant bleeds!</p> <p>But behold, on the mountain in the red of dawn by the silver ore the Loved Ones smile. And with arms woven together and bosoms tightly bound they hasten towards the rustic barn.</p>	<p>270</p> <p>275</p> <p>280</p> <p>285</p> <p>290</p>	<p>Midgard Serpent: a giant snake, encircling the earth</p> <p>Fenris: a monstrous wolf, kept in check by the Æsir</p>
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