

## The Dream of the Rood

1 Hwæt, ic swefna cyst secgan wylle,  
hwæt mē gemætte to midre nihte,  
syðþan reordberend reste wunedon.  
þūhte mē þæt ic gesāwe syllicre trēow  
5 on lyft lædan lēohte bewunden,  
bēama beorhtost. Eall þæt bēacen wæs  
begoten mid golde. Gimmas stōdon  
fægere æt foldan scēatum, swylce þær fife wæron  
uppe on þām eaxlgespanne. Behēoldon þær engel dryhtnes ealle,  
10 fægere þurh forðgescaft. Ne wæs ðær hūru fracodes gealga,  
ac hine þær behēoldon hālige gāstas,  
men ofer moldan ond eall þēos mære gescaft.  
Syllic wæs se sigebēam, ond ic synnum fāh,  
forwunded mid wommum. Geseah ic wuldres trēow,  
15 wædum geweorðod wynnum scīnan,  
gegyred mid golde; gimmas hæfdon  
bewrigen weorðlice wealdendes trēow.  
Hwæðre ic þurh þæt gold ongytan meahte  
earmra ærgewin, þæt hit ærest ongan  
20 swætan on þā swiðran healfe. Eall ic wæs mid sorgum gedrēfed,  
forht ic wæs for þære fæggran gesyhðe. Geseah ic þæt fīse bēacen  
wendan wædum ond blēom; hwīlum hit wæs mid wætan bestēmed,  
beswyled mid swātes gange, hwīlum\* mid since gegyrwed.  
Hwæðre ic þær licgende lange\_hwīle  
25 behēold hrēowcearig hælendes trēow,  
oð ðæt ic gehyrde þæt hit hlēoðrode.

1 Lo! I will tell of the best of dreams,  
what I dreamed in the middle of the night,  
after the speech-bearers were in bed.  
It seemed to me that I saw a very wondrous tree  
5 lifted into the air, enveloped by light,  
the brightest of trees. That beacon was all  
covered with gold. Gems stood  
beautiful at the surface of the earth, there were five also  
up on the central joint of the cross. All those fair through eternal decree gazed  
10 [on] the angel of the Lord. [It] was certainly not a wicked person's gallows there,  
but holy spirits, men over the earth,  
and all this famous creation gazed on him.  
Wondrous was that tree of victory, and I stained with sins  
wounded sorely with defects, I saw the tree of glory,  
15 honoured with garments, shining joyously,  
adorned with gold. Gems had  
splendidly covered the Lord's tree.  
I was able, however, to perceive through the gold,  
the ancient hostility of wretched ones, [that] it first began  
20 to bleed on the right side. I was all troubled with grief,  
I was afraid in the presence of that beautiful sight. I saw that noble beacon  
change its coverings and colour; sometimes it was drenched with moisture,  
soaked with the flow of blood, sometimes adorned with treasure.  
Nevertheless, I, lying a long time there,  
25 gazed troubled at the Saviour's tree,  
until I heard it speak.

Ongan þā word spreca wudu sēlesta:

‘Þæt wæs gēara\_iū, (ic þæt gyta geman),

þæt ic wæs āhēawen holtes on ende,

30 āstyred of stefne mīnum. Genāman mē ðær strange fēondas,

geworhton him þær tō wæfersyne, hēton mē heora wergas hebban.

Bæron mē þær beornas on eaxlum, oððæt hīe mē on beorg āsetton,

gefæstnodon mē þær fēondas genōge. Geseah ic þā frean mancynnes

efstan elne micle, þæt hē mē wolde on gestīgan.

35 Þær ic þā ne dorste ofer dryhtnes word

būgan oððe berstan, þā ic bifian geseah

eorðan scēatas. Ealle ic mihte

fēondas gefyllan, hwæðre\* ic fæste stōd.

Ongyrede hine þā geong hælēð, (þæt wæs god ælmihtīg),

40 strang ond stīðmōd. Gestāh hē on gealgan hēanne,

mōdig on manigra gesyhðe, þā hē wolde mancyn lisan.

Bifode ic þā mē se beorn ymbclypte. Ne dorste ic hwæðre būgan tō eorðan,

feallan tō foldan scēatum, ac ic sceolde fæste standan.

Rōd wæs ic āræred. Āhōf ic rīcne cyning,

45 heofona hlāford, hyldan mē ne dorste.

Þurhdrifan hī mē mid deorcan næglum. On mē syndon þā dolg gesīene,

opene inwidhlemmas. Ne dorste ic hira ænigum sceððan.

Bysmeredon hīe unc bütū ætgædere. Eall ic wæs mid blōde bestēmed,

begoten of þæs guman sīdan, siððan hē hæfde his gāst onsended.

50 ‘Feala ic on þām beorge gebiden hæbbe

wrāðra wyrda. Geseah ic weruda god

þearle þenian. Þystro hæfdon

bewrigen mid wolcnum wealdendes hræw,

scīrne scīman, sceadu forð ēode,

55 wann under wolcnum. Wēop eal gesceaft,

The most excellent tree then began to speak the words:

It was years ago (that, I still remember),

that I was cut down from the edge of the forest,

30 removed from my foundation. Strong enemies seized me there,

they made me into a spectacle for themselves, commanded me to lift up their criminals.

Men carried me there on their shoulders, until they set me on a hill,

many enemies secured me there. Then I saw mankind’s Lord

hasten with great zeal, that he wished to climb upon me.

35 There, I did not dare break to pieces or bow down

against the Lord’s words, when I saw the surface

of the earth tremble. I was able to destroy

all the enemies, nevertheless, I stood firmly.

The young hero stripped himself then (that was God Almighty),

40 strong and resolute. He ascended onto the high gallows,

brave in the sight of many, there, [since] he wished to release mankind.

I trembled when the man embraced me. However, I dared not bow down to the earth,

fall to the surface of the earth, but I had to stand fast.

I was raised [as a] cross. I lifted up the mighty king,

45 the lord of the heavens; I dared not bend down.

They pierced me with dark nails. On me, the scars are visible,

open malicious wounds. I did not dare injure any of them.

They mocked both of us, together. I was all drenched with blood,

covered from the man’s side, after he had sent forth his spirit.

50 I endured many cruel events

on that hill. I saw the Lord of Hosts

severely stretched out. Darkness

had covered the bright radiance

of the Lord’s corpse with clouds, a shadow went forth,

55 dark under the sky. All of creation wept,

cwīðdon cyninges fyll. Crīst wæs on rōde.

Hwæðere þær fūse feorran cwōman

tō þām æðelinge. Ic þæt eall behēold.

Sāre ic wæs sorgum gedrēfed, hnāg ic hwæðre þām secgum tō handa,

60 ēaðmōd elne mycle. Genāmon hīe þær ælmihtigne god,

āhōfon hine of ðām hefian wīte. Forlēton mē þā hilderincas

standan stēame bedrifenne; eall ic wæs mid strælum forwundod.

Ālēdon hīe þær limwērigne, gestōdon him æt his lices hēafðum,

behēoldon hīe þær heofenes dryhten, ond hē hine þær hwīle reste,

65 mēðe æfter ðām miclan gewinne. Ongunnon him þā moldern wyrcan

beornas on banan gesyhðe; curfon hīe ðæt of beorhtan stāne,

gesetton hīe ðæron sigora wealdend. Ongunnon him þā sorhlēoð galan

earme on þā æfentīde, þā hīe woldon eft sīðian,

mēðe fram þām mæran þēodne. Reste hē ðær mæte weorode.

70 Hwæðere wē ðær grēotende gōde hwīle

stōdon on staðole, syððan stefn up gewāt

hilderinca. Hræw cōlode,

fæger feorgbold. Þā ūs man fyllan ongan

ealle tō eorðan. Þæt wæs egeslic wyrd!

75 Bedealf ūs man on dēopan sēape. Hwæðre mē þær dryhtnes þegnas,

frēondas gefrūnon,

ond gyredon mē golde ond seolfre.

‘Nū ðū miht gehyran, hæleð mīn se lēofa,

þæt ic bealuwara weorc gebiden hæbbe,

80 sārra sorga. Is nū sæl cumen

þæt mē weorðiað wīde\_on\_sīde

menn ofer moldan, ond eall þēos mære gesceaft,

gebiddaþ him tō þyssum bēacne. On mē bearn godes

þrōwode hwīle. Forþan ic þrymfæst nū

they lamented the king's death. Christ was on the cross.

Nevertheless, eager ones came there from afar

to the prince. I beheld all that.

Grievously I was afflicted with sorrow, yet I bowed to the hands of the men,

60 humble, with great zeal. There they took God Almighty,

they lifted him up out of the oppressive torment. The warriors abandoned me

to stand, covered with moisture; I was wounded very badly with arrows.

They laid him down there, weary-limbed; they positioned themselves at his body's head,

there they gazed at the Lord of heaven, and he, rested himself there for a while,

65 weary after the great battle. The men began to make a sepulcher for him

in the sight of his slayer; they carved it out of bright stone;

they put him, the Lord of Victories, therein. The wretched began to sing him a song of sorrow

in the evening-time, then they wanted to go again,

wearily from the glorious prince. He rested there with little company.

70 Nevertheless, we stood in a fixed position,

weeping for a good while, after the voice of the warriors

went up. The corpse cooled,

beautiful dwelling of the soul. Then they began to cut us all

down to the earth. That was a dreadful event!

75 We were buried in a deep pit. However, the Lord's disciples,

friends, discovered me there,

and adorned me [with] gold and silver.

Now you can hear, my beloved hero,

what work of the evildoers that I have experienced,

80 the painful grief. The time is now come

that men over the earth and all this illustrious creation

far and wide honour me,

they pray to this sign. On me, God's son

suffered a time. Therefore, now I rise up

85 hlīfīge under heofenum, ond ic hælān mæg

æghwylcne ānra, þāra þe him bið egesa tō mē.

Iū ic wæs geworden wīta heardost,

lēodum lādost, ær þan ic him lifes weg

rihtne gerymde, reordberendum.

90 Hwæt, mē þā geweorðode wuldres ealdor

ofer holtwudu, heofonrīces weard!

Swylce swā hē his mōdor ēac, Marīan sylfē,

æلميhtig god for ealle menn

geweorðode ofer eall wīfa cynn.

95 ‘Nu ic þē hāte, hæleð mīn se lēofa,

þæt ðū þās gesyhðe secge mannum,

onwrēoh wordum þæt hit is wuldres bēam,

se ðe æلميhtig god on þrōwode

for mancynnes manegum synnum

100 ond Adomes ealdgewyrhtum.

Dēað hē þær byrigde, hwæðere eft dryhten ārās

mid his miclan mihte mannum tō helpe.

Hē ðā on heofanas āstāg. Hider eft fundað

on þysne middangeard mancynn sēcan

105 on dōmdæge dryhten sylfa,

æلميhtig god, ond his englas mid,

þæt hē þonne wile dēman, se āh dōmes geweald,

ānra gehwylcum swā hē him ærur hēr

on þyssum lænum lifē geearnaþ.

110 Ne mæg þær ænig unforht wesān

for þām worde þe se wealdend cwyð.

Frīneð hē for þære mænige hwær se man sīe,

se ðe for dryhtnes naman dēaðes wolde

85 glorious under the heavens, and I am able to heal

each one of those who hold me in awe.

Formerly, I was the most fierce of torments,

most hateful to people, before I opened the right

path of life to them, the speech-bearers.

90 Lo, the prince of glory, the guardian of the kingdom of the heavens,

honoured me over all the trees of the forest!

Just as he, Almighty God, before all men,

honoured his mother also, Mary herself,

over all womankind.

95 Now I command you, my beloved warrior,

that you tell this vision to men,

reveal in words that it is the tree of glory,

on which Almighty God suffered

for mankind's many sins

100 and Adam's deeds of old,

He tasted death there. However, the Lord arose again

to help men with his great power.

Then he ascended into the heavens. Hither again, the Lord, Himself,

will set out into this world

105 to seek mankind on the day of judgement,

Almighty God and His angels with Him,

since He who has power of judgement, He then will sentence

each one, just as he shall have earned

for himself here in this temporary life.

110 Nor can there be any unafraid there

because of the words which the Lord shall say:

He shall ask before the multitude, where the man might be,

who for the name of the Lord would taste

biteres onbyrigan, swā hē ær on ðām bēame dyde.

115 Ac hīe þonne forhtiað, ond fēa þencað

hwæt hīe to Crīste cweðan onginnen.

Ne þearf ðær þonne ænig anforht wasan

þe him ær in breostum bereð bēacna sēlest,

ac ðurh ðā rōde sceal rīce gesēcan

120 of eorðwege æghwylc sāwl,

sēo þe mid wealdende wunian þenceð."

Gebæd ic mē þā to þām bēame blīðe mōde,

elne mycle, þær ic āna wæs

mæte werede. Wæs mōdsefa

125 āfysed on forðwege, feala ealra gebād

langunghwīla. Is mē nū lifes hyht

þæt ic þone sigebēam sēcan mōte

āna oftor þonne ealle men,

well weorþian. Mē is willa tō ðām

130 mycel on mōde, ond mīn mundbyrd is

geriht tō þære rōde. Nāh ic rīcra feala

frēonda on foldan, ac hīe forð heonan

gewiton of worulde drēamum, sōhton him\* wuldres cyning,

lifiaþ nū on heofenum mid hēahfædere,

135 wuniaþ on wuldre, ond ic wēne\_mē

ðaga gehwylce hwænne mē dryhtnes rōd,

þe ic hēr on eorðan ær scēawode,

on þysson lænan lifē gefetige

ond mē þonne gebringe þær is blis mycel,

140 drēam on heofonum, þær is dryhtnes folc

geseted tō symle, þær is singāl blis,

ond mē þonne āsette þær ic syððan mōt

bitter death, as He did before on the cross.

115 But then they fear, and few think of

what to begin to say to Christ.

None needs to be afraid [of]

of [he] who already bears on his breast the best of signs,

but through the cross, each soul must seek

120 the kingdom from the earthly way,

those who intend to dwell with the Lord.

Then I prayed to the cross with friendly spirit,

with great zeal, where I was alone

with little company. My mind was

125 impelled on the way hence, it experienced very many

times of longing. Now this is my life's joyous expectation

that I may seek the tree of victory

and honour [it] well

most often of all men. The desire for that is

130 great in my heart, and my patronage is

directed to the cross. I do not have many

powerful friends on earth, since they departed away hence

from the joys of the world, they sought the King of Glory;

now they live in the heavens with God the Father.

135 They dwell in glory, and each day

I look forward to the time when the cross of the Lord

that I previously saw here on the earth,

in this temporary life, will fetch me,

and will then bring me to where great bliss is,

140 joy in the heavens, where the Lord's people are

seated at the feast, where perpetual joy is;

then it may set me, where afterwards I might

wunian on wuldre, well mid þām hālgum  
drēames brūcan. Sī mē dryhten frēond,  
145 se ðe hēr on eorðan ær þrōwode  
on þām gealgtrēowe for guman synnum.  
Hē ūs onlȳsde ond ūs lif forgeaf,  
heofonlicne hām. Hiht wæs genīwad  
mid blēdum ond mid blisse þām þe þær bryne þolodan.  
150 Se sunu wæs sigorfæst on þām siðfate,  
mihtig ond spēdig, þā hē mid manigeo cōm,  
gāsta weorode, on godes rīce,  
anwealda ælmihtig, englum tō blisse  
ond eallum ðām hālgum þām þe on heofonum ær  
155 wunedon on wuldre, þā heora wealdend cwōm,  
ælmihtig god, þær his eðel wæs.

dwell in glory, with the saints  
to enjoy bliss well. May the Lord be a friend to me,  
145 who suffered here on earth before  
on the gallows-tree for men's sins;  
he redeemed us and gave us life,  
a heavenly home. Joy was restored  
with blessings and with bliss, for those who endured the fire there.  
150 The Son was triumphant on that expedition,  
mighty and successful, when he came with the multitude,  
the host of souls, into God's kingdom,  
the Lord Almighty, to the delight of the angels,  
and of all the saints, who in the heavens before  
155 dwelled in glory, when their Ruler, the Almighty  
God came, where his homeland was.