

poholshi

* label all Kennings, Caesura

alliteration

THE EXETER BOOK - RIDDLE 5

Anon.

trans. Graham Holderness
(from 10c. English)

be sure to
also indicate
what the
kenning means

Ic eom anhaga iserne wund,
bille gebennad, beadoweorca sæd,
ecgum werig. Oft ic wig seo,
frecne feohtan. Frofre ne wene,
þæt me geoc cyme guðgewinnes,
ær ic mid ældum eal forwurðe,
ac mec hnossiað homera lafe,
heardecg heoroscearp, hondweorc
smiþa,
bitað in burgum; ic abidan sceal
laþran gemotes. Næfre læcecynn
on folcstede findan meahte,
para þe mid wrytum wunde
gehælde,
ac me ecga dolg eacen weorðað
purh deaðslege dagum ond nihtum.

Look at me, love-lorn,
Lost in my loneliness,
A blade-bitten sword-slashed
Iron-etched
Battle-brassed-off
Victim of violence!

Wars I've witnessed:
Caught in the carnage
Of many a massacre
I've hopelessly howled out
And hollered for help,
But round none to nab me
Out of harm's way,
Or snatch me to safety
Before I fell. All too soon
I'm struck to my centre
By the flame-forged sharp-honed
Shaped-on-an-anvil hard-edged
Blacksmith's handiwork,
The shining sword.

No rest, no respite;
Always another war.

I've never found
A fine physician
Who'd heal all my hurts
With health-giving herbs,
So you see no improvement
But increase of injury,
Long days and nights
Of death-dealing illness.
Most fatal of all
Mankind's infirmities
Bites at my being -
The sword's sharp edge.

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RIDDLE 14

Anon.

Ic wæs wæpenwiga. Nu mec wlonc
 þeceð
 geong hagostealdmon golde ond
 sylfore,
 woum wirbogum. Hwilum weras
 cyssað
 hwilum ic to hilde hleopre bonne
 wilgehleþan; hwilum wycg byreþ
 mec ofer mearce; hwilum merehengest
 fereð ofer flodas, frætwum beorhtne;
 hwilum mægða sum minne gefylleð
 bosm beaghroden; hwilum ic on
 bordum sceal,
 heard, heafodleas, behlyped licgan;
 hwilum hongige hyrstum frætwed,
 wlitig, on wage, þær weras drincað,
 freolic fyrdsceorp; hwilum folcwigan
 on wicge wegað þonne ic winde sceal
 sincfag swelgan of sumes bosme;
 hwilum ic gereordum rincas laðige
 wlonce to wine; hwilum wrappum
 sceal
 stefne minre forstolen hreddan,
 flyman feondsceapan. Frige hwæt ic
 hatte.

RID [REDACTED]

trans. Louis Rodrigues (*from Anglo-Saxon*)

I was a weaponed-warrior. Now the
 proud
 young retainer wraps me with silver
 and gold, –
 carved twisted wires. Sometimes men
 kiss me;
 sometimes with song I summon to
 battle
 close comrades sometimes a steed
 bears
 me over the mark; sometimes the sea-
 horse
 ferries me over floods, bright with
 treasures;
 sometimes a maiden, ring-adorned,
 fills my bosom; sometimes on boards,
 hard and headless, I must lie stripped;
 sometimes hang, adorned with jewels,
 fair, on the wall, where warriors drink,
 a noble war-weapon; sometimes
 warriors
 on horseback bear me; then I must
 swallow
 breath from a bosom, gleaming with
 gold;
 sometimes with my tongue I summon
 proud
 warriors to wine; sometimes from foes
 I must with my voice rescue spoil,
 rout plundering robbers. Ask what I am
 called.

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RIDDLE 55

Anon.

Ic seah in healle, þær hæleð druncon,
 on flet beran, feower cynna:
 wrætlic wudutreo, ond wunden gold,
 sinc searobunden, ond seolfres dæl,
 ond rode tacn, þæs us to roderum up
 hlædre rærde, ær He helwara
 burg abræce. Ic þæs beames mæg
 eaþe for eorlum æþelu secgan:
 þær wæs hlin ond acc, ond se hearda
 iw,
 ond se fealwa holen. Frean sindon ealle

nyt ætgædre; naman habbað anne,
 wulfheafedtreo, þæt oft wæpen abæd
 his mondryhtne, maðm in healle,
 goldhilted sweord. Nu me þisses
 gieddes
 ondsware ywe, se hine on mede
 wordum secgan hu se wudu hatte.

RIDDLE 55

trans. Louis Rodrigues (*from Anglo-Saxon*)

I saw in the hall, where heroes were
 drinking,
 borne onto the floor, a thing of four
 kinds:
 a wondrous wood-tree, wound with
 gold,
 a subtly-bound treasure, silvered in
 part,
 and His rood-symbol, who for us to the
 heavens
 erected a ladder, ere He vanquished the
 fortress
 of hell's denizens. I can easily describe
 for men that tree's origin:
 there were maple and oak, and the hard
 yew,
 and the yellow holly. To the Lord they
 are all
 useful together; they have one name,
 wolf-head-tree, which weapon its liege
 lord
 often besought, a heirloom in the hall,
 a gold-hilted sword. Now let him
 reveal
 this riddle's answer, who takes upon
 himself
 to say in words what that wood is
 called.

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