

Cry of the Wolf



Volume III

Part I

About the authors

Baroness TSivia bas Tamara would have been known to most people as "Mary MacGregor", as she is a crypto-Jewess -- a Jew who hides her religious beliefs due to fear of persecution. She was the daughter of petty nobility from the "northern part of southern Scotland", captured for ransom while her father fought alongside Robert the Bruce. Her father was killed, and she was turned out alone into the English countryside when her value disappeared. She became an itinerant bard in order to survive.

TSivia received her Laurel from the Midrealm in 1983 from the Midrealm for Balladry and Research. She has been past head of the Midrealm Bardic College, and holds the Order of the Troubadour from the Eastrealm for her performances of ballads and poems at Eastern events.

Shelley TSivia Rabinovitch received her Ph.D in religious studies in October 2001 from the University of Ottawa, where she now lectures part-time as a cultural anthropologist of religion. She is owned by three cats, and has been a participant in the SCA since 1971.

Contents

The Honourable Lady Anne Le Gris

- ..Sonnet XVIII 1
- The Knighting 1
- Sonnet XXXVI - What must I do... 2
- Sonnet XL - Langholme Tower 2

Lord Archibald Weatherford

- Sonnet IV 3
- Sonnet VIII 3
- Sonnet XIII 4
- Sonnet XV 4

Lady Chiara da Montepulciano

- Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon be 5
- Lord of My Love 6

Lord Colyne Stewart

- Wolfen Elegy: In Memory of Markus 7
- Hail to Thee, o' Ardchreag 8

Lord Garraed Galbraith

- The Smith's Tale 9
- For Prince Berus and Princess Marion 10
- In memory of my King. For Os 11
- For a barefoot maid of distant lands... 12

Lady Gwerydd verch Rhys

- The Raven and the Valkyrie 13
- For Arminius the Footsore 14

Master Hector of the Black Heights

- Strigor's Song 15
- Evander mhic Lachlan at Murder Melee XVI 17
- Mortraeth's Song 18
- For Aeden and Kaffa 19
- For Henry and Enid, Their Excellencies Skræling Althing 20

Al-Mufassir Ibrahim ibn Abi ‘Ali Mahmud al-Fatimi	
➤ Qasidat Ibrahim ibn Mahmud	21
➤ A Pennsic Tale	25
Lady Isabella Oakwood	
➤ The Tale of Dragon’s Revenge	27
Lady Ivanna the Oblivious	
➤ The Viking Wife	29
➤ Ancient One	30
Lady Lucia d’Enzinas	
➤ Words	30
Mistress Marian of Heatherdale	
➤ Lady at the Loom	31
Yoshikiri Nagayo Dono	
➤ Shining on my tears	32
Baroness TSivia bas Tamara, O.L.	
➤ Fiona’s Lullaby	33
➤ Waes Hael Osis	34
➤ A Trio of Sonnets	35
➤ Elegy for a Friend: In Memoriam TSvetan Arinsson, O.L. .	37
Al-Mufassir Ibrahim ibn Abi ‘Ali Mahmud al-Fatimi	
➤ Farewell to Ealdormere	38
About the authors	39

During a journey he met, fell in love with, and married Blanche Wriotheosley, a lady with countless wonderful qualities and with a fine talent for the bardic arts.

In real life, Niall is a Mediaeval Islamic Historian, currently employed at the University of Toronto. His academic specialties are in eastern

Lady Isabella Oakwood lives in a small town near London. She and her husband Bevin are cloth merchants and run a small shop once owned by Isabella’s uncle. She enjoys spinning, card-weaving, embroidery, sewing, singing and storytelling. Her father was once a knight in the service of Earl Simon de Montfort. Isabella adored her ‘Uncle Simon’ and was devastated when he, her father and both her older brothers were killed at the Battle of Evesham on August 4, 1265.

Rebecca Cairns is a computer programmer working for the Canadian government. She lives in Ottawa with her wonderful husband, Bruce and her two cats, Megan and Molly. Besides her main hobby of the SCA, Rebecca is an active member of the Ottawa Valley Weavers’ and Spinners’ Guild. She acts as Webmaster for the Guild’s web site and her local SCA groups (Caldrithig and Skraeling Althing). She also enjoys reading SF/Fantasy and is currently a big Harry Potter fan.

Lady Ivanna is a gypsy in Byzantine Russia (1470’s). Named after Ivan the Great, the first ruler to allow gypsies freedom within his borders, she has never lived anywhere else. As a result she has been an avid collector of tales from all visitors and has a multi-cultural collection of stories to tell. Although she is still learning, she has begun supplementing the clan’s income as a budding poet and storyteller.

Laurie Woodward also tends to be like a gypsy. Having been an E.C.E. assistant, a daycare dietary manager, and a portrait photographer, among other things, she is presently, managing a party and play center in Oshawa. The mother of a seven-year-old boy who helps keep her creative side active, she enjoys painting, writing, sewing, and many other forms of crafting.

Mistress Marian of Heatherdale is an alliance-bride between her native Scotland (currently under the tyranny of Edward Longshanks) and warm, sunny, civilized France. She is a bard of Ealdormere, and a member of the Order of the Laurel for her research into Arthurian Legends.

Heather Marian Dale is a professional Modern Celtic singer-songwriter, who has produced two CDs (*The Trial of Lancelot* and *Call The Names*), several songbooks, and numerous tapes. For more information, visit www.HeatherDale.com.

About the authors

Lord Garraed Galbraith is a land-owner living on the Isle of Gigha, in the bottom of the Scots Hebrides chain, in the 11th Century. He is the (nominal) head of a large merchant household. He has studied as a filidh (the first of the three bardic schools) and under the brehon (lawyer/law speaker) traditions. He continues his work in the bardic tradition under an Ollagh from mainland Scotland.

Tim Jennings is the General Manager for a mid-sized theatre company in Toronto. He has taught Theatre Production at several Colleges and Universities, and is part of an advocacy group for workplace safety in the Live Performance Industry. Tim is an avid collector of traditional Brit-trad folk music, and enjoys the three R's (reading, writing and role-playing). He lives with his wife, their housemate (Arminius/Kevin) and their menagerie of cats, dogs, bunnies, etc in a beautiful old house near Guelph, Ontario.

Lady Gwerydd verch Rhys is daughter of Rhys ap Gwion, a Welsh trader, and Grainne ingen Diarmait Finn, an Irishwoman. She was brought up in an Irish household and listened to the tales of bards. She has been writing poetry and songs for a short time since she discovered the joys of the Bardic Arts at Pennsic XXIX. She has been avidly learning what she can from other bards and honing her skills and abilities whenever possible.

Helen Marshall is a student at St. Christopher Secondary School. She lives in Sarnia with the rest of her family who are participants in the SCA. In her spare time, she writes short stories and hopes, one day, to be published. She also role-plays when she has an opportunity and loves to read whatever books happen to be lying around in her house.

Master Hector of the Black Height, an itinerant ditch-digger taught to read by monks with little better to do, wandered out of the west islands of Scotland around 1297. He once saw William Wallace, from a distance, in a dark hall, and remarked on his large hair. Hector's done some soldiering and sapping and a lot of singing and telling. Performance has kept him well fed and in good company for the past 15 years or so, which means it's about 1312 now. Stewth! Time flies when you're having fun.

Arthur McLean is a Federal civil servant, part-time Army officer and father of a 4 1/2 year old SCAdian son, all in Toronto.

Al-Mufassir Ibrahim ibn Abi 'Ali Mahmud al-Fatimi was born in Cairo in 1150, to Abu 'Ali Mahmud, cousin to the Fatimid caliph al-Mu'tamin, and a Scottish slave named Isabella. Like most Muslim princes, he was raised to be both a warrior and a man of learning, and showed a particular taste for songs and tales, becoming known through the court as an entertainer. He became so well known that the caliph conferred upon him the title of "al-Mufassir", the one who explains.

The Honourable Lady Anne Le Gris

Sonnet XVIII

Phoebus would not find favour in my eyes
Placed beside thee that tak'st my breath away
With thy fair countenance, so truly wise,
That gives thee total power o'er my heart's sway.
If thou were nimble Hermes with the lyre,
I'd love thee less. Thou would'st not me enfold --
Presenting me with flowers I admire,
The dulcet rose, the lys and marigold.
For knights or dukes or titles I've no care.
I'm happiest when we share a peaceful time.
If ought in me could be considered fair,
A tribute 'tis to thee, for I am thine.
Be thou my inspiration and my king.
Accept my heart and all the love I bring.

© Ann Graham, 1982

The Knighting

Swooping sword of Mordain,
singing for promised kings.
An old gift of gold is
given for valour's call.
Day duties permit no
dreams, but serve kings and queens,
though fields cold of fighting
form not a warm vigil.

© Ann Graham, 1982

Sonnet XXXVI - What must I do...

What must I do to bring you to my side?
 For women's friendship you do not eschew.
 You're friends with everyone, but woe betide
 the one who finds herself in love with you.
 What is it that will bring you? I'm aware
 that modern views of beauty have no hold.
 It sometimes even seems to me you dare
 to choose your latest love to break the mold.
 I've gazed into your laughing depths of green
 and wish I'd lived another time and place.
 A place where your sweet lips had never been.
 A time when I would not have seen your face.
 I love you, yet I hate you. In my eyes
 you truly are a god in mortal guise.

© Ann Graham, 1986

Sonnet XL - Langholme Tower

Look on my ceaseless efforts, haughty one, And see how you would wound me with your vain Negligence. Tell me, when will you be done, Glorious love, treating me with disdain? Hear my fervent pleas, my feckless one -- Only give me a moment to explain: Look on my face and tell me why you shun Me, for I'll not rest until my refrain Engages you; I'll stay in Albion 'Til the end of time and I would remain Only yours, sweet Charity. If I won, Worthy soul, I would be with you again. Eagerly, I will wait 'til unison. Refuse me, you will find I'm all undone.	Haughty one, You're vain! Be done With disdain! Feckless one Explain Why you shun My refrain In Albion I would remain If I won You again. 'Til unison I'm all undone!
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© Ann Graham, 1991

The Honourable Lady Anne Le Gris was born in 1452 at Wilton House in Somerset. After spending her formative years with her parents in Paris, she now lives with her artist husband in Venice. She fills her days with managing his atelier.

Anne's greatest love in the SCA is poetry, specifically sonnets.

Ann Graham owns Silver Writing, which offers technical writing and editing services to both the high tech and manufacturing businesses in the Ottawa area.

Lord Archibald Weatherford is a nuisance to his Yorkshire father of the ancient Weatherford clan and, as part of a long family tradition, was sent ~~out of the way~~ to Italy for an education. There he practices the thespianic arts, political machinations, poetry, sword play, wit cracking, and all arts else due unto a gentleman.

Lord Archibald was one of the founding memebers of Skeldergate. Since migrating to Greyfells Archibald spends his time fencing, sonneteing, and hunting for an Italian by the name of Pedrolino who looks suspiciously like him.

Aaron Miedema is a semi professional Actor and a professional dishwasher who dedicates what time he has left over to playing in the SCA and writing sonnets.

Lady Chiara da Montepulciano, living in the late 15th century, is a daughter of a Genoese merchant family that was originally famous for its vinyards in the Montepulciano region of southern Italy. After being widowed at age 15, Chiara spent 5 years with her mother's family, then returned to help her older brother Ferrante manage the family business. She now spends most of her time, travelling between Istanbul and Genoa, negotiating trade with Sultan Mehmet II and other merchant families along the Istanbul / Genoa route.

Elyse Tera is an Acupuncturist and Asian Bodywork Therapist practicing in Ottawa and at various events throughout the Kingdom and the Known World. Elyse wrote professionally for a few years in the early 90's and has a few short stories and pieces of poetry floating around.

Lord Colyne Stewart is a Lowlander, born in southern Scotland in the early 1300s to a wealthy family. He was apprenticed to a tax collector at a young age, but quickly grew tired of that life. He longed for adventure and eventually left and became a gallowglass (Scottish mercenary). Having fought in the Highlands, England, Ireland and France he has adapted many local customs and fashions as his own.

By day, Todd Fischer works in the Recording Studio for the CNIB's Library for the Blind. By night he's a zine and chapbook editor and publisher, a cartoonist, an illustrator, a writer and a playtester.

Farewell to Ealdormere

From sun-baked sands in the east, I came to a northern land,
Following the call of one who holds my heart in her hand.
From the land of mighty jinn to the place where gnomes run free,
We followed a silver wolf that watched o'er a great lake strand.
We found there were hearth-fires lit in the strongholds and the
keeps,
So that wherever we went the welcome was always grand.
Even in the peasant camps, there were smiles and open hearts.
What little there was they shared, with no grumbling or demand.
So it was from east to west and likewise from north to south.
In every place we were welcomed by a merry band.
We hoped to make our home here, in a castle's mighty keep.
Alas! The decrees of fate did shatter all we had planned.
The will of Allah is that we journey on to the south.
There is none, rich or poor, who can stand against God's command.
But know, gentle listeners, that no matter where we go,
When we hear the grey wolf howl, our thoughts will turn to this
land.¹²

© Niall Christie, 2001

SONNET IV

Before the years circle doth start again
Comes autumn with it colour and its dark
And with it came a prize for me to claim
As that fair maid across the hall did arc.
Her hair by the candles was all alight
A compliment to the trees in array
A Queen of the season was she that night
To my hiding shadow she made her way
My mask became as a cool autumn day
And the roar of the room did disappear
Upon the bed of leaves that swept her way
In that peace I vision'd everything clear
To me she came, her mark she did not miss
And on that nights day she bless'd me a kiss.

© Aaron Miedema

SONNET VIII

It is as loud as a door that opens
The touch of this fine paper in my hands
Those things of which my loving mistress pens
And sights not seen by me in other lands
Wax undone as gingerly as button
And then gently I feel the papers skin
Anticipating all that did happen
Unfolding and that treasure therein
Finding the first word sets a gentle tone
Each that follows a pierce to my heart
Desiring me quicken like bird new flown
I read faster and stronger my lovers art.
Until ending, and pause, a panting layn
Once breathing done I will read once again

© Aaron Miedema

¹² In the style of a mediæval Arabic poem, in basit meter.

SONNET XIII

A shepherdess is by a shepherd love'd
And all from them bout love may learn
For by naught but her beauty is he move'd
Though simple in fashion his heart will burn
Though not courtier, he must proffer his suit
And not finely arrayed, must still bend knee
To gain her ear and her fair heart recruit
In words of straw not flowers his love we see
And though she not crown'd, we liken to Queen
For she to him will grant a princely boon
In both most simple is most noble seen
And why is music found in this Rustic tune?
For he has not paper, nor pen, nor art.
And to her he loves, may only use heart.

© Aaron Miedema

SONNET XV

The celestial mistress who holds mine carte
Does hold my most attentive gaze enrapt
And sway does she hold of my raptured heart
And for to be thus is most wisely apt
For in her eyes gleam a bewitching glare
From her shapely foot a calf most tender
And striking the dark cascade of her hair
And a wish on her lips a kiss to render
But above all her eyes that draw me in
Heresy must the worship of such be
But most willing do I go to such sin
Swirling and spinning in love to be
That may concentrate on such radiance
And with beauteous Margareta dance.

© Aaron Miedema

Elegy for a Friend: In Memoriam TSvetan Arinsson, O.L.

When the heart is too full; when the cup overflows -
When the pain feels too great to be borne;
Once the candles are lit, once the myrrh fills the air,
Only then may we slow down to mourn.

Now the kitchen's a little less full, you might say,
One less pair of arms carries the load.
One less smile in the great hall illuminates the meal
And without it, the feast hall seems cold.

Heark now! as the dancers tread stately the steps
And they traverse the hall, up and down.
There's a pair of feet missing, the lightest of all -
Why are they not dancing the round?

There's a kind, gentle voice which I no longer hear
In the kitchen, the meeting, or hall.
Tho' I search high and low for those dancing blue eyes
I cannot find their warm smile at all.

For too soon he has left us. Now mem'ries and smiles
Are the legacy we have to hold.
So remember, ye wolf-kin, the friend that we've lost...
For his heart outweighed silver or gold.

© Shelley T. Rabinovitch, 1990.

2) Sustenance

The reddest wine from France, both dry and sweet
Cannot compare in richness to your lips.
The stars above appear to be eclipsed
When I sip of your kisses so complete.
Although the Lord Himself made stately wheat
So gold, still every stalk in reverence dips
To worship where you lay your fingertips.
Fair beauty mantles you, from head to feet.

If bread and wine absolves us of all sin
Then this fair lady's token will be borne
A private Host, inspiring me to win.
No demon-taunts will stop me, for I've sworn
To guard and honour all my lady's kin
Till Gabriel at last must blow his horn!

3) Shelter

A shelter warm and dry is my love's place,
But logs of wood are not its main attraction.
Too often am I driven to distraction
When my eyes spy that cottage made of lace!
A haven from the storm is my love's waist;
A short stop there will leave me fit for action.
Her tiny bower quakes with the reaction
Of urging me to come at such a pace!

Ah, could a man find shelter where repose
Is sweeter? Every night my lover sighs
With gentle warmth. Her love is like a rose
Which pricks my heart and makes my passion rise.
Where my love's boudoir is, I'll not expose:
To find your own, use more than just your eyes!

© Shelley T. Rabinovitch, 1981

Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon be

For him who hath lost his own true love
And hath not the heart to fight,
And needeth the inspiration of a Goode Womon
That he may well serve his Kinge on the field

Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon¹ be
A Knight sich as thee needs a Lady
Else thy sword will fall weke by thy side
And thine iyen waxen pale and glassy

Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon be
Let my touch be thy physick
A kiss from my lips upon thy brow
To sparken the fire of thy spirit

Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon be
Tak my favour² to the field
I will thee guarden from all foes
With my breste as thy shield

Swete Prince, let me thy Lemmon be
And if thy tendre heart be weary
I'll pray for thee to Hevene' Queene
Upon thee to ha' mercye

Swete Prince let me thy Lemmon be
Thy nature be unbounden³
I will to thee be swete succour⁴
And thee shall be my champioun

© Elyse Tera, 2001

Source:

Davies, R. T.: *Medieval English Lyrics*, Faber & Faber, London 1963.

¹ Sweetheart or mistress, depending on century (late 13-early 14thc. is sweetheart: Davies, p.63 foot)

² A token a lady gives a knight for him to wear, to inspire him on the tournament/battle field. Can be a lock of hair, an embroidered piece of cloth, etc.

³ free

⁴ OED: come to the assistance of, give aid to (person in danger or difficulty); (arch:) reinforcements, troops coming to the rescue

Style:

ABCB. Based on poems: 9, 10, 34, 154. Late 13th – early 14th c. Most quatrain verse is ABAB, these poems represent the fact that many early poems often change style midway, or lose their initial rhythm of speech (pp 17-18).

Translation:

Sweet Prince, let me be your sweetheart (rep. every stanza):

- You need a lady to inspire you or else you will be too weak to lift your sword and your eyes will be pale and lifeless.
- Let my touch heal you, and my kiss upon your forehead be the spark that ignites your will to fight
- Take this token of me to the field – it will guard you from your enemies as my body (symbolically) shields you from all harm
- If your tender heart becomes weary while fighting, I will pray for you to the Queen of Heaven (Mary) that her mercy be upon you
- “let thy nature be unbounden” be free with yourself, let nothing hold you back. I will be your strength and support, and you will be my champion

Lord of My Love

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage⁵
Thy regards hath my heart in bondage tied;
To thee my soul hath made a pilgrimage
And in thine arms sweet ecstasy to find.
My body for thy touch I am on fire;
I ache for thy sweet kiss upon my breast.
Embracèd by thee I find such desire
Sweet Adonis; my thoughts me give no rest
To Venus every night I do petition
For her kind understanding of love’s plight;
That I be worthy of thy adoration
And thee with me to be forever might.
Yet tortur’d by these thoughts I do but say
That Cupide maketh me thy humble slave

© Elyse Tera, 2001

Toast Osis wise-warrior, war-winner,
Toast Osis, step-father, squire-father, King.
Toast Osis, drink deep and honour his memory;
Toast Osis Konungr, Trillium King.

Waes Hael as open the doors to Valhalla,
Waes Hael as Valkyries ride on the wind.
Waes Hael: the Iceberg rides onward to battle;
Waes Hael Osis Konungr, Ealdormere's King!

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A Trio of Sonnets

1) Clothing

If I were but a glove, do you suppose
That I could so engage my lover's eyes
That he would find me cut to perfect size?
In this gauntlet would his hand repose?
Or if I were a pair of boots, his toes
Could find in me the finest, strong disguise.
My love could try these shoes before he buys,
With nothing twixt ourselves except his hose!

Plumed hats, or gloves, or coats, can they aspire
To measure up in shathmonts,¹⁰ or by ell
And win the heart of such a choosy buyer?
The thoughts of serge or kidskin I can't tell.
If I were they, I'd take the shade of fire
To fan the flames of love no other could quell!¹¹

⁵ First line is from Shakespeare's Sonnet #26.

¹⁰ Shathmonts and ells are both types of measurements.

¹¹ All three of these were written in one of the sonnet styles made popular by Petrarch.

For the people to savour.

Dear Fiona Avril
We'll miss your great mirth,
But a kingdom remains
To attest to your worth.

We'll strive to be like you
In word and in deed;
You helped plant the Trillium,
We spring from that seed.

Now light you a candle,
Drink long and drink deep.
Sing quietly now --
Sing Fiona to sleep.

© Shelley T. Rabinovitch, 2000

Waes Hael Osis

I speak of the King-maker, King-slayer, King-ruler,
I speak of a Prince, a lover, a King.
I speak of a strong arm, strong mind, strong laugh:
I speak of Osis Konungr, Wolven King.

He was Osis long-limbed, long-armed, long-tressed,
He was Osis the hard-faced and soft-hearted
He was Osis deep-hearted, strong-minded, still waters,
He was Osis Konungr, Ealdor-King.

Think on Osis hot-blooded, battle-honoured,
Think on Osis joy-hearted, great-hearted, oak-hearted.
Think on Osis squire-father, Queen-lover
Think on Osis Konungr, steel-eyed King.

Wolfen Elegy: In Memory of Markus

Can you hear, with pointed ear
The howl that's on the wind?
The wolfen cry to let us know
Erlkonig here has been.

Stunned we sit, 'round fire's pit
With words that will not come.
No voice can fill our sense of loss
Our tongues and pens struck dumb.

One we knew, for days too few
Abruptly taken from us.
Life gave no sign of things to come
No warning; must it be thus?

As he's lain, search not in vain
No reason can we find.
Embraced by Horned King's bony arms
He left us all behind.

To understand, together band
For comfort all will need
To forge ahead through grief and pain
Our strength will be our steed.

He was a friend 'til very end
A smile he shared so free;
Let all the Wolves remember him
In hearts and memory.

The rain pours, as the wolf roars
And shares in all our tears;
For we have lost a kindred soul
True child of Ealdormere.

© Todd Fischer, June 2001

Hail to Thee, o' Ardchreag

Hail to thee, o' Ardchreag
To the Canton-Upon-the-Cliffs
Hail to thee, o' true Craigger born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

Hail to the Royalty you have spawned
To the Duchess and Barony
Hail to thee, o' Royals born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

Hail to the Marshals of our brood
Of the Scout and of the Horse
Hail to thee, o' leaders born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

Hail to the Fighters who battle for us
As Baronial Guard and more
Hail to thee, o' true Bear born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

Hail to our Craftsmen, and Women too
Those with exquisite skill
Hail to thee, o' Peerage born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

Hail to thee, o' Ardchreag
Boldest of Ealdormere
Hail to thee, o' true Wolf born
Hail, o' hail to thee.

© Todd Fischer, May 2001

Fiona's Lullaby

Drink from the gold chalice,
Drink deep and drink long,
And list while I sing you
Our Fiona's song.

Fair daughter of Mary
From Maidenhead's lands,
You formed Rising Waters
With just, gentle hands.

Bright jewel of the Dragon
With honour you served,
Fulfilling your duties
As herald with verve.

With Byron, a barony
Strong did you steer --
The first of the lands
Newly-named Ealdormere!

Good counsel you offered
To both high-born and low.
Like an oyster, from you
Pearls of wisdom would flow.

Most gentle of spirit
This pachyderm strong;
Your service unstinting,
Your memory long.

("That's ok: I can't remember YOUR name, either!")

And who could forget
The sweet fruits of your labour;
Rich rose petal jam

Shining on my tears

Shining on my tears
The moon peeks from behind clouds
Great is my sorrow

Great is my sorrow
I wet my sleeves⁸ without you
Oh to have you near

Oh to have you near
To hold you close in my arms
To see you smiling

To see you smiling
Warms me to my very soul
At last the sun dawns

At last the sun dawns
It brings joy to my sad heart
And shines on my tears⁹

© Brendan Smith

The Smith's Tale

I first came to stand,
brave warrior I,
By these standing Stones
(Grown old long ago),
To seek a new path.

Bathed in the moon's rays,
Gazing at the sky,
I, fists curled, screamed to
You. Angry. Alone.
None to hear my call.
All Father? It is I,
Thy truest servant!
Went I not to war
for you? Here is proof!

Rough and rotting now.
How then should I live?
Give me back my hand!
Land I cannot till.
Kill me then. Be done.
Gone. That which served you
Dutifully. Lost.

Most cannot recall,
Almost forgotten now,
How I learned to smith
With just the one hand.
Standing by the fire,
dire oaths from my lips
slipping with each burn.
Learning my new art.
Starting life anew.

Few of them know why
I come here to pray.

⁸ The term "I wet my sleeves" is a Japanese poetic term for crying heavily.

⁹ This is in the Japanese style called Renga which consists of a series of Haiku poems where the last line of one is the first line of the next.

Greybeard they call me.
Me! But I care not.
What is in a name?
Fame? Glory? Fleeting
things. You showed me that.
What thanks can I give?
"Live your life" you said
"Wed. Bear sons. Grow old.
Hold well to you kin.
Win friends with kind words.
Sword days now are done."
Done, and with my thanks.⁶

© Tim Jennings

For Prince Berus and Princess Marion

The last lone Wolf stood on the field.
A Rose within his teeth.
A Raven circled o'er head,
Alighting on the heath

She looked around at what he'd wrought.
She judged him then and there.
"At what great cost is vengeance bought?
What price must others share?"

"What would you now, my bonny Prince?
Your foe are dead and gone.
Let us, my lord, rebuild this land.
T'll love you when you're done"

The Wolf he stared at Raven fair.
"This Rose for you I've kept.

⁶ An example of early Irish poetry, in the style of the Incantation of Amergin.

Lady at the Loom

The fretful Bacchanalia
Twists and turns engrappled with the vine
Which yields the blood-red juice of their dementia.
The cloven-hooved and samite-sheathed,
Ecstatic, call your name;
How I wish I'd not begun their weaving.
The knots and turns from endless shuttled tide
Turn always from my softer fancy
To these rough-shod scenes of thee.
Angels with their weightless wings
Alight in ponderous shape upon the frame
And none so fair but share your face;
The curve of brow and finger
In flower-stem or failing bloom
Drooping to the velvet ground
To lay their weary heads upon my lap.
No silken cords but these,
No will but mine shall keep from me my doom:
Thy passionless and unrequiting gaze,
Uncaring of the maid who bears such fruits for thee.⁷

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⁷ The Lady of Shalott appears in the later King Arthur legends as a doomed woman, cursed to die if she ever looks upon the outside world. And so she spends her days with her back to the tower window, weaving scenes that she sees in a nearby mirror. Here she watches Sir Lancelot riding by each day, falls irrevocably in love, and finally succumbs to her curse by turning to look upon him fully.

Ancient One

What grandiose beauty, O King of the Glade,
Most wondrous creation Lady Nature hath made.
Would that I could have discourse with thee,
And learn of the wisdom of thou, Aged Tree.

Sing of the Rock of Ages some wouldst,
But He knoweth not of great change as thou couldst.
Thy life hast endured from seedling to splendour.
Thou hast been witness to times tough and tender.

Oh, if I couldst but spend just a day,
To sit in thy shade and hear what thou wouldst say.
The life that doth live in thy boughs and around
Thy great ancient trunk doth thrive and abound,
They've been gifted the chance to live, wild and free
Due to the food and protection from thee.
And the Great Seelie Court do their dance in thy shade.
All the world shouldst revere thee, O King of the Glade.

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Words

More! Again! Woo me with words! Poetry!
Music! Delights where your lips cannot go
The alphabet will be fingers for thee
and paper will be my skin, caressed so
Write to me an epic of pure pleasure
The language of love where two lovers meet
Ink can be spun into love and treasure
of timeless love and kisses full of heat
Cast it into soft words, gentle phrases
And send this written oblation to me
Thus upon the page shall meet our gazes
A private display of love for lover to see
Although such paper, pen, black ink and mark be true
they make no fair substitution for seeing you

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A kingdom will I win for you.”
But Raven shook and wept.

“O good my Wolf, my mighty knight,
I seek no Kingdom’s jewel,
But here I’ll plant this lovely Rose,
And with you I will rule.”

The Pair they passed each Seasons’ change
With love and hope unbound.
Until at last, a field of Rose
Grew from that barren ground

The Wolf he stared at Raven Fair.
“Our land is full and well!”
But Raven smiled and cocked her head,
“That, only time will tell.”

“But here is all that Man might want
To build upon this day.
Let us my lord, retire from here
Look on, and walk away”.

The Wolf he stared at Raven fair.
“To Man we do bequeath”
And passed they on, into the dawn
Across a Rose strewn heath.

© Tim Jennings

In memory of my King. For Os

I stood upon a barren field, and cried.
Windswept with ashes, comrades old and foemen strong.
A raven’s tears mix with the wolves. Most fearsome song.
Today I feel the loss. My King has died.

No knight reknowned blade did strike him down,
Nor peasants loose flung shaft did find it’s final rest.

For from the field he walked, His voice raised high in jest,
And stood we all in glory of the crown.

He passed us by and strode with awesome might
Toward his palfry steed, then turned to wish us well;
That, no last cry he gave, more commonplace farewell,
And into mornings' sun he rode from sight.

Within my mind I still deny the loss.
No hero finds his end in such foreshortened way.
His claim was to the Saga, not denied destiny.
What right to break the blade? To leave the dross?

Yet do we see his legend build this day.
The bards still sing and cry his undisputed might,
And no heart beats that can his soaring legend fight.
For living men are bound by feet of clay

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For a barefoot maid of distant lands...

I'll lay you down. As in summer,
When the winds catch the petals of the rose.
I'll lay you down. As in autumn,
When the winds bring the leaves from off the tree.
I'll lay you down. As in winter,
When the winds catch the softly falling snows.
I'll lay you down. As in springtime,
When the winds bring the summer back to me.
In every place, though seasons bring
The winds of change, for you I sing.
I'll lay you down.

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The Viking Wife

The King had called and off he went
And on a sword our money spent
A soldier's wage to me he sent
As he marched off to war
My back, unto the plow, was bent
Though, in my chores, I made no dent
The sunset, it was heaven-sent
For I could work no more

And in his absence our son grew
A grown man's work was all he knew
There was what I could teach him, too
But that was not enough
He learned the bow, an axe he threw
His father's foe he yearned to hew
And I knew what he longed to do
When he felt strong and tough

To serve a King, be brave and bold
Spurred on by tales the old men told
To earn the glory, and the gold
Not for a farmer's boy
With high adventure now foretold
My plow for his sword now was sold
He left me, feeling weary, old
And gone was all my joy

So now my heart within my chest
Has called me out to face the test
I pose as man with bound up breast
And march myself to war
With each new kill my rage expressed
I now begin to feel hard pressed
With one more thrust, my final rest
And then I'll grieve no more

They wait at Heaven's door

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To live the old days, no modern word
Let's forge our bold ways, it's do or die."

And as we had planned, we came again
To the same fair land, with hope for all
But Skraelings we saw, women and men
So to fix the flaw, we built a wall.

And good times we share, with friends around
The campfire is there, we sing and play
The Rhine Maidens run, the Ring is found
We've had lots of fun, at end of day.

So now we return, to mark the time
Our fires do burn, even when wet
But now we must tell, in song and rhyme
Of the Dragon's hell, we won't forget.

Come hear the old tale, how the wind blew
Tornado and gale, that did avenge
And how we got here, starting anew
And raised up our cheer, Dragon's Revenge!

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References in the story:

Green sky ghosts: We were fascinated by the greenish glowing in the sky that we thought was Northern Lights. A seasoned tornado veteran would have immediately recognized that green glow as a sign of dangerous weather.

The land diminished, where trees had been: The tornado ripped out 50-foot-tall maples by their roots and decimated the entire campsite.

Curtained Waters: Rideau River (rideau is French for curtains).

Cedric is guarding: Cedric the dragon, who guards our gate.

But let us try To live the old days: At the end of the first Dragon's Revenge, discussions had included the baseball strike, Star Trek and computers. So in subsequent years, there was an effort to act more medievally, do more medieval things and banish the blatantly non-medieval from our midst.

We built a wall: The road to the beach runs along the front of the campsite. So we built a wall. The first year, it was a painted cloth wall, supported by poles and guy ropes. Each year since, Arture has brought wood and built ever-more-elaborate palisade walls and gates.

The Rhine Maidens run, the Ring is found: Our "Ring Play" has become a classic, repeated each year and at other events too.

Fires do burn, even when wet: Another event had had a heavy rain storm, but our bonfire was so high and so hot, even sheeting rain couldn't put it out!

The Raven and the Valkyrie

At twilight, after battle's end
When wolves and eagles fed,
A Valkyrie came to the fields
To take the Masked One's dead.
A raven under hunger's hold
Had found within his sight
A fallen man the angel claimed
For Odin as his right.

The Valkyrie with gleaming spear
Addressed the sloe-black bird:
"What stake have you upon this man?
His rank earns him reward."
The raven answered with his wit:
"On bloody grain I'll feed.
If knighthood makes him Odin's man
His belt is all you need."

"Tis more than belt or spurs or chain,"
The Winged Maid did praise,
"His prowess on the field today
Has caught the High One's gaze."
"If skill at swords is what you seek
To choose a man most brave
Then seek your marks in other fields
For skilled men dodge the grave."

At this the maiden's face grew dark.
"You mock me with your sport
But I am Odin's servant here
And 'tis his wrath you court.
For Huginn is the Spear God's slave
Likewise is Muninn too.
So by his pow'r I tell you now
This man is Odin's due!"

“Then take this corpse for Odin’s sake
For I am of his flock.
He’ll drink your mead and eat your boar
And die at Ragnarok.
While I, fair maid, will feast and feed
When others swordsmen kill
And when the final battle comes
'Tis then I’ll eat my fill.

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For Arminius the Footsore

A tale have I to tell you of misfortune and of greed
Of alcohol and gambling and of one young peasant’s deed.
This tale is quite amazing but I swear each word is true
So listen hard to this young bard, else his fate might find you.

There was a simple peasant with a skill at craft and sword
And for his feats it was thought meet to offer some reward.
The royalty assembled and did grant him for his fame
That he should have the title ‘lord’ pronounced before his name.

The peasant now elated thought to make good on his luck.
He headed for the tavern, there to see what coins he’d pluck.
But mead and ale and alcohol did dampen fast his skill
And money lost did reach a cost that made a mighty bill.

So the peasant, hardly daunted, sought to try his hand at cards
But quickly found his luck unchanged and hopes of credit barred.
So with strong voice he made a choice and yelled his drunken plea:
“I have a noble title so who’ll come and play with me?”

Now from the dark there was a bark, its volume quickly grew.
A small strange shape emerged but fairly blurred by drunken view.

The Tale of Dragon's Revenge

Hot was the season, that year of Doom
We had no reason to fear as yet
Frolicking in the water nymphs' womb
Green sky ghosts in the sky black as jet.
Out of the water, refreshed and cool
Bardic songs sought were the day's last joy
As we said good night, Thor raised his tool
Split the sky so bright, it was no toy.

Hear the gods' thunder, as the rain falls
Skies split asunder, we cry our fear
Hear the gods' voices, hear now their calls
Our only choices: live or die here.

Then came the howling, greater by far
Than the wolves yowling, lifting their song
Great Weather Dragon, roaring afar
Bad Weather Dragon, you don't belong!

A night of terror, the land laid waste
It was no error, by morning seen
But now 'twas finished, we left in haste
The land diminished, where trees had been.

Cheated of camping, we sought redress
Old plans revamping, summer still lives
But far to the north, with no distress
Some locals go forth, the Duke forgives.

The quest was started, for land anew
We weren't downhearted, and we did find
By Curtained Waters a fair land grew
Skrael's sons and daughters camped with their kind.

We ordered the beast, "Leave us alone!"
We'll have our fine feast, dance 'neath the moon
Bonfires and barding, far from our home
Cedric is guarding, it's gone so soon.

"Another next year", the cry was heard
"Let's do it right here, but let us try

Do at the Eldormerean ranks sneer;
And chide the cripple tardy-gaited night,
Little knowing the defeat they will face
In the bright morn. The Ealdormere folk,
Light in their hearts, by their watchful fires
Sit and make merry. They have long prepared for
The morning's danger; and their gestures wide,
Displaying strong young limbs and costly garb,
Presenting them unto the gazing moon
So many great heroes. O now, who will behold
The honoured bard with his friends at his side
Walking up Horde Hill, to where tales are told,
Let him cry, "Praise and glory on his head!"
For forth he goes, and visits with this host,
Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,
And sings them songs, the pride of Ealdormere.
The lady at his side sings dulcet notes
Moving a dread knight to kneel before her;
Nor doth his apprentice fail to give his voice
Unto the weary and all-watched night;
With friendly looks, the listeners respond
With cheerful semblance and sweet words of praise;
That every one, who sad or tired before,
Beholding them, plucks new life from their songs.
Now they must leave the host, gone like the sun,
The bard's careful eye doth see their work is done,
They have warmed hearts, and when they come back all
Behold, as lights of celebration shine,
A little touch of Hector in the night.
And so our scene must to this hall return;
Where - O for pride's sake - we should much wassail
With four or five most fine and foaming draughts
(Think not of where, or how they were made)
The name of Ealdormere! Yet sit and see,
For there are bards much greater here than me.

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"I'll take your bet, young peasant," said the figure sounding bored,
"For who knows what high rank I'd reach if I was first a lord."

Now wine and ale can make a tale quite truly sound deranged
And so perhaps this ailment is what makes this story strange.
But still 'tis sworn by every soul to witness o'er their cup
The stranger to accept the bet did seem a wily pup.

The peasant smiled a drunkard's smile for certain he'd not lose
And dealt the cards to each of them so hands they could peruse.
But when, at last, it came to pass the card game, it was done.
It seemed the other had four kings and title newly won.

The creature's eyes took in the prize much to the man's dismay.
He stood and in a cultured voice, he quietly did say:
"My time is short, my wager won so I must leave, my friend.
But when I am a baron we will surely meet again!"

Now Lady Luck's a winsome wench as all good gamblers know.
She'll flaunt and taunt, as is her wont, then go and kiss your foe.
So do not place your money if you're not sure she's around
Or else you'll lose your title to a right ambitious hound.

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Strigor's Song

I had my first woman at thirteen,
But I killed my first man at eleven;
He made to remark on my sister
And I sent his rude soul off to heaven.
My knife was so small, and his body so big,
His life spilled away in a flood,
And I stood in amazement as death claimed its own
The first time I ever drew blood.

My childhood was never called boring
For revenge was considered my due,
And brothers and cousins and uncles
Had occasional cause me to rue.
Some came from the front, and others behind,
But all choked their last in the mud,
For my steel was as sharp as their honour,
Besmirched by a matter of blood.

I left my line's home shortly after,
And I left finer senses behind,
For there is little room with the wanderer
For things of a delicate kind.
I carried my harness, I carried my steel;
All I needed, when first I did bud
But the raw sanguine bloom would soon follow,
For the killing is deep in my blood.

I've slain a few Turks for Greek money,
And Greeks too, if reason was there.
I'm too old to fear for the fighting
And, if truth should be told, I don't care.
I slew men with coldness, I slew men in rage
If the anger arose in full flood,
For steel is a skill, as is mayhem,
Which have both settled true in my blood.

Some morning I'll never awaken,
For a man I have injured some way
Will catch me and face me, or mayhap
I'll slumber and then he will slay.
I cannot fear fate so familiar to me
I'll serve on, then be spat like old cud
But I'll wage life as aye in the meantime
Cold steel in the dawn, and the blood.

- ii) Hija' (Satire): Usually of the enemies of the poet, his patron or his tribe.
- iii) Ritha' (Elegy): For someone deceased who was dear to the poet.
- iv) Hikma (Wisdom): Sage comments for the poet's listeners.
- v) Wasf (Description): A stirring scene to entertain the listeners. In the qasida presented here, a wasf is given of a battle.
- vi) Fakhr (Boasting): Often of the prowess of the poet, his tribe or his patron.
This qasida contains a little fakhr too!

This structure was used by poets composing works of this type throughout the Middle Ages, and is even still used by Bedouin and partially-sedentarised societies to this day!

It should be noted that the last line does not really fit into this structure. For a pre-Islamic ode, the use of an Islamic expression is anachronistic. In addition, the general idea of the poet riding off into the sunset goes beyond the normal subject matter of such a qasida. The line is a purely personal touch!

A Pennsic Tale

(After William Shakespeare, Henry V, Act IV, Chorus)

Now entertain conjecture of a time
When the creeping mud and the pouring rain
Fill the wide fields of Pennsic.
In ev'ry camp, through the foul weather of night,
The noise of endless wassail loudly sounds,
And in dark corners lovers give soft tongue
To secret whispers in each others' ears.
Drink follows drink, and through the campfire flames
Each gentle sees another's smiling face.
Knight threatens knight, in high and boastful shouts
Roaring in defiance; and from the tents
The fair ladies, ignoring the fighters,
With busy voices filling silence up,
Give wondrous note of celebration.
The minstrels sing their songs, the heralds call,
And the small hours of morning pass away.
Proud of their numbers and secure in soul,
The overconfident Tuchuk mob

Taghlib, he put his enemies to flight, but his allies refused to help him further, and so he was forced to seek help elsewhere to regain his throne. He eventually found his way to the Byzantine court, where the emperor Justinian provided him with an army for his quest. However, Imru' al-Qays seduced Justinian's daughter, with the result that at Ankara the emperor sent him a poisoned robe which made him suffer from painful sores. From this time on he was also known as Dhu'l-Quruh (the owner of sores). He died in about 550. This qasida is subtitled "With apologies to Imru' al-Qays, as much of the style is derived from his mu'allaqa.

The classical qasida normally follows a set of stylistic and structural rules:

1. The qasida should be in a single metre. Arabic metres are quantitative, being based on the number of syllables in the line, placement of consonants (it is rare to find more than two consecutive consonants in Arabic) and whether these syllables are long or short. This is contrary to English poetry, which is based on a stress metre. This means that it has not been possible entirely to emulate the Arabic metre in the qasida presented here. However, it was felt that it would be better to forgo accuracy in favour of comprehensibility to a general audience! The correct number of syllables has been used for the meter, which is called tawil. It consists of two hemistichs of 10 syllables each per line (poetically speaking, every two lines here count as one line).
2. All lines should rhyme, with the first line rhyming internally at the hemistich break.
3. All lines should be end-stopped. Each line should be grammatically complete in itself, with no enjambement to the next line.
4. The qasida should follow a classic structure, consisting of the following narrative elements:
 - a) Atlal (Ruins - lines 1-3 of this qasida): The poet arrives at a deserted camp site, all that remains of the place where his love used to dwell.
 - b) Nasib (Erotic prelude - lines 4-11): The poet waxes lyrical about the beauty of his beloved, and the strength of his love for her. Some of the imagery used for this might seem strange to a western ear, as a result of the radically different cultural background of Middle Eastern poets.
 - c) Tarhallus (Disengagement - lines 12-13): The poet tears himself away from the deserted site, and begins a journey.
 - d) Rihla or Rahil (Journey - lines 14-20): The poet travels towards his objective, often taking the opportunity to boast about the fine qualities of his mount, or muse upon the insignificance of man. In this case, the former option was chosen. Once again, some of the imagery used in this might seem a little strange to a western ear.
 - e) Gharad (Objective - lines 21-35): The eventual conclusion of ode. This can consist of any of a variety of elements:
 - i) Madih (Panegyric): Generally exalting the poet's patron.

Evander mhic Lachlan at Murder Melee XVI

In the summer we buried Thorbjorn King they crossed swords
ten on ten.
On a hot summer's day after swords' sharp play one stood against
three men.
Two were Knights from Sylvan lands, the third a Baron bold
And Thorbjorn's grieving champion alone the field would hold.

In the summer we buried Thorbjorn King three faced a gallant one.
Two of the three held back until a Knightly duel was done.
The Knight did curse an ill-cast blow that both of them did rue
And then they closed, Knight and his foe... and one alone faced
two.

In the summer we buried Thorbjorn King one man on two
advanced,
'Gainst Knight and Baron skilled and deadly but already lanced.
The pair hoped to engage in line the lonely champion
But as they closed he stepped aside... and one alone faced one.

In the summer we buried Thorbjorn King we saw two proud
Knights fall.
Far Æthelmearc would grieve in time; first heard was Malik's call.
The Baron's blade, swift as an asp, to the champion's leg did glide
But, as he fell upon his knees, a sword rent Malik's side.

In the summer we buried Thorbjorn King they crossed swords
ten on ten,
Then one on three, then one on two, then man on man again
Until three lay still on the grass and legends loud were made
Of Evander, kneeling on his field, and the skill of his lone blade.

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Mortraeth's Song

I've watched a dozen summers fade
Without his touch, without his hand
I've seen a dozen times that tree
Spread leaves like fire across his land
As I stand, silent, by his gate
I serve him as I stay and wait

I've seen a hundred bolts of cloth
Spring whole and vibrant from the loom
For me to fold and pack away
In hopes of breaking winter's gloom
As I wait word of husband's fate
What more to do but sit and wait

I till the fields and tend the fires
I watch the flocks and spin the wheel
I work all day but cannot sleep
For fear of what dawn may reveal
Of viking gone, of missing mate
In fear I can but work and wait

I keep the house, I keep the land
I mind his cattle and his men
I'll smile my smile when he arrives
And once more when he leaves again
So spins my life, I mark each date
When he must go, and I must wait

When comes the time and turns the tide
When ships go gliding out to sea
His last sight of his home and land
Will be the shore, and there of me
Before I go to hearth and grate
The days do pass, and I shall wait

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Remains standing in the way and so we our foes displace.

They retreat again, and then their nerve breaks and off they run,
Like deer that have scented leopards. The fight is now a chase.

Soon our foes are all fled. The clashing din of swords is gone.
The wind blows the sand across which soon will the blood efface.

I go to my sultan's side as he reaches to his chin,
To unlace the helmet which his noble head does encase.

He smiles, and I know that I have won favour in his eyes.
I have fought hard enough and avoided any disgrace.

So now I turn my steed's head to the west and gallop off,
And in sha'a Allah tonight I will my love embrace.

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Writer's Notes

"For a poet was one, a defence to the honour of them all, two, a weapon to ward off insult, three, a record of great deeds." Ibn Rashiq (d. 1070)

The above is a poem written in the style of a pre-Islamic qasida, or ode, dating from the 6th or early 7th Century. These qasidat were composed by Bedouin poets (Ar. *shu'ara'*, sing. *sha'ir*), who played a number of roles within their tribes. They were historians of tribal lore, frequently consulted if information was needed regarding precedents of the tribes customs or the genealogy of its members. They were propagandists, encouraging their fellows in times of war. They were also regarded as wizards, feared for their ability to curse their enemies through bitter satire.

The qasidat were normally performed at meetings of tribes, which occurred during four sacred months of the year, and often consisted of trade fairs or group pilgrimages to shrines (most particularly to the Ka'ba, at Mecca). They were recited (from memory, few were written down) either by the poet himself, or by trained reciters (Ar. *ruwah*, sing. *rawin*). A poet who could afford to train a number of reciters could see his work, and with it his fame, spread over a wide area.

The most famous pre-Islamic qasidat were the *mu'allaqat* (hanging poems), which according to legend were seven of the finest odes which were inscribed upon white linen in letters of gold, and hung around the Ka'ba. It is actually more likely that they were gathered together by a later writer. Of these, the best known is that of Imru' al-Qays, who was the youngest son of Hujr, the chieftain of the Kinda. He was also a notorious womaniser, being twice expelled from his father's house for his exploits. When one of the tribes of the area, the Banu Asad, revolted and put his father to death, the duty of *tha'r* (blood vengeance) fell upon him. Enlisting the aid of two other tribes, the Banu Bakr and Banu

If you should watch us run by, and seek to follow our path,
Of us you will see no sign. His feet never leave a trace.
He has borne me many times amid blades and fire and death,
But never has he been timid or sought to flee his place.
There are those that say that such an ill-favoured, stinking mount
Serves no end, but I say that no other can him replace.
I've seen many a fair horse, much vaunted by proud young fools,
Shy back from the blood of war, their hearts cowardly and base.
He may be an ugly beast of foul looks and noxious breath,
But his heart is braver than a lion's, hot for the chase.
So here now we come again to where drums are beating out,
And horns blast, together we ourselves for the battle brace.
He pulls on the leather rein, eager now to join the fight,
While I pull my helmet on and take my bow from its case.
To my left my sultan rides, his sword in his great right hand,
His left at his front, he holds his shield to his armour lace.
All around his army waits, with weapons bright and eyes full
Of courage. No enemy could scare this from any face.
We charge, and our arrows fly to pierce through our wretched foes,
And soon I swap bow for blade to strike out and clear a space.
My steed butts, and kicks, and bites, and dodges each stabbing
spear,
And no matter how they try, no foeman can us displace.
I slice, thrust and cut again at each hairy, grasping arm,
Which reaches to pull me down from my high and lofty place.
As heads, limbs and bodies fall with each blow I strike around,
My foes, learning how to fear are quick to draw back a pace.
I surge forward, with my sword in my hand held high above
My head, and an awful smile which lights up my snarling face.
I strike left and right again and hack out a bloody swathe
Of death, and my valiant mount kicks out with unusual grace.
There is not one enemy who, clubbed by his mighty feet,

For Aeden and Kaffa

- I. The years so soon passed / sanguine sages shall tell us
Two lines each proud deeds tell / two names worth remembering
- II. The war bands like banshees / ruby banner before them
Two spearpoints gore-streaming / two stout hearts the foremost
- III. The archers aye patient / all in livery of scarlet
Two arrows 'midst many / two bows drawn to make marks
- IV. The care of proud craftsmen / crimson glow of forged iron
Two hands making harness / two hard skins of war steel
- V. The woodwright's fine work / in white pine and bright cedar
Two eyes trace fine wood-grain / two tried and true teachers
- VI. The feasts at the fireside / flame's glow warm and ruddy
Two cups clash in tribute / two toasts split the silence
- VII. The gifts and great honours / beneath gules banner given
Two voices speak verity / two ring-givers valued
- VIII. The courts and high councils / with South King and Rose
Queen
Two seats held in splendour / two peers in such fiefdom
- IX. The North's houses and heroes / copper shields and hard
warriors
Two noble names ring clear / two known as kind patrons
- X. The font of proud Princes / beneath red standard puissant
Two legacies legendary / two lands - wolf's and barony

**For Henry and Enid,
Their Excellencies Skraeling Althing**

Wide-ranger, wanderer, friend of hill's side,
Gentle when able and fierce foe when tried.
Faithful and fertile, such attributes rare;
Now charge full the North-cup and drink to the Hare!

Gaze to the southland like hill-strider wise,
Laugh at the North wind and predators' eyes.
Dash for the high hills and cast off dull care
Then drink from the North-cup, Waeshael to the Hare!

Fleet-foot in battle and graceful at dance,
Glad as the summer's sun and glen's expanse.
Dashing and daring, in form and mind fair,
Pray pass 'round the North-cup, a health to the Hare!

Singular mark of a singular place,
War-wise when needed, how wide its embrace!
Faithful, forgiving, such attributes rare;
Now charge full the North-cup and drink to the Hare!

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Qasidat Ibrahim ibn Mahmud

(with apologies to Imru' al-Qays)

Halt my friends, and let me weep when I see this desert place.
For lost love I give the sun the salt tears upon my face.

For here stood among these dunes my dearest one's linen tent.
The winds blow the sand across this site, and the signs efface.

For all now are packed and gone away to the distant west,
And all that is left here now is me in this open space.

The breeze sighs into my ears a soft word of good advice:
Remember! The night you met in secret, risking disgrace.

Remember! Her gentle hands reaching up behind those eyes,
Which shone bright like distant stars as she did her veil unlace.

Remember! The way the cloth fell tumbling to the soft sand,
Revealing to you alone a vision of perfect grace.

Her cheeks pale, like white gazelles which gallop across the dunes.
The fair moon could not compare to that glory in her face.

Her hair fell in ebon waves which flowed down her flawless back,
To cover my trembling hands as she stood in my embrace.

She held me, and in my clasp was her slim and tender waist,
Which bent like a troubled palm which the wind seeks to displace.

The sand sucked at our young feet to keep our joy with it there,
But I, jealous of my love would not share her with this place.

I raised her up in my hands away from the grasping earth.
Our love was a beacon which no sun can ever replace.

Enough now, for time has passed. A drum sounds a battle call
Which no fighter can ignore. I gather my shield and mace.

My camel awaits me on its knees, with its head held high,
On its back I take my seat and up and away we race.

His legs may be bent like reeds shattered by the savage storms,
But they fly across the sand, and none can his charge outpace.

The one who sits on his back feels no jolt or swaying ride,
A newborn could sit here and be safe, so smooth is his pace.