

## SKÍRNISMÁL, OR THE JOURNEY OF SKIRNIR

*Skírnismál* (*Sayings of Skírnir*) is preserved in the 13th century manuscripts *Codex Regius* and *Arnarnagnaean Codex* (AM 748 I 4to) but may have been originally composed in heathen times. Many scholars believe that the poem was acted out, perhaps in a sort of *hiéros gamos*.

AM 748 I 4<sup>to</sup>, one of the two manuscripts to preserve *Skírnismál*, has notes on the margin indicating the speaker of each verse. Some scholars consider this a clue that the poem might have been performed as ritual drama.

### Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The *Skírnismol* is found complete in the *Codex Regius*, and through stanza 27 in the *Arnarnagnaean Codex*. Snorri quotes the concluding stanza. In *Regius* the poem is entitled "For Scirnis" ("Skírnir's journey").

The *Skírnismol* differs sharply from the poems preceding it, in that it has a distinctly ballad quality. As a matter of fact, however, its verse is altogether dialogue, the narrative being supplied in the prose "links," concerning which cf. introductory note to the *Grimnismol*. The dramatic effectiveness and vivid characterization of the poem seem to connect it with the *Thrymskvitha*, and the two may possibly have been put into their present form by the same man. Bugge's guess that the *Skírnismol* was the work of the author of the *Lokasenna* is also possible, though it has less to support it.

Critics have generally agreed in dating the poem as we now have it as early as the first half of the tenth century; Finnur Jonsson puts it as early as 900, and claims it, as usual, for Norway. Doubtless it was current in Norway, in one form or another, before the first Icelandic settlements, but his argument that the thistle (stanza 31) is not an Icelandic plant has little weight, for such curse-formulas must have traveled freely from place to place. In view of the evidence pointing to a western origin for many or all of the Eddic poems, Jonsson's reiterated "*Digtet er sikkert norsk og ikke islandsk*" is somewhat exasperating. Wherever the *Skírnismol* was composed, it has been preserved in exceptionally good condition, and seems to be practically devoid of interpolations or lacunae.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
I	Frey, son of Niord; had one day seated himself in Hlidskialf, and was looking over all regions, when turning his eyes to Jotunheim, he there saw a beautiful girl, as she was passing from her father's dwelling to her bower. Thereupon he became greatly troubled in mind. Frey's attendant was named Skírnir; him Niord desired to speak with Frey; when Skadi said:--	<sup>1</sup> Freyr, the son of Njorth, had sat one day in Hliðskjölf <sup>2</sup> , and looked over all the worlds. He looked into Jotunheim, and saw there a fair maiden, as she went from her father's house to her bower. Forthwith he felt a mighty love-sickness. Skírnir was the name of Freyr's servant; Njorth bade him ask speech of Freyr. He said: <sup>3</sup>	
1	Rise up now, Skírnir! Go and request our son to speak; And inquire with whom he so sage May be offended.	"Go now, Skírnir!   and seek to gain Speech from my son; <sup>4</sup> And answer to win,   for whom the wise one Is mightily moved."	Skadi: Arise, Skírnir, ride now Swiftly to Frey, my son, And ask him this: with whom is the wise one So angry, so sad at heart?
2	Skírnir Harsh words I have from your son to fear, If I go to speak with him, And to inquire with whom he so sage May be offended.	Skírnir spake: "Ill words do I now   await from thy son, If I seek to get speech with him, And answer to win,   for whom the wise one Is mightily moved."	Skírnir: A grim answer I shall get, Skadi, I fear, from Frey, your son, If I ask him this: at whom is the wise one So angry, so sad at heart?
3	Skírnir Tell me now, Frey, prince of gods! For I desire to know, Why alone thou sittest in the spacious hall The livelong day?	Skírnir spake: "Speak prithe, Freyr,   foremost of the gods, For now I fain would know; Why sittest thou here   in the wide halls, Days long, my prince, alone?"	Tell me, Frey, first of the gods, That which I long to learn: Why do you sit and sulk in your hall Alone, my lord, all day?
4	Frey Why shall I tell thee, thou young man, My mind's great trouble? For the Alfs' illuminator shines every day, Yet not for my pleasure.	Freyr spake: "How shall I tell thee,   thou hero young, Of all my grief so great? Though every day   the elfbeam <sup>5</sup> dawns, It lights my longing never."	Frey: Why should I tell you what is the cause Of the great grief that casts Gloom on my mind, though the Glory of Elves Lights up the daytime hours.
5	Skírnir Thy care cannot, I think, be so great, That to me thou canst not tell it; For in early days we were young together: Well might we trust each other.	Skírnir spake: "Thy longings, methinks,   are not so large That thou mayst not tell them to me; Since in days of yore   we were young together, We two might each other trust."	Skírnir: No grief, Prince, is so great that you May not tell it to me: In the days of our youth we were young together, Each can trust the other.

6	Frey In Gymir's courts I saw walking A maid for whom I long. Her arms gave forth light Wherewith shone all air and water.	Freyr spake: "From Gymir's <sup>6</sup> house   I beheld go forth A maiden dear to me; Her arms glittered,   and from their gleam Shone all the sea and sky.  <sup>7</sup> ["Hither to me shalt thou bring the maid, And home shalt thou lead her here, If her father wills it or wills it not, And good reward shalt thou get."]	Frey: I saw a girl in Gymir's courts, A girl for whose love I long; Air and water took on a radiance From the light of her lovely arms.
7	Is more desirable to me that maid Than to any youth in early days; Yet will no one, Æsir or Alfar, That we together live.	"To me more dear   than in days of old Was ever maiden to man; But no one of gods   or elves will grant That we both together should be."	As dear to no man in days past Was maid as she is to me: But no elf, no god, will grant my prayer That I may lie with her.
8	Skirnir Give me but thy steed, which can bear me Through the dusk, flickering flame, And that sword, which brandishes itself Against the Jotuns' race.	Skirnir spake: "Then give me the horse   that goes through the dark / And magic flickering flames; And the sword <sup>8</sup> as well   that fights of itself Against the giants grim." <sup>9</sup>	Skirnir: Give me a mare that will gallop through The wall of flickering flame, And the sword that slays by itself when battle Is joined with the race of giants.
9	Frey I will give thee my steed, which can bear thee Through the dusk, flickering flame, And that sword, which will itself brandish, If he is bold who raises it.	Freyr spake: "The horse will I give thee   that goes through the dark / And magic flickering flames, And the sword as well   that will fight of itself If a worthy hero wields it."	Frey: I will give you a mare that will gallop through The wall of flickering flame, And the sword that slays by itself if brave The warrior be who wields it.
10	Skirnir Speaks to the Horse Dark it is without, 'tis time, I say, For us to go across the misty fells, Over the Thursar's land: we shall both return, Or the all-potent Jotun will seize us both.	Skirnir spake to the horse: "Dark is it without,   and I deem it time To fare through the wild fells, (To fare through the giants' fastness); <sup>10</sup> We shall both come back,   or us both together The terrible giant will take."	Skirnir: Night has fallen: now we must ride Over the misty mountains, The fells of the troll-folk; We shall both arrive or both fall into The hands of the horrible giant.
II	Skirnir rides to Jotunheim, to Gymir's mansion, where fierce dogs were chained at the gate of the enclosure that was round Gymir's hall. He rides on to where a cowherd was sitting on a mound, and says to him:	Skirnir rode into Jotunheim to Gymir's house. There were fierce dogs bound before the gate of the fence which was around Gerth's hall. He rode to where a herdsman sat on a hill, and said:	
11	Tell me, cowherd! as on the mound thou sittest, And watchest all the ways, How I to the speech may come, Of the young maiden, for Gymir's dogs?	"Tell me, herdsman,   sitting on the hill, And watching all the ways, How may I win   a word with the maid Past the hounds of Gymir here?"	Hail, Herdsman, howe-watcher, Looking this way and that! By what means can I speak, despite his hounds, With Gymir's daughter, Gerd.
12	Cowherd Either thou art death-doomed, Or thou art a departed one. Speech wilt thou ever lack With the good maid of Gymir.	The herdsman spake: "Art thou doomed to die   or already dead, [Thou horseman that ridest hither?] <sup>11</sup> Barred from speech   shalt thou ever be With Gymir's daughter good."	Herdsman: Are you doomed to death, or dead already? Barred shall you ever be from speech With Gymir's daughter, Gerd.
13	Skirnir Better choices than to whine there are For him who is prepared to die: For one day was my age decreed, And my whole life determined.	Skirnir spake: "Boldness is better   than complaints can be For him whose feet must fare; To a destined day has mine age been doomed, And my life's span thereto laid." <sup>12</sup>	Skirnir: To stake life on the luck of the dice Is better than to be a coward: The day of my death is By Fate my time is fixed.
14	Gerd What is that sound of sounds, Which I now sounding hear within our dwelling? The earth is shaken, and with it all The house of Gymir trembles.	Gerth spake: "What noise is that which now so loud I hear within our house? The ground shakes, and the home of Gymir Around me trembles too."	Gerd: What is the noise which now I hear, That din throughout our halls? Earth trembles, everything shakes In the wide garths of Gymir.
15	A serving-maid A man is here without, dismounted from his horse's back: he lets his steed browse on the grass.	The Serving-Maid spake: "One stands without who has leapt from his steed, And lets his horse loose to graze;" <sup>13</sup>	Herdsman: A man on a mare: he dismounts and leads her Unbridled to graze the grass.
16	Gerd Bid him enter into our hall, And drink of the bright mead; Although I fear it is my brother's slayer Who waits without.	Gerth spake: "Bid the man come in, and drink good mead Here within our hall; Though this I fear, that there without My brother's slayer <sup>14</sup> stands.	Gerd: Go, let him in; bid him enter our hall And drink a draught of mead, Though my heart forebodes that my brother's killer Darkens the door with his shadow.
17	Who is this of the Alfar's, or of the Æsir's sons, Or of the wise Vanir's? Why art thou come alone, through the hostile fire, Our halls to visit?	"Art thou of the elves   or the offspring of gods, Or of the wise Waners? <sup>15</sup> How camst thou alone   through the leaping flame Thus to behold our home?"	Are you one of the elves, are you one of the gods, Or one of the wise Vanes? Why have you ridden through wildfire Hither to visit our halls?

18	Skirnir I am not of the Alfar's, nor of the Æsir's sons, Nor of the wise Vanir's; Yet I am come alone, through the hostile fire, Your halls to visit.	<sup>16</sup> Skirnir spake: "I am not of the elves,   nor the offspring of gods, Nor of the wise Wanæs; Though I came alone   through the leaping flame Thus to behold thy home.	Skirnir: I am not an elf, I am not a god, Nor one of the wise Vanes, Though well I have ridden through wildfire Hither to visit your halls.
19	Apples all-golden I have here eleven: These I will give thee, Gerd, Thy love to gain, that thou mayest say That Frev to thee lives dearest.	"Eleven apples, <sup>17</sup>   all of gold, Here will I give thee, Gerth, To buy thy troth   that Freyr shall be Deemed to be dearest to you."	Eleven apples, all of gold, Lo, I will give them you, Gerd, To look on Frey with friendly eyes, Call him your dearest dear.
20	Gerd The apples eleven I never will accept For any mortal's pleasure; Nor will I and Frey, while our lives last, Live both together.	Gerth spake: "I will not take   at any man's wish These eleven apples ever; Nor shall Freyr and I   one dwelling find So long as we two live."	Gerd: No, your apples I will never take At any wooer's wish, Nor look on Frey with friendly eyes, Nor call him my dearest dear.
21	Skirnir The ring too I will give thee, which was burnt With the young son of Odin. Eight of equal weight will from it drop, Every ninth night.	Skirnir spake: "Then do I bring thee   the ring <sup>18</sup> that was burned Of old with Othin's son; From it do eight   of like weight fall On every ninth night." <sup>19</sup>	Skirnir: This bracelet I'll give you, that was burned on the pyre / Of Baldur, Odin's boy: It drops eight of equal thickness Every ninth night.
22	Gerd The ring I will not accept, burnt though it may have been / With the young son of Odin. I have no lack of gold in Gymir's courts; For my father's wealth I share.	Gerth spake: "The ring I wish not,   though burned it was Of old with Othin's son; In Gymir's home   is no lack of gold In the wealth my father wieldes."	Gerd: I refuse the bracelet, though burned on the pyre Of Baldur, Odin's boy: I need no gold in Gymir's court; His wealth is at my command.
23	Skirnir Seest thou this sword, young maiden! Thin, glittering-bright, which I have here in hand? I thy head will sever from thy neck, If thou speakst not favourably to me.	Skirnir spake: "Seest thou, maiden,   this keen, bright sword That I hold here in my hand? Thy head from thy neck   shall I straightway hew, If thou wilt not do my will."	Skirnir: Do you see this sword, slender, inwrought, This sword I hold in my hand? I will hack your head from your haughty neck Unless you pledge your love.
24	Gerd Suffer compulsion will I never, To please any man; Yet this I foresee, if thou and Gymir meet, Ye will eagerly engage in fight.	Gerth spake: "For no man's sake   will I ever suffer To be thus moved by might; But gladly, methinks,   will Gymir seek To fight if he finds thee here."	Gerd: No threat of force shall frighten me To yield to a wooer's wish: If Gymir, my father, finds you here, Short shrift you will get.
25	Skirnir Seest thou this sword, young maiden! Thin, glittering-bright, which I have here in hand? Beneath its edge shall the old Jotun fall: Thy sire is death-doomed.	Skirnir spake: "Seest thou, maiden,   this keen, bright sword That I hold here in my hand? <sup>20</sup> Before its blade the   old giant bends,-- Thy father is doomed to die.	Skirnir: Do you see this sword, slender, inwrought, This sword I hold in my hand? Beneath its edge will the old one kneel, It dooms your father to die.
26	With a taming-wand I smite thee, And I will tame thee, maiden! to my will. Thou shalt go thither, where the sons of men Shall never more behold thee.	<sup>21</sup> "I strike thee, maid,   with my magic staff, To tame thee to work my will; There shalt thou go   where never again The sons of men shall see thee.	With a taming wand I shall teach you swiftly, Make you, maiden, obey. You shall be sent where no son of man Or god shall see you again,
27	On an eagle's mount thou shalt early sit, Looking and turned towards Hel. Food shall to thee more loathsome be than is To any one the glistening serpent among men.	"On the eagle's hill <sup>22</sup>   shalt thou ever sit, And gaze on the gates of Hel; <sup>23</sup> More loathsome to thee   than the light-hued snake To men, shall thy meat become." <sup>24</sup>	With earth behind you, on an eagle's mound, Facing Hel, forever sit. Fouler to you shall food look Than the snake seems to warriors.
28	As a prodigy thou shalt be, when thou goest forth; Hrimnir shall at thee gaze, all beings at thee stare; More wide-known thou shalt become Than the watch among the gods, If thou from thy gratings gape.	"Fearful to see,   if thou comest forth, Hrimnir <sup>25</sup> will stand and stare, (Men will marvel at thee); <sup>26</sup> More famed shalt thou grow   than the watchman of the gods! <sup>27</sup> / Peer forth, then, from thy prison,	A sight you shall become ere you come out. Hrimnir shall leer at you, everyone jeer at you, A more famous figure you'll be Than the god's watchman When you gape through the fence.
29	Solitude and disgust, bonds and impatience, Shall thy tears with grief augment. Set thee down, and I will tell thee Of a whelming flood of care, and a double grief.	"Rage and longing,   fetters and wrath, Tears and torment are thine; Where thou sittest down   my doom is on thee Of heavy heart / And double dole." <sup>28</sup>	May error and terror, blotches and blains, Grow on you, grief with tears. Crouch low while the curse I pronounce, Heavy torment and twofold grief.
30	Terrors shall bow thee down the livelong day, In the Jotuns' courts.	"In the giants' home   shall vile things <sup>29</sup> harm thee Each day with evil deeds;	Orcs shall pinch you the whole day long In the grim garths of the giants, [Every day to the halls of Frost You shall creep, crawl] without choice, Without any hope of choice]
35	[To the Hrimthursar's halls, Thou shalt each day crawl exhausted, Joyless crawl;]	<sup>30</sup>	Lamentation not laughter know, Dejection instead of joy.
30	Wail for pastime shalt thou have, And tears and misery.	Grief shalt thou get   instead of gladness, And sorrow to suffer with tears.	

31	With a three-headed Thurs thou shalt be Ever bound, or be without a mate. Thy mind shall tear thee from morn to morn: As the thistle thou shalt be which has thrust itself On the house-top.	"With three-headed giants <sup>31</sup>   thou shalt dwell ever, Or never know a husband; (Let longing grip thee,   let wasting waste thee,--) <sup>32</sup> Be like to the thistle   that in the loft Was cast and there was crushed.	With three-headed trolls shall your time be spent, Never shall a man come near you, May your senses be numbed, your sadness weep, May you be as the thistle, thoughtlessly crushed Underfoot at the gate of the garth.
32	To the wold I have been, and to the humid grove, A magic wand to get. A magic wand I got.	"I go to the wood,   and to the wet forest, To win a magic wand; I won a magic wand. [with which I will tame you, Maid, to work my will.] <sup>33</sup>	To the woods I went, through the wet trees, For a spell-binding branch, And a fitting branch I found.
33	Wroth with thee is Odin, wroth with thee is the Æsir's prince; / Frey shall loathe thee, Even ere thou, wicked maid! Shalt have felt the gods' dire vengeance.	"Othin grows angry,   angered is the best of the gods, / Freyr shall be thy foe, Most evil <sup>34</sup> maid,   who the magic wrath Of gods hast got for thyself.	Odin is angry, angry is Thor, All the gods shall hate you Base maiden, you have brought on yourself The anger of all the gods.
34	Hear ye, Jotuns! hear ye, Hrimthursar! Sons of Suttung! Also ye, Aesir's friends! How I forbid, how I prohibit Man's joy unto the damsel, Man's converse to the damsel.	"Give heed, frost-rulers,   hear it, giants. Sons of Suttung, <sup>35</sup> And gods, ye too, <sup>36</sup> How I forbid   and how I ban The meeting of men with the maid, (The joy of men with the maid.)	Hear me, giants, hear me frost-trolls, Sons of Suttung, hear me, What I forebode, what I forbid, Joy of man to this maid, Love of man to this maid.
35	Hrimgrimmir the Thurs is named, that shall possess thee, / In the grating of the dead beneath;	"Hrimgrimmir <sup>37</sup> is he,   the giant who shall have thee / In the depth by the doors of Hel; To the frost-giants' halls   each day shalt thou fare, Crawling and craving in vain, (Crawling and having no hope.) <sup>38</sup>	Hrimgrimir shall have you, the hideous troll, Beside the doors of the dead,
36	There shall wretched thralls, from the tree's roots, Goats' water give thee. Other drink shalt thou, maiden! Never get, either for thy pleasure, Or for my pleasure.	"Base wretches there   by the root of the tree Will hold for thee horns of filth; A fairer drink   shalt thou never find, Maid, to meet thy wish, (Maid, to meet my wish.) <sup>39</sup>	Under the tree-roots ugly scullions Pour you the urine of goats; Nothing else shall you ever drink, Never what you wish, Ever what I wish.
37	Thurs I cut for thee, and three letters mere: ergi, and oedi, and othola. So will I cut them out, as I have cut them in, If there need shall be.	<sup>40</sup> "I write thee a charm <sup>41</sup>   and three runes therewith, / Longing and madness and lust; But what I have writ   I may yet unwrite If I find a need therefor."	I score troll-runes, then I score three letters, Filth, frenzy, lust: I can score them off as I score them on, If I find sufficient cause.
38	Gerd Hail rather to thee, youth! And accept an icy cup, filled with old mead; Although I thought not that I ever Should love one of Vanir race.	Gerth spake: "Find welcome rather,   and with it take The frost-cup filled with mead; Though I did not believe   that I should so love Ever one of the Waness."	Gerd: You have conquered, warrior. This cup I pledge you, full of foaming mead, Little did I dream my love would ever Be vowed to a son of the Vanes.
39	Skirmir All my errand will I know, Ere I hence ride home. When wilt thou converse hold With the powerful son of Niord?	Skirmir spake: "My tidings all   must I truly learn Ere homeward hence I ride: How soon thou wilt   with the mighty son Of Njorth a meeting make."	Skirmir: More must I know for the message I bear When I ride from Gymir's garth. Where will you meet, when will you give Yourself to the Son of Njord?
40	Gerd Barri the grove is named, which we both know, The grove of tranquil paths. Nine nights hence, there to Niord's son Gerd will grant delight.	Gerth spake: Barri <sup>42</sup> there is,   which we both know well, A forest fair and still; And nine nights hence   to the son of Njorth Will Gerth there grant delight."	Gerd: In the woods of Barn which we both know, A peaceful, secluded place, After nine nights to Njord's Son Gerd will give herself.
III	Skimir then rode home. Frey was standing without, and spoke to him, asking tidings:	Then Skimir rode home. Freyr stood without, and spoke to him, and asked for tidings:	
41	Tell me, Skimir! ere thou thy steed unsaddlest, And a foot hence thou goest, What thou hast accomplished in Jotunheim, For my pleasure or thine?	"Tell me, Skimir,   ere thou take off the saddle, Or farest forward a step: What hast thou done   in the giants' dwelling To make glad thee or me?"	Frey: Answer me, Skimir, ere you dismount Or step a foot further: Is it joyful news from Gianthome You bring with you or bad?
42	Skimir Barri the grove is named, which we both know, The grove of tranquil paths. Nine nights hence, there to Niord's son Gerd will grant delight.	Skirmir spake: <sup>43</sup> "Barri there is,   which we both know well, A forest fair and still; And nine nights hence   to the son of Njorth Will Gerth there grant delight."	Skirmir: In the woods of Barri which we both know, A peaceful, secluded place, After nine nights to Njord's Son Gerd will give herself.
43	Frey Long is one night, yet longer two will be; How shall I three endure. Often a month to me less has seemed Than half a night of longing.	Freyr spake: <sup>44</sup> "Long is one night,   longer are two; How then shall I bear three? Often to me   has a month seemed less Than now half a night of desire."	Frey: Long is one night, longer are two, Endless the thought of three. Many a month has moved more swiftly Than this half of a bridal eve.

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<sup>1</sup> Prose. Freyr: concerning his father, Njorth, and the race of the Wanæs in general, cf. *Voluspo*, 21 and note. Snorri thus describes Njorth's family: "Njorth begat two children in Noatun; the son was named Freyr, and the daughter Freyja; they were fair of aspect and mighty. Freyr is the noblest of the gods; he rules over rain and sunshine, and therewith the fruitfulness of the earth; it is well to call upon him for plenty and welfare, for he rules over wealth for mankind. Freyja is the noblest of the goddesses. When she rides to the fight, she has one-half of the slain, and Othin has half. When she goes on a journey, she drives her two cats, and sits in a cart. Love-songs please her well, and it is good to call on her in love-matters." Hliðskjölf: Othin's watch-tower; cf. *Grimnismol*, introductory prose. He said: both manuscripts have "Then Skathi said:" (Skathi was Njorth's wife), but Bugge's emendation, based on Snorri's version, is doubtless correct.

<sup>2</sup> Hliðskjölf: Othin's watch-tower; cf. *Grimnismol*, introductory prose.

<sup>3</sup> He said: both manuscripts have "Then Skathi said:" (Skathi was Njorth's wife), but Bugge's emendation, based on Snorri's version, is doubtless correct.

<sup>4</sup> My son: both manuscripts, and many editors, have "our son," which, of course, goes with the introduction of Skathi in the prose. As the stanza is clearly addressed to Skirnir, the change of pronouns seems justified. The same confusion occurs in stanza 2, where Skirnir in the manuscripts is made to speak of Freyr as "your son" (plural). The plural pronoun in the original involves a metrical error, which is corrected by the emendation.

<sup>5</sup> Elfbeam: the sun, so called because its rays were fatal to elves and dwarfs; cf. *Alvissmol*, 35.

<sup>6</sup> Gymir: a mountain-giant, husband of Aurboða, and father of Gerth, fairest among women. This is all Snorri tells of him in his paraphrase of the story.

<sup>7</sup> Snorri's paraphrase of the poem is sufficiently close so that his addition of another sentence to Freyr's speech makes it probable that a stanza has dropped out between 7 and 8. This has been tentatively reconstructed here. Finn Magnúsen detected the probable omission of a stanza here as early as 1821.

<sup>8</sup> The sword: Freyr's gift of his sword to Skirnir eventually proves fatal, for at the last battle, when Freyr is attacked by Beli, whom he kills bare-handed, and later when the fire-demon, Surt, slays him in turn, he is weaponless; cf. *Voluspo*, 53 and note.

<sup>9</sup> Against the giants grim: the condition of this line makes it seem like an error in copying, and it is possible that it should be identical with the fourth line of the next stanza.

<sup>10</sup> Some editors reject line 3 as spurious.

<sup>11</sup> Line 2 is in neither manuscript, and no gap is indicated. I have followed Grundtvig's conjectural emendation.

<sup>12</sup> This stanza is almost exactly like many in the first part of the *Hovamol*, and may well have been a separate proverb. After this stanza the scene shifts to the interior of the house.

<sup>13</sup> No gap indicated in either manuscript. Bugge and Niedner have attempted emendations, while Hildebrand suggests that the last two lines of stanza 14 are spurious, 14, 12, and 15 thus forming a single stanza, which seems doubtful.

<sup>14</sup> Brother's slayer: perhaps the brother is Beli, slain by Freyr; the only other references are in *Voluspo*, 53, and in Snorri's paraphrase of the *Skirnismol*, which merely says that Freyr's gift of his sword to Skirnir "was the reason why he was weaponless when he met Beli, and he killed him bare-handed." Skirnir himself seems never to have killed anybody.

<sup>15</sup> Wise Wanæs: Cf. *Voluspo*, 21 and note.

<sup>16</sup> The *Arnarnagnaean Codex* omits this stanza.

<sup>17</sup> Apples: the apple was the symbol of fruitfulness, and also of eternal youth. According to Snorri, the goddess Iðun had charge of the apples which the gods ate whenever they felt themselves growing old.

<sup>18</sup> Ring: the ring Draupnir ("Dropper") was made by the dwarfs for Othin, who laid it on Baldr's pyre when the latter's corpse was burned (Cf. *Voluspo*, 32 and note, and *Baldrs Draumar*). Baldr, however, sent the ring back to Othin from hell. How Freyr obtained it is nowhere stated. Andvari's ring (Andvaranaut) had a similar power of creating gold; cf. *Regnismol*, prose after stanza 4 and note.

<sup>19</sup> Lines 3 and 4 of this stanza, and the first two of stanza 22, are missing in the *Arnarnagnaean Codex*.

<sup>20</sup> The first two lines are abbreviated in both manuscripts.

<sup>21</sup> With this stanza, bribes and threats having failed, Skirnir begins a curse which, by the power of his magic staff, is to fall on Gerth if she refuses Freyr.

<sup>22</sup> Eagle's hill: the hill at the end of heaven, and consequently overlooking hell, where the giant Hraesvelg sits "in an eagle's guise," and makes the winds with his wings; cf. *Vafthruthnismol*, 37, also *Voluspo*, 50.

<sup>23</sup> The second line is faulty in both manuscripts; Hildebrand's emendation corrects the error, but omits an effective touch; the manuscript line may be rendered "And look and hanker for hell."

<sup>24</sup> The *Arnarnagnaean Codex* breaks off with the fourth line of this stanza.

<sup>25</sup> Hrimnir: a frost-giant, mentioned elsewhere only in *Hyndluljóth*, 33.

<sup>26</sup> Line 3 is probably spurious.

<sup>27</sup> Watchman of the gods: Heimdall; cf. *Voluspo*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Three nouns of doubtful meaning, which I have rendered *rage*, *longing*, and *heart* respectively, make the precise force of this stanza obscure. Niedner and Sijmons mark the entire stanza as interpolated, and Jonsson rejects line 5.

<sup>29</sup> The two words here translated *vile things* are obscure; Gering renders the phrase simply "Kobolde."

<sup>30</sup> In *Regius* and in nearly all the editions the first two lines of this stanza are followed by lines 3-5 of stanza 35. I have followed Niedner, Sijmons, and Gering.

<sup>31</sup> Three-headed giants: concerning giants with numerous heads, cf. *Vafthruthnismol*, 33, and *Hymiskviða*, 8.

<sup>32</sup> The confusion noted as to the preceding stanza, and a metrical error in the third line, have led to various rearrangements and emendations; line 3 certainly looks like an interpolation.

<sup>33</sup> No gap indicated in the manuscript; Niedner fills out the stanza as given in brackets. The whole stanza seems to be either interpolated or out of place; it would fit better after stanza 25.

<sup>34</sup> Jonsson marks this stanza as interpolated. The word translated *most evil* is another case of guesswork.

<sup>35</sup> Suttung: concerning this giant cf. *Hovamol*, 104 and note.

<sup>36</sup> Most editors reject line 3 as spurious, and some also reject line 6. Lines 2 and 3 may have been expanded out of a single line running approximately "Ye gods and Suttung's sons."

<sup>37</sup> Hrimgrímnir ("The Frost-Shrouded"): a giant not elsewhere mentioned.

<sup>38</sup> Most editors combine lines 1-2 with stanza 36 (either with the first two lines thereof or the whole stanza), as lines 3-5 stand in the manuscript after line 2 of stanza 30. Line 5, as a repetition of line 4, is probably a later addition.

<sup>39</sup> For the combination of this stanza with the preceding one, cf. note on stanza 35. The scribe clearly did not consider that the stanza began with line 1, as the first word thereof in the manuscript does not begin with a capital letter and has no period before it. The first word of line 3, however, is so marked. Line 5 may well be spurious.

<sup>40</sup> Again the scribe seems to have been uncertain as to the stanza divisions. This time the first line is preceded by a period, but begins with a small letter. Many editors have made line 2 into two half-lines.

<sup>41</sup> A charm: literally, the rune Thurs (b); the runic letters all had magic attributes; cf. *Sigrdrifumol*, 6-7 and notes.

<sup>42</sup> Barri: "The Leafy."

<sup>43</sup> Abbreviated to initial letters in the manuscript.

<sup>44</sup> The superscription is lacking in *Regius*. Snorri quotes this one stanza in his prose paraphrase, *Gylfaginning*, chapter 37. The two versions are substantially the same, except that Snorri makes the first line read, "Long is one night, long is the second."