

# Havamál: The Song of Hár

Translation by

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## Dedication

This work is dedicated first to the Aesir and the Vanir, and to the Saga who is my patron.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Gary Anderson who offered tremendous help and the occasional verbal "slap upside the head" when I got stuck on a verse. I would also like to thank William Reaves for his help early on in this translation. And Rorik, who helped in many verses and in proof-reading.

## Introduction

Hávamál literally translates as The High Ones Words. In the mythology of the Nordic peoples the High One was the god Oðin, god of wisdom, poetry, magic and death. It was believed that this poem was words of wisdom, homilies, and a code of conduct. The poem is divided into six sections. The first three can be considered codes of conduct; how one should behave and treat others. The next section deals with the god Odin and his passions and the finding of the runes. The next deals with magic. The last section is just one poem and that is what the name of the section means – Last Poem!

My decision to do this translation came after conversations with a friend in an historical recreation organization. My friend, had taught himself to read and write Old Norse to verify translations of Runestones. These conversations led us to wonder about other translations of Old Norse material. When I came across the Gestapattur on an Internet web site, I thought it would be a good idea to try translating the Old Norse to English. Later, I came across the entire poem. I used translations by W. H. Auden & P. B. Taylor, Lee M. Hollander, Carolyn Larrington, and O. Bray as controls. In most cases my translations of the verses were very similar; having only a different choice of synonyms.

Another difference between my translation and others is that I show the process that one goes through to determine what each word means and then which are used to make the lines of the poem. I then show a literal translation and a final one which makes it much easier to read. Lastly, there is commentary following the poem giving my belief as to what the verse is trying to teach. Some are very straight forward, others are a little deeper.

One last note. The order of the poem follows a standardized form. However, it is quite probable that all the sections were originally separate poems. As such, it is also quite probable that some verses were added after the poem was originally composed. A few of the verses have a decidedly non-heathen flavor to them. These particular verses are noted as being such in the commentary on each verse.

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## Hávamál: the Song of Hár

### I. Gestapáttur - Guest Section

1. Gáttir allar  
áður gangi fram  
um skoðast skyli,  
um skyggnast skyli,  
því að óvíst er að vita  
hvar óvinir  
sitja á fleti fyrir.

Doorway all

Before {walk, go, pass} {forward, forth, on}

{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {view, survey, examine, inspect} {shelter, shed}

{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {spy, look out} {shelter, shed},

{consequently, therefore; why, for, because} {that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to,

at} {doubtful, uncertain} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {that, though, although;

towards, against, up to, to, at} {know, be aware of, face}

where enemy

{sit, be seated} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} {couch, strip} {before, in front of, because of,  
on account of}.

Doorways all

Before pass forth

Survey about the shelter

Spy about the shelter,

Because although uncertain who know

Where enemies

Sit upon benches before you.

At all doorways

Before passing forth

Survey about the shelter

Spy about the shelter,

Because there is uncertainty

Where enemies

Sit upon benches before you.

This verse is fairly straight forward. One should always be cautious when entering into a place or situation one has never been in before. One cannot know if there are enemies there or not.

2. Gefendur heilir,  
gestur er inn kominn,  
hvar skal sitja sjá?  
Mjög er bráður  
sá er á bröndum skal  
síns um freista frama.

{giver, donor} {hail, greeting; sound, safe, in health, good luck, good omen},  
{guest, visitor} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {in, into} come,  
where shall {sit, be seated} {see, look, sight; miss, mourn, sorry, foresee, provide, expect,  
be cautious}?  
{very much, very, much, greatly} {as, when, who, that, which, whose} {sudden, hasty;  
hot tempered, rash; impatient; vehement}  
{sow; such, so, that, the one, who} {as, who, that, which, whose, when; it} {on, upon, in, of, at,  
by, about; river, stream; bait, rest} {burn, fire} shall  
his {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {try, tempt} {distinction, fame}.

Giver hail  
Guest which in come  
Where shall be seated expect?  
Very who impatient  
Who when at fire shall  
his by try fame.

Hail the Giver  
The guest has come  
Where shall he expect to be seated?  
Very rash is he  
When at the hearth he shall  
Go about proving his fame.

The first half of the verse asks the host where a new come guest should be seated. As the placement of one's seat at a gathering denoted one's social standing, knowing where one was to sit was important. The wrong placement could lead to great insults. The second half of the verse is a warning to guests to behave themselves; that it is rude to make excessive or inappropriate boasts while at the feast.

3. Elds er þörf  
þeim er inn er kominn  
og á kné kalinn;  
matar og voða  
er manni þörf  
þeim er hefir um fjall farið.

{fire, eruption} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {need, use, necessity, requirement}  
they {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {in, into} {who, that, which, whose} come  
and {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} knee {frost-bitten, frost-maimed}  
{food, provisions} and {clothes; fishing net}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {man, person, husband; moon} {need, use,  
necessity, requirement}  
They {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {to be able, can, may; avenge, vengeance} {of,  
about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {mountain, hill} {gone, lost, disposed;  
constituted}

Fire that need  
They who into which come  
And of knee frost bitten;  
Food and clothes  
That person needs  
They that can by mountain gone

Fire is needed  
By those who come  
And are frost-bitten below the knee;  
Food and clothes  
That person needs  
Who over the mountain has gone.

This is telling the host that when a guest arrives during the winter to take them to a seat near the fire so that they may warm themselves. The guest should then be offered food and fresh clothing so as that s/he does not need to sit about in wet clothes.

4. Vatns er þörf  
þeim er til verðar kemur,  
þerru og þjóðlaðar,  
góðs um æðis  
ef sér geta mætti  
orðs og endurþögu.

{water, lake, large river(s)} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {need, use, necessity, requirement}  
They {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {to, towards} {become, grow, get, turn, happen, befall, be obliged} come,  
{dry, wipe; dry weather} and {national, people - attract, allure, captivate},  
{gods, idols; good} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}  
{rage, fury, madness, frenzy; nature, disposition; very, rather }  
{if, in case; doubt} oneself {get, guess, mention} {to be able to, can, may}  
words and {past, formerly, again - yours}

Water that need  
They who towards happen come,  
Dry and people-allure,  
Good for disposition  
If oneself mention be able to  
Words and formerly-yours.

Water is needed  
By those who come,  
Thirsty and in need camaraderie,  
It is good for one's humor  
If able to get oneself  
News and to tell ones tale.

This is a continuation of the verse above. In addition to food, fire and warm, dry clothes, a guest needs to be offered a drink to quench the thirst developed and the dust accumulated on the road. The second half of the verse states that the guest should then be given local news and allowed to tell the news of himself and what he has heard along the road.



5. Vits er þörf  
þeim er víða ratar;  
dælt er heima hvað.  
Að augabragði verður  
sá er ekki kann  
og með snotrum situr.

{sense, reason, intelligence} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {need, use, necessity, requirement}  
they {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {far and wide, in many places} {to fall down; to push, shove, drive, drift};  
{gentle, easy, familiar} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} home what.  
{that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to at} {in the twinkling of an eye}  
{worth, meal, become aware of}  
{sow; so, that, who} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {not; nothing, naught; sobbing, sob} {to know, know how to, be able; kin, kindred}  
and with wise {sit, be seated}.

Reason that need  
They who far and wide drift;  
Easy which home what.  
Though in a twinkling of an eye become aware  
Who which nothing to know  
And with wise be seated.

Reason is needed  
By those that travel far and wide;  
It is easy at home.  
Though soon it is known  
Which ones know nothing  
And with the wise are seated.

Sage advice for those who travel. Things are not the same as when at home; if one gains just enough knowledge to get at home, that person will be seen as ignorant when he travels far from home and that knowledge is shown to be insufficient.

6. Að hyggjandi sinni  
 skyli-t maður hræsinn vera  
 heldur gætinn að geði.  
 Þá er horskur og þögull  
 kemur heimisgarða til  
 sjaldan verður víti vörum  
 því að óbrigðra vin  
 fær maður aldregi  
 en manvit mikið.

{that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at} {believe, think} {take care of, attend to, heed, mind; interest; disposition, mind, opinion}  
 {should not {man, person; faded} {vaunting, boasting} {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
 {watertight, waterproof; rather, but, on the contrary} {take care of, watch, notice, heed, mind, attend to} {that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at} {mood, temper, disposition; mind; spirits; liking}.  
 {then, at the time} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} wise and taciturn  
 come {home yard; world yards} {to, towards}  
 {seldom, rarely} {happens, come to pass} {know} lip-by  
 {consequently, therefor} {that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at}  
 {unflawed, inviolate, unbreaking} friends  
 {few} {man, person; faded} never  
 but {human understanding} {great, large}.

Though think heed  
 Shelter the man boasting purpose  
 Rather notice that disposition.  
 When that wise and taciturn  
 Come home-yard to  
 Seldom come to know by lip  
 Because to unbreaking friends  
 Have man never  
 But human understanding great.

When thinking take heed  
 A boasting man covers a purpose  
 Take notice of his character.  
 When the wise and reserved  
 Come to the halls  
 Seldom comes knowledge by speech  
 Because a fast friend  
 Man never has  
 But great wisdom.

The portion of this verse prior to the first period tells us that those that boast too much might not be what they say, so watch the person to learn their true character. The second half tells us that when we enter somewhere, to keep our mouths shut and listen; one learns by listening, not talking and that being wise is the best friend one can have.

7. Inn vari gestur,  
er til verðar kemur,  
þunnu hljóði þegir,  
eyrum hlýðir  
en augum skoðar;  
svo nýsist fróðra hver fyrir.

{in, into, inside, inland} {warning, precaution} {guest, visitor},  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {to, towards} {become, grow, get, turn, happen,  
arise, befall, be obliged} come,  
{thin, weak} {hearing, silence, cry, sound} {at once, forthwith, already, when; be silent,  
continue silent}  
{ear, handle} {warm, cover up, tend, nurse (or) obey, yield}  
but eye {view, survey, examine, inspect};  
{so, thus, then} newest wise {who, which; every, each; whoever, whichever; hot spring} {before,  
in front of, of, on account of, earlier, previously}.

Into precaution guest,  
Who towards happen come,  
Weak sound at once,  
Ear obey  
And eye survey;  
Thus newest wise which before.

The cautious guest,  
Towards those that come,  
Keeps quiet,  
He listens  
And watches;  
Thus new knowledge is gained.

This verse is a restatement of the previous one, only in simpler language.

8. Hinn er sæll,  
er sér um getur  
lof og líknstafi.  
Ódælla er við það,  
er maður eiga skal  
annars brjóstum í.

{that, the other} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {happy, blessed},  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} oneself {of, about, around, round, during, by, at,  
for} {means, resources, ability, power, get}  
{praise, good report; permission, leave, license} and Charitystaves  
{difficult, disobedient, wild, naughty} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {against, at, by,  
near, of, on, to, with; we} {there, it, that},  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {man, person; faded} {own, possess, have;  
ownership, possession; not} shall  
{else, otherwise, for the rest} {breast, chest, mind, heart; shirt front, front of something} {in,  
into, during, for}.

That who blessed,  
Who oneself for resources  
Praise and charitystaves.  
Difficult is near it,  
That man possess shall  
Otherwise heart for.

Blessed the one  
Who is fortunate to have  
Praise and good writings.  
It is difficult neighboring  
The man that shall possess  
A heart that is contrary.

The first half of this strophe was relatively easy; both to translate and to see the meaning: A person is very lucky when many people think highly of him. The second half of the strophe was very difficult. The translating of the words themselves was easy, but ordering them so that they made sense was something else. The meaning that I derive from this is that when people have an unfriendly neighbor, that life can be difficult for everyone nearby.

9. Sá er sæll  
er sjálfur um á  
lof og vit meðan lifir  
því að ill ráð  
hefir maður oft þegið  
annars brjóstum úr.

{sow; so, that, who} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {happy, blessed}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} self {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}  
{on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
{praise, good report; permission, leave, license} and {sense, reason, intelligence} {while,  
whilst, as long as; in the mean time, meanwhile} {live, be alive, survive; be left}  
{consequently, therefore} {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} {badly,  
ill} {council, advice; means, expedient}  
{to be able, can, may; avenge, vengeance} {man, person; faded} {often, frequently}  
{at once, forthwith, already, when, be silent, continue silent}  
{else, otherwise, for the rest} {breast, chest, mind, heart, shirt front, front of something}  
{watch; out of, from}.

That who happy  
Whose self for about  
Praise and reason as long as live  
Consequently towards ill council  
May man often be silent  
Otherwise mind watch

One is happiest  
Who has about themselves  
Praise and wisdom as long as they live;  
Thus towards ill council  
May a person keep silent  
And otherwise watch their mind.

This is another verse that counsels the gaining of wisdom and the good will of others. The second half counsels the ignoring of people who wish to offer bad advice and to keeping ones opinions to oneself.

10. Byrði betri

ber-at maður brautu að  
en sé manvit mikið.  
Auði betra  
þykir það í ókunnum stað;  
slíkt er volaðs vera.

{load, burden} better  
{berry; bear, naked, uncovered; clear, manifest} - against {man, person; faded} {road, path,  
track} {that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at}  
but {to be; this; to see} {human understanding} {great, large}.  
{easily; destined; riches, wealth, fortune} {better, improve}  
{thought to be, seem to be; although} {there; it, that} {in, into, during} {unknown,  
unacquainted, strange, obscure} {place, spot, parts};  
{such, such a thing} {who, that, which, whose; when; is; at} {misery; wail, whine, cry; rumple,  
soil; wretched, miserable} {stay, sojourn; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be,  
exist}

Load better  
Bear not man road that  
But this human understanding large.  
Destined better  
Seems it in strange places;  
Such that misery sojourn.

A better load  
Man cannot bear on the road  
But this great wits.  
Better intent  
In strange places it seems;  
Like when misery stays.

Having ones wits about them makes for safer traveling. By having and using ones wits in  
strange places will prevent misery and that is the best fortune one can have.

11. Byrði betri

ber-at maður brautu að  
en sé manvit mikið;  
vegnest verra  
vegur-a hann velli að  
en sé ofdrykkja öls.

{load, burden} better  
{bear, naked, uncovered; clear, manifest} - against {man, person; faded} {road, path,  
track} {though, that, although, towards, against, up to, to, at}  
but {to be; this; to see} {human understanding} {great, large};  
{travelling, provisions} {worse, suffer, mischief}  
{way, road, mode; manner, direction; honor, distinction}-not he {boil; cry, scream, flow;  
ground} {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at}  
{but; when} {to be; this; to see} {drunk, drunkenness} {ale, beer, liquor}.

Burden better  
Bear-against man road at  
But this human understanding great;  
Traveling suffer  
Honor-not he ground towards  
When is drunk ale.

A better burden  
Man cannot carry on the road  
But this great wits;  
Traveling suffers  
He foolishly falls  
When drunk on ale.

Again the advice to gather wits and wisdom. Also to watch how much ale one consumes when traveling as the drunkard not only makes a fool of himself, but leaves himself open for trouble on the road - mainly in the thieves and injury.

12. Er-a svo gott  
sem gott kveða  
öl alda sonum  
því að færra veit  
er fleira drekkur  
síns til geðs gumi.

Is not {so, thus, then} good  
{as, as if} good {say, recite, sing}  
{ale, beer, liquor} {age-not; billow} son  
{consequently, therefore; for, because} {that, though, although;  
towards, against, up to, to, at} few {know, be aware of}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} more drinks  
his own {to, towards} {mood, temper, disposition; mind, spirit, liking} man.

Is not so good  
As good say  
Ale billow son  
For against few know  
That more drinks  
His towards minds man

It is not so good  
As pleasantly said  
Billowing ale son  
For many know  
That too much drink  
Man's mind goes.

Do not believe that much ale is good for you; too much drink causes one to lose their reason.



13. Ómínnishegri heitir  
sá er yfir öldrum þrumir;  
hann stelur geði guma.  
Þess fugls fjöðrum  
eg fjötraður vark  
í garði Gunnlaðar.

{oblivious heron} {name, designation, denomination}  
{sow; so, that, who} {is; when; who, that, which, whose} {over, above} {ale party}  
{stay behind, mope};  
he {steal, embezzle, steal upon, surprise, attack unawares} {mood, temper, disposition,  
mind, spirits, liking} {praise excessively, boast}.  
{this, that, these} {bird, fowl} {feather, quill; blade of a spear}  
I {fettered, chained} {cautious, wary, careful}  
{in, into, during} {manger, byre; garden, yard, courtyard, fence, wall, house, cottage; spell  
of stormy weather} Gunnlaðar.

Oblivious heron name  
Who which over ale party stay behind;  
He surprise mind boast.  
That bird quill  
I fettered wary  
In house Gunnlaðar

Oblivious the heron's name  
Who over stays the ale feast;  
He surprises the mind with boasting;  
That bird's feather  
I chained with caution  
In Gunnlað's house

Here "the heron" is a kenning for man. It says that one who drinks too much becomes oblivious to one's surroundings and that one's common sense is lost. Thus the drunkard begins to make foolish and/or unfounded boasts. The last half of the strophe indicates that the poet (Oðin ?) drank in moderation or with caution while in the home of Gunnlað. This is an allusion to the story of Oðin winning the mead of poetry.

14. Ödur eg varð,  
varð ofurölvi  
að ins fróða Fjalars.  
Því er öldur best  
að aftur um heimtír  
hver sitt geð gumi.

{ale, beer} I {cairn, memorial, guard, watch},  
{cairn, memorial, guard, watch} {over intoxicated}  
{that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at} the {well instructed, learned}Fjalars.  
{consequently, therefore; for, because} {who, that, which, whose} {ale; drinking party} best  
{that, though, although; towards, against, up to, to, at} {after, back,  
again} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for; if} recover-is  
{who, which; every, each; hot spring} ones{mood, temper,  
disposition, mind, spirits, liking} man.

Ale I watch  
Watch over intoxicated  
At the learned Fjalars  
Because that drinking party best  
That after about recover-is  
Each ones mind man

I watched the ale  
Watched the drunk  
At the learned Fjalars hall  
Because the best feast  
Is that one remembered  
In each man's mind.

This is another allusion to the winning of the mead of poetry; Fjalar is an alternate name for Suttung. Óðin is stating that he drank only in moderation while those around him got drunk. The last half of the strophe is pretty straight forward - one enjoys a party more if they can remember what was said and done the night before thus avoiding embarrassment and the need to fulfill foolish oaths.

15. Þagalt og hugalt  
skyli þjóðans barn  
og vígdjarft vera;  
glaður og reifur  
skyli gumna hver  
uns sinn bíður bana.

quiet and {bravery, courage, fortitude, mind}  
{shelter, shed} prince {child, infant, baby}  
and {valiant, valorous} {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose,  
intention, view; be, exist}  
{glad, cheerful, merry} and {swaddle, swathe; bestow, present}  
{shelter, shed} man {who, which; every, each; hot spring}  
{until, til} {his, hers, ours, its, theirs; time} {to wait} {kill, destroy}.

Quiet and brave  
Shelter prince child  
And valiant be  
Merry and cheerful  
Shelter man each  
Until his to wait kill

Quiet and brave  
A young prince at home  
And valiant be;  
Merry and Cheerful  
Each man at home  
Until his expected death.

When at home, young men (of any rank, really) should be brave, valiant, and not prone to speaking too much or out of turn. Everyone should be happy with their home life throughout their days.

16. Ósnjallur maður  
hyggst munu ey lifa  
ef hann við víg varast  
en elli gefur  
honum engi frið  
þótt honum geirar gefi.

{unwise, unskilled} {man, person; faded}  
{mean, believe, think, intend, purpose} {shall, will, should, would}  
  {island, isle; ever} {live, be alive, survive}  
{if, in case; doubt} he {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we}  
{killing, slaying, homicide, manslaughter, battle, fight} {warn, caution, beware, be on guard}  
{but, than} {old age} {give, present, make a present}  
he {meadow, grassland; no none, nobody, no one} {pacify, appease, restore, restore to peace,  
  protect}  
{thought to be, seem to be; although} he spears give.

Unwise man  
Believe will ever live  
If he with battle be on guard  
But old age make a present  
He no restore  
Although he spears give

The unwise man  
Believes he will live always  
If he guards against battle  
But old age makes a present  
He cannot return  
Although spears he gives away.

A fool believes himself to be immortal, especially if he avoids conflict, but no one can escape death by old age even if battles are avoided.

17. Kópir afglapi  
 er til kynnis kemur,  
 þylst hann um eða þrumir.  
 Allt er senn  
 ef hann sýlg um getur,  
 uppi er þá geð guma.

{stunt, declines, copper, seal pup, small vessel} {fool, simpleton}  
 {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {to, towards} {acquainted with, an acquaintance} come,  
 {repeat by rote, patter; recite} he {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, if, in, for} {or, and,  
 but} {stay behind, mope; lie, welter, resound, thunder}.  
 {all, whole, entire, completely} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {soon, presently; seen}  
 {if, in case; doubt; lest} he {frozen, brooch, buckle, door sill}  
 {of, about, around, round, if, in, during, by, at, for} {means, resources, ability, power; get;  
 can; guess; beget},  
 {up, above, upstairs; live; raised up, used up} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {then, at t  
 he time; thaw accept, receive, when} {mood, temper, disposition, mind, spirits,  
 liking; affection} {man}.

Seal pup fool  
 When towards an acquaintance come  
 Patter he about or mope.  
 Entire is seen  
 If he buckle at ability  
 Raised up is when affection man

The young fool  
 When towards an acquaintance comes,  
 He babbles about or mopes.  
 Everything is known  
 If at ability he buckles,  
 Man is raised up when he is liked.

This was a difficult verse. At first I was taking some words and phrases too literally; forgetting about kennings. However, I finally got past these failings and got the verse translated. The first half of the verse describes the actions of young person who has not been properly trained in the manners one uses when meeting some one one knows but is not necessarily a friend. The second half can be seen as either saying inspite of being foolish, if one buckles down to work, their true nature is shown and their status will be raised by being liked for their industriousness. Or the verse says that the true nature is seen when they fail at their work, but may be made a better person by having a friend.

18. Sá einn veit  
er víða ratar  
og hefir fjöld um farið  
hverju geði  
stýrir gumna hver  
sá er vitandi er vits.

{sow; so, that, who} {one, alone} {know, be aware of}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} {we; scattered; skein; wood; far an wide, in many places}  
{to fall down; to push, shove, drive, drift}  
and {to be able, can, may; avenge, vengeance} {multitude, number, store} {of, about,  
around, round, during, by, at, for} {gone, lost, disposed, constituted}  
{who, which, what, each, every} {mood, temper, disposition, mind, spirit, liking}  
{rudder, helm, tail} man {who, which; every, each; hot spring}  
{sow, so, that, when; to see} {who, that, which, whose; is} understandable  
{who, that, which, whose; is} {sense, reason, intelligence, wits}.

Who alone know  
When far and wide drift  
And can store for gone  
Every mind  
Rudder man every  
To see who understandable that wits.

He alone comprehends  
When travelling far and wide  
And able to reserve for loss  
What mind  
Steers each man  
And sees who learns by wits.

It is a smart man who does not spend everything when travelling and watches those around him  
to see how they act.

19. Haldi-t maður á kerri,  
drekki þó að hófi mjöð,  
mæli þarft eða þegi;  
ókynnis þess  
vár þig engi maður  
að þú gangir snemma að sofa.

{grasp, hold, keeping, strength, durability}-against {man, person; faded}  
{on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}{vessel, tub},  
drink although {moderation, moderately} mead,  
{voice, measure, speak} useful or {at once, forthwith, already, when;  
be silent, continue silent};  
{not breed} {this, that, these}  
{our; to be} {accept, you} {meadow, grassland; no, none, nobody, no one} {man,  
person; faded}  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at}{thou, you} {walk, go, pass, march,  
course, gait, corridor, passage, graze} early {that, though, although, towards, against,  
up to, to, at} {sleep, be asleep}.

Keeping against man at vessel  
Drink although moderately mead  
Speak useful or be silent  
Not breed this  
Is accept no one man  
Though you go early to sleep

Keep not a man at cups  
Drink mead albeit moderately  
Speak useful or be silent  
That ill-breeding  
Is no man construed  
Though he goes to bed early.

This is good advice; especially if you like to party or frequent bars. Don't force some one to drink that does not wish to and drink only in moderation. Secondly, if you must speak, say something intelligent and meaningful. Lastly, if you leave early, or some one with you does so, this should never be seen as bad manners.

20. Gráðugur halur  
nema geðs viti  
etur sér aldurtrega;  
oft fær hlægis,  
er með horskum kemur,  
manni heimskum magi.

{bull; greedy, voracious} man  
{take, perceive, catch, hear, learn, acquire, settle, colonize; unless} {mood, temper,  
disposition, mind, spirit, liking} {bode; to know}  
{means, resources, ability, power; eat} {oneself; this} {age mourn; never reluctant};  
{often, frequently} {able, capable; to get, take; few} laugh,  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} {with, among} wise come,  
{man, person, husband; moon} {foolish, silly, stupid} {stomach, belly}.

Greedy man  
Acquire mind to know  
Eat this never reluctant;  
Often to get laugh,  
Who with wise come,  
Man foolish belly.

The greedy man  
Knows how to get his wish  
And is ever ready to eat;  
He often gets laughs,  
When among the wise he comes,  
The man with the foolish belly.

Do not over eat, it makes you look lazy and foolish - in that you do not know how to control yourself. This will gain you the scorn of wiser people around.



21. Hjarðir það vitu  
nær þær heim skulu  
og ganga þá af grasi;  
en ósvinnur maður  
kann ævagi  
síns um mál maga.

{linger, vegetate; herd}{there; it that}(?) {beacon, sign, lighthouse, omen; bode; face,  
know}  
{almost, nearly; near; how soon, when, until} they home shall  
and {walk, go, pass, march, course, gait, corridor, passage, graze} {then, at the time; thaw}{by,  
of, from, with} {grass, herb, herbage};  
but {unwise, not stingy} {man, person; faded}  
{to know, know how to, be able; kin, kindred} never  
theirs {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {speech, speaking, power of speech, tale,  
story; time} {stomach; thin}

Herd it know  
When they home shall  
And walk then from grass;  
But unwise man  
Know never  
Theirs of tale thin

The herd knows  
When they shall go home  
And leave the pasture;  
But the unwise man  
Never knows  
When his tale is thin.

Basically, this verse says that those who do not know when to stop speaking do not have the sense of cattle.

22. Vesall maður  
og illa skapi  
hlær að hvívetna.  
Hittki hann veit,  
er hann vita þyrfti,  
að hann er-a vamma vanur.

{wretched, poor, miserable, unwell, indisposed} {man, person; faded}  
and {ill, badly; ill treated} {mind, temper, disposition}  
laugh {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at} {anything, everything, whatever}.  
Comes to he {know, be aware of},  
{who, that, which, whose; is; } he {know, be aware of} need,  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at} he is not {fretful, crying, blemish}  
{accustomed, used; wanting, missing; lacking}.

Wretched man  
And ill temper  
Laugh at everything.  
Comes to he know  
That he know need  
That he is not blemish lacking.

The wretched man  
And ill tempered  
Laughs at everything.  
He comes to know  
That he needs to know  
That he is not without blemish.

One who is not quite sound of mind and/or spirit will tend to laugh at just about everything, some people see themselves as perfect. Eventually, though, these people will learn that they are not perfect.

23. Ósvinnur maður  
vakir um allar nætur  
og hyggur að hvívetna;  
þá er móður  
er að morgni kemur;  
allt er víl sem var.

{unwise, not stingy} {man, person; faded}  
ambling {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} all {night, late hours}  
and {mean, believe, think, intend, purpose} {that, though, although,  
towards, against, up to, to at} elsewhere;  
when {wrath, excitement, passion; heaps of snow and ice on the  
beach; weary, out of breath}  
{is; when; who, that, which, whose} {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at}  
morning come;  
{all, whole, entire, completely} {who, that, which, whose} {wailing, misery, wretchedness}  
{as, as if} {stay, sojourn; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}

Unwise man  
ambling about all night  
and intend to elsewhere;  
When weary  
That at morning come  
all whose misery as stay

The unwise man  
Ambles about all night  
And intends to be elsewhere;  
When weary  
In the morning light  
Finds his misery remains

It doesn't matter what your troubles are, if you stay up nights your not likely to solve them and the next morning you'll be too tired to take care of the day's regular business.

24. Ósnotur maður  
hyggur sér alla vera  
viðhlæjendur vini.  
Hittki hann finnur  
þótt þeir um hann fár lesi  
ef hann með snotrum situr.

{not pretty, not fine; not wise} {man, person; faded}  
{mean, believe, think, intend, purpose} {oneself; this; to see} {all, whole, entire, completely}  
{stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
{to laugh again; with interval end} friend.  
Comes to he {find, discover, invent, perceive, notice, feel}  
{thought to be, seem to be; although; arrogance} they {of, about, around, round, during, by, at,  
for} he {few; silent} {read, study; gather}  
{if, in case; doubt} he with wise {sit, be seated}.

Not wise man  
Believe this all to be  
To laugh again friend.  
Comes to he find  
Although they about he silent gather  
If he with wise sit.

The foolish man  
Believes that all are  
Fast friends.  
He comes to find  
They are silent near him  
If he sits with the wise.

The wise person is a little wary of people until he is shown otherwise. People who don't learn this, and remain too friendly, will soon find that the wise people won't speak to the foolish.

25. Ósnotur maður  
hyggur sér alla vera  
viðhlæjendur vini;  
þá það finnur  
er að þingi kemur  
að hann á formælendur fáa.

{not pretty, not fine, not wise} {man, person; faded}  
{mean, believe, think, intend, purpose} {oneself; this; to see} {all, whole, entire, completely}  
{stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
{to laugh again} friend;  
{then, at that time; thaw} {There; it, that} {find, discover, invent, perceive, notice, feel}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at}  
{meeting, assembly, parliament, council, consult, consider, discuss} come  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at} he {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
{spokesman, advocate} get

Not wise man  
Believe this all be  
To laugh again friend;  
Then there discover  
When to assembly come  
Against he of spokesman get.

The unwise man  
Believes all are  
Friend when they laugh;  
Then discovers that  
When at the assembly  
A spokesman he cannot get.

A fool does not realize that people are laughing at him as opposed to with him. Then, because s/he acts the fool, s/he can't find anyone to give support at court or other like situations.

26. Ósnotur maður  
þykist allt vita,  
ef hann á sér í vá veru.  
Hittki hann veit  
hvað hann skal við kveða  
ef hans freista firar.

{not pretty, not fine, not wise} {man, person; faded}  
{though to be, seem to be; although; think} {all, whole, entire, completely} {know, be aware of},  
{if, in case; doubt} he {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about; not} {oneself; this; to see} {in, into,  
during} {lift, smite, kill, slay; weigh}  
{stay, sojourn, nature; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be exist} comes to he {know,  
be aware of}  
what he shall {against, at, by, near, of, on, with; we} {say, recite, sing}  
{if, in case; doubt; lest} his {try, test} {men, people}.

Unwise man  
Thought to be entire know,  
If he at this during kill stay  
Comes he to know  
What he shall against say  
Lest his test men.

The unwise man  
Thinks he knows all,  
If he stays home during war.  
He comes to know  
What he cannot say  
Lest men test him.

This verse sounds like it is saying that those who do not fight a coward. However, I believe the real intent here is toward the "arm-chair" warrior: those people who have never fought, yet have an opinion about everything that goes on in war. In other words, if you haven't been there, you don't know what you're talking about.

27. Ósnotur maður  
 er með aldir kemur  
 það er best að hann þegi.  
 Engi það veit  
 að hann ekki kann  
 nema hann mæli til margt;  
 veit-a maður  
 hinn er vætki veit  
 þótt hann mæli til margt.

{not pretty, not fine} {man, person; faded}  
 {who, that, which, whose; is; when} with {age; all} come  
 {there; it, that} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} best {that, though, although, towards,  
 against, up to, to at} he {at once, forthwith, already, when; be silent, remain silent}.  
 {meadow, grassland; no none, nobody, no one} {there; it, that} {know, be aware of}  
 {learn, study, perceive, amount to; before} he {not; nothing, naught; sobbing, sob}  
 {to know, know how to, be able; kin, kindred}  
 {take perceive, catch, hear, learn, acquire, settle, colonize; unless} he {voice, measure, speak}  
 {to, towards} many;  
 {know, be aware of}-not {man, person; faded}  
 {that, the other} {who, that, which, whose; is; what} nothing {know, be aware of}  
 {though to be, seem to be; although} he {voice, measure, speak} {to, towards} many.

Unwise man  
 When with all come  
 It is best that he remain silent.  
 None there be aware of  
 Perceive he not to know  
 Know not man  
 That who nothing know  
 Although he speak to many.

The unwise man  
 When he gathers with others  
 It is best that he remain silent.  
 None are aware  
 And perceive not his lack  
 Unless he speaks too much;  
 Man knows not  
 Who knows nothing  
 Although he speaks to many.

I think this the origin of "it is best to remain silent and thought a fool, then to open ones mouth and remove all doubt". Although this verse is much more polite about. The last three lines say that if you must speak, keep it short and to the point.

28. Fróður sá þykist  
er fregna kann  
og segja ið sama.  
Eyvitu leyna  
megu ýta synir  
því er gengur um guma.

{well instructed, learned} {saw, that, who; the; to see; this} {thought to be, seem to be;  
although}  
{is; when; who, that, which, whose} {hear, be informed, told, ask} {to know, know how to, be  
able; kin, kindred}  
and {say, tell, declare} {restless, motion, fidgeting; occupation, work} {benefit, become; befit}.  
{island wise; not wise, ever wise} {hide, conceal}  
{can, able, may; son} {push, shove} son  
at the moment {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {luck, repute, success, help, reputation}  
{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {praise excessively, boast}.

Learned who thought to be  
Who ask to know  
And say work benefit.  
Not wise conceal  
Son push son  
At the moment when reputation about boast.

He is thought to be learned  
Who asks to know  
And speaks helpful things.  
Fools conceal  
And causes fights  
When they boast about themselves.

A person is seen as being intelligent if they ask questions to further their understanding, and also offer useful advice. If is only a fool who conceals knowledge, and these people cause fights with their excessive boasting.



29. Ærna mælir  
sá er æva þegir  
staðlausu stafi;  
Hraðmælt tunga  
nema sér haldendur eigi  
oft sér ógott um gelur.

{sufficient, plentiful; great} {speak, measure, voice}  
{sow, who, that} {who, that, which, whose; is; what} never {be silent, remain silent}  
{absurd, chimerical, baseless, groundless; homeless} {stick, staff; cane; letter, character};  
{quick of speech, speaking quickly} tongue  
{take, perceive, catch, hear, learn, acquire, settle, colonize; hear;  
unless; except} {oneself; this; to see, look, gaze; know, understand} {holdend} not  
{often, frequently} {oneself; this} {ungood} {past; in; if; over; of, about, around, round, during,  
by, at, for} {scream, crow}.

Great voice  
That is never silent  
Baseless letters;  
Swiftspeak tongue  
Knows this holdend not  
Often looks ungood by crow.

A great voice  
That is never silent  
Is a fool;  
A quick tongue  
Knows not this restraint  
Often looks foolish by boasting.

This was a most difficult verse. Certain words are kennings and made the translation troublesome. The third line, as can be seen above, has many meanings to choose from. I have chosen "baseless letters", and a refinement of "is a fool", for several reasons. First, it is in keeping with other translations. Second, letters is a term often used for meaning knowledge. Thus "baseless letters" would mean unfounded knowledge, and a person who bases his information this way is a fool.

30. Að augabragði  
skal-a maður annan hafa  
þótt til kynnis komi;  
margur þá fróður þykist  
ef hann freginn er-at  
og nái hann þurrfjallur þruma.

{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to at}{eye stir}  
shall-not {man, person; faded}{other, another, second} {have, use}  
{thought to be, seem, to be; although} {to, towards} {acquainted with, an acquaintance} come;  
many {then, at the time; thaw}{well instructed, learned}{thought to be, seem to be; although}  
{if, in case; doubt} he the news is not and {reach, get, obtain, overtake, catch, access; near,  
nearly related}he {dry deal, cold deal; dry hill} {thunder; stay behind, mope}.

Though eye stir  
Shall not man another use  
Although to an acquaintance come;  
Many at the time learned thought to be  
If he the news is not  
And near he dry hill stay behind

When seen  
Abuse not another  
Even if among friends;  
Many at times are thought to be wise  
If he is not spoken of  
And near his home he stays.

The first three lines indicate that you should not abuse people - physically, mentally, or sexually. Even your friends should be free of any type of abuse even if you consider them to be "friendly" jibes. The last three say that one can seem to be very wise at home, but if they never travel their knowledge is in reality limited.

31. Fróður þykist  
 sá er flótta tekur  
 gestur að gest hæðinn;  
 veit-a görla  
 sá er um verði glissir  
 þótt hann með grömum glami.

{well instructed, learned} {thought to be, seem to be; although}  
 {sow, that, who} {who, that, which, whose} {flight, put to flight} {take, lay hold of, seize, grasp}  
 {guest, visitor} {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} {guest, visitor}  
 {fond of mocking};  
 {know, be aware of}-not {give blame; quite, fully, clear}  
 {sow, who, that} {who, that, which, whose} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}  
 {price, value, worth; become, grow, get, turn, happen} finery  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} he with fierce {jangle, rattle, prattle, strum; noise}

Well instructed thought to be  
 Who is flight grasp  
 Guest against guest fond of mocking;  
 Know not fully  
 Who is of worth finery  
 Although he with fierce noise.

[One] is thought to be well instructed  
 Who avoids the grasp  
 Of a guest who mocks other guests;  
 One knows not fully  
 Who is worthy of praise  
 Even though he boasts loudly.

The first half of the verse states that it takes quick wits and wisdom to avoid being derided by a fellow guest. The second half essentially says not to judge someone by their appearance or what they say - good clothes and bragging can hide an evil person.

32. Gumnar margir  
erust gagnhollir  
en að virði [v]rekast,  
aldar róg  
það mun æ vera,  
órir gestur við gest.

Man many  
are mutually kind  
but {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {value, worth, esteem} {drive, dismiss, pursue,  
follow, carry on, bump, toss, wander},  
{time, age, cycle, period, men, people} {slander, calumny, strife, quarrel}  
{there; it, that} {shall, will, should, would} {ah, alas, alack; for aye, ever} {stay, sojourn, being,  
entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
{rave, wrangle} {guest, visitor} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we} {guest, visitor}.

Man many  
Are mutually kind  
But for esteem follow,  
Men quarrel  
It shall ever be  
Wrangle guest with guest

Many men  
Are void of use  
But follow to raise themselves,  
Quite scandalous  
Shall it ever be  
When guest fights guest.

The first half of this verse says that people of little ability or worth will often attach themselves to greater people to attain stature vicariously. The last half is very obvious - it is very dishonorable to fight when being a guest in another's home.

33. Árliga verðar  
skyli maður oft fá  
nema til kynnis komi;  
situr og snópir,  
lætur sem sólginn sé  
og kann fregna að fáu.

{yearly, annually; year to lie down; early} {price, value, worth; become, grow, get, turn, happen}  
{shelter, shed} {man, person; faded} {often, frequently} {get, obtain, gain}  
{take, perceive, catch, hear, learn, acquire, settle, colonize; unless, except} {to, towards}  
{acquainted with, an acquaintance; kin, origin, kind} come;  
{sit, be seated} and {hang about},  
{gestures, manners; noise; put in place} {as, as if, while, when, that} greedy {to be; stay; to see; this}  
and {to know, know how to, be able; kin, kindred} {hear, be informed, told, ask} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}get.

Early become  
Shelter man often get  
Settle to kin come;  
Sit and hang about,  
Manners when greedy to be  
And know ask about get

Early arrived  
Man often finds shelter  
At his kin's home;  
Sit and visit,  
Use manners when hungry  
And know how to ask.

This is basic advice about visiting another - arrive early (but not too), visit and be talkative - but not too, use your best manners when at the table - or any meal - and remember to use "please" and "thank you".

34. Afhvarf mikið  
er til ills vinar  
þótt á brautu búi,  
en til góðs vinar  
liggja gagnvegir  
þótt hann sé firr farinn.

{deviate from path, relinquishment} {great, large}  
{who, that, which, whose; when; is} {to, towards} ill friends  
{thought to be, seem to be; although} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} {road, path, track}  
{dweller, inhabitant, neighbor},  
but {to, towards} {heathen gods, idols; good, fine, noble} friends  
{lie, be situated} {weigh the advantage; advantage road}  
{thought to be, seem to be; although} he {this; to see; to be; stay; be done} {absurdity,  
nonsense; deprive, defend, protect; farther} {to go; gone, lost; disposed; constituted}.

Deviate from path great  
When towards ill friends  
Although on road neighbor,  
But to good friends  
Lies advantage road  
Although he to be farther to go.

Make a wide berth  
When towards false friends  
Despite being a neighbor,  
But to good friends  
Lie good roads  
Although it is farther to go.

Essentially - avoid people who are insincere in their friendships, even if that person is your neighbor. However, if you have good friends, the road to their home seems quick and easy no matter the distance.

35. Ganga skal,  
skal-a gestur vera  
ey í einum stað;  
ljúfur verður leiður  
ef lengi situr  
annars fletjum á.

{walk, go, pass, march, course, gait, corridor, passage, graze} shall,  
shall-not {guest, visitor} {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
{island, isle; not; ever} {in, into, during} one {place, spot, parts};  
{dear, beloved} {worth, meal; happen, come to pass, take place} disliked  
{if, in case; doubt} {long, for a long time} {sit, be seated}  
{else, otherwise, for the rest; other, second, next} {split, cut open} {on, upon, in, of, at, by,  
about; river; possession; own, have, possess, marry}.

Go shall,  
Shall not guest be  
Ever in one place;  
Beloved happen disliked  
If for a long time sit  
Otherwise split possession.

He shall go,  
A guest should not be  
Ever in one place;  
The beloved become disliked  
If they stay too long  
And abuse their hosts bounty

Do not overstay your welcome. If you stay too long the host will loose his/her liking of you.  
Also, don't overeat or bring undue cost to your host.

36. Bú er betra  
 þótt lítið sé,  
 halur er heima hver;  
 þótt tvær geitur eigi  
 og taugreftan sal,  
 það er þó betra en bæn.

{household, farming, housekeeping, estate} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {better, improve}  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} {to look; little} {this; be; to see}  
 {man, hero} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {home, at home} {who, which, what; every, each; hot spring};  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} {two} {she-goat, coward} not  
 and {string roof, nerves roof} hall,  
 {there; it, that} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {yet, however, still} {better, improve}  
 {but, and; then} {prayer, request, entreaty}.

Household is better,  
 Although little be,  
 Hero is at home each;  
 Although two she-goats not  
 And string roof hall  
 It is however better than entreaty.

A house is better,  
 Although it is small,  
 Each is a hero at home;  
 While without two goats  
 And a cord roofed hall,  
 It is better than begging.

Having the humblest home is better than not having a home at all.



37. Bú er betra  
þótt lítið sé,  
halur er heima hver;  
blóðugt er hjarta  
þeim er biðja skal  
sér í mál hvert matar.

{household, farming, housekeeping, estate}{who, that, which, whose} {better, improve}  
{thought to be, seem to be; although} {to look; little} {this; be; to see},  
{man, hero} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {home; at home} {who, which; every, each;  
hot spring};  
{bloody, gory, blood stained}{who, that, which, whose} {heart, mind}  
they {who, that, which, whose} {ask, beg, pray} {shall, must}  
{this; to see; oneself} {in, into, during}{speech, speaking, power of speech, tale, story}  
{whither, where} {food, provisions}.

Household is better,  
Although little be,  
Hero is at home each;  
Bloody who heart,  
They when beg shall  
Self in speech whither food.

A house is better,  
Although it is small,  
Each is a hero at home;  
His heart is bloody,  
When he must beg  
Asking for his meal.

Essentially this is the same as the previous one. The idea is that if some one has a home, they have an occupation; you must remember that this was written when the Nordic people were virtually all farmers and if you had a farm you could at least grow enough food to subsist on.

38. Vopnum sínum  
skal-a maður velli á  
feti ganga framar  
því að óvíst er að vita  
nær verður á vegum úti  
geirs um þörf guma.

{ weapon, arm, arms } ones  
shall-not { man, person; faded } field { on, upon, in, of, at, by, about }  
{ pace, step; go } { walk, go, pass, march, course, gait, corridor, passage, graze } { farther on, to  
the front, further, more }  
{ consequently, therefore, why, for, because } { of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for }  
{ doubtful, uncertain } { who, that, which, whose; is; when } { of, about, around, round,  
during, by, at, for } { know, be aware of }  
{ almost, nearly } { become, grow, get, turn, happen, come to pass, arise } { on, upon, in, of, at, by,  
about } { way, road, mode, manner, direction } { out, out of doors, abroad, in the open air }  
spear { of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for } { need, use, necessity, requirement }  
{ praise excessively, boast; man }.

Ones weapons  
Shall not man field in  
Go walk further,  
Because about uncertain who about know  
Almost happen on road abroad  
Spear for need man

From one's weapons  
A man in the field should not  
Go travelling far,  
For it is uncertain who will be met  
Upon the road  
A spear may be needed.

Keep your weapons close at hand when away from home because you never know who might be an enemy. This can also refer to a sharp mind as this is one of the best weapons for getting out, or staying out of, trouble.

39. Fannk-a eg mildan mann  
eða svo matar góðan  
að ei væri þiggja þegið  
eða síns fjár  
svogi [glöggvan]  
að leið sé laun ef þægi.

Found-not I {mild, gentle, lenient, merciful} {man, person, husband}  
{or, and, but; still; again, moreover} {so, thus, then} {food, provisions} {priest, chieftain; dear}  
{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {ownership, possession; not} {to be, stay,  
be done, happen} {accept, receive} {at once, forthwith, already, when; be  
silent, continue silent}  
{or, and, but; still; again, moreover} ones {sheep, cattle, money}  
answer-not [clear-sighted]  
{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {way, journey, to go, pass} {this; to see; to be}  
{secrecy, concealment; reward, recompense} {if, in case; doubt} {acceptable, agreeable,  
obedient, well behaved, good}.

Found not I mild man  
Or so provisions chieftain,  
For not happen accept at once,  
Again ones money  
Answer-not [clear-sighted]  
At pass this reward if good.

I found not a mild man  
Or so great a chieftain,  
Who would not receive  
His due  
The wise speak not  
Until good rewards are given.

Every one wants the credit due them, no matter their station or how humble the person is. The wise hold their tongues until such time as they know that they will be treated correctly.

40. Fjár síns,  
 er fengið hefir,  
 skyli-t maður þörf þola;  
 oft sparir leiðum  
 það er hefir ljúfum hugað,  
 margt gengur verr en varir.

{sheep, cattle, money} theirs,  
 {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {haul, take (of fish), gain, acquisition} {to be able,  
 can, may; avenge, vengeance},  
 {shelter, shed}-that {man, person; faded} {need, use, necessity, requirement} {bear, suffer,  
 endure};  
 {often, frequently} {sparing, spare, economize; grudge, deny} {disliked; way, journey,  
 road, path, manner, fashion; to go, pass, progress, dead, of that time, pass away}  
 {There; it, that} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {to lift, raise, heavy, exalt, elevate,  
 commence, begin} {dear, beloved; mild, gentle} {supplied with courage, courageous},  
 many {able to walk, passable, fit to walk} {worse; man} {but, and, then} {warning, precaution}.

Money theirs,  
 When gain to be able,  
 Shelter-that man need endure;  
 Often spare to go,  
 There when begin beloved courageous  
 Many able to walk man and cautious .

Ones money,  
 When able to gain it,  
 Man needs to maintain his home;  
 Often reserves go,  
 When there begins a battle,  
 Many able and cautious men.

This verse says that one should be frugal with one's money. This does not, however, mean that one should be cheap or a miser. Keep your home in good repair - buildings, equipment, etc. - then when the unexpected happens, like war, one often loses their reserves as well as employees.

41. Vopnum og voðum  
skulu vinir gleðjast,  
það er á sjálfum sýnst.  
Viðurfendur og endurfendur  
erust lengst vinir  
ef það bíður að verða vel.

{weapon, arms, arm} and {danger, peril, dangerous object}  
shall friends {gladden, cheer, exhilarate, rejoice, be glad},  
{There; it that} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
self {sight, appearance, vision; show, exhibit, display, evince, manifest; visible,  
clear, evident; son's}.  
{wide giver, generous} and {generous, again giver}  
{when, that, since, as, who, which, to be} {long, for a long time} friends  
{if, in case; doubt} {there; it, that} {ask, beg, pray} {of, about, around, round, during,  
by, at, for} {price, value, worth; become, grow, get, turn, happen} well.

Arms and danger  
Shall friends rejoice,  
That is about self evident.  
Wide giver and again giver  
Are long friends  
If it ask about worth well.

In arms and danger  
Shall friends rejoice,  
That should be self evident.  
Open handed and continuous  
Are long friends  
Ask if that is well worth it.

I believe this verse to say that good, true friends are there for you in both the good times and the bad. To maintain that friendship make sure you treat your friends well - you'll find it is worth it.

42. Vin sínum  
skal maður vinur vera  
og gjalda gjöf við gjöf.  
Hlátur við hlátri  
skyli höldar taka  
en lausung við lygi.

Friends oneself

shall {man, person; faded} friends {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view;  
be, exist}

and {pay, repay} {gift, present, donation, feed of hay} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with;  
we} {gift, present, donation, feed of hay}.

{Laugh, laughter} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we} {laugh, laughter}

{shelter, shed} {yeoman, farmer, man} {take, lay hold of, seize, catch, grasp}

{but, then, and, when, if} {falsehood, levity, fickleness, loose life, frivolousness} {against, at,  
by, near, of, on, to, with; we} {lie, falsehood}.

Friends oneself

Shall man friends stay  
And repay gift with gift.  
Laughter with laughter  
Shelter man take  
When lie near lie.

His friends

Shall a man stay friends  
And repay gift with gift.  
Laughter with laughter  
Man takes refuge  
When falsehood faces falsehood.

[With] his friends

Shall a man stay friends  
And repay gift with gift.  
Laughter with laughter  
A shelter man welcomes  
When lies meet lies.

The first half of this verse is fairly self evident. The second half was difficult. In essence it means that when people start throwing lies around, the best way to avoid or stop them is with laughter.

43. Vin sínum  
skal maður vinur vera,  
þeim og þess vin;  
en óvinar síns  
skyli engi maður  
vinar vinur vera.

Friends oneself

shall {man, person; faded} friends {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist},

they and {this, that, these} friends;

but enemy theirs

{shelter, shed} {meadow, grassland; no, none, nobody, no one} {man, person; faded}

friends friends {stay, sojourn, being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist; happen}.

Friends oneself

Shall man friends stay,

They and these friends;

But enemies theirs

Shelter none man

Friend's friends stay.

His friends

Shall a man stay friends

And his friend's friends;

But his enemies

A man shelters none

Friends stay friends.

Be a friend to your friend's friend, but do not befriend the enemy of your friend's friend.

However, this can lead to problems (and does in some of the sagas). Say you have two friends.

Friend one comes and introduces you to another person. According to this verse you should now

be a friend to this third person. Now, you find out that this third person has an enemy. Again,

according to the verse you should never be a friend to the enemy of your new friend. However,

if it turns out that this enemy is your friend number two, what do you do? Personally, I would

suggest that you try your darnedest to stay neutral.

44. Veistu ef þú vin átt  
þann er þú vel trúir  
og vilt þú af honum gott geta,  
geði skaltu við þann blanda  
og gjöfum skipta,  
fara að finna oft.

{to know; give; get} {if, in case; doubt} {thou, you} friends {quarter, direction}  
{than; they; that, the; this} {who, that, which, whose} {thou, you} well {belief, faith}  
and wish {thou, you} {by, of, from, with} he good {get; guess, mention},  
{mood, temper, disposition, mind, spirits, liking} {Shall, will} {against, at, by, near,  
of, on, to, with; we} {than; they; that, the; this} {blend, mix; among}  
and {gift, present, donation; feed of hay} {divide, share},  
{go, travel, start, leave} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {find, discover, invent,  
perceive, notice, feel} {often, frequently}.

Give if you friends quarter  
That who you well faith  
And wish you from he good mention,  
Liking shall with they among  
And gift share  
Go round discover often.

If you give friends lodging  
That you trust well,  
And wish from him good words,  
Liking grows between them  
And gifts exchanged  
When you visit often.

This verse says that friends should visit often and exchange gifts to maintain that friendship; that if you neglect a friendship it will fade and be lost.



45. Ef þú átt annan  
 þann er þú illa trúir,  
 viltu af honum þó gott geta,  
 fagurt skaltu við þann mæla  
 en flátt hyggja  
 og gjalda lausung við lygi.

{if, in case; doubt} {thou, you} {quarter, direction; one, only; own, possess, marry, have; find}  
 {other, another, second}  
 {than; they; that, the; this} {who, that, which, whose} {thou, you} {ill, badly; ill treated}  
 {belief, faith},  
 wish {by, of, from, with} he {yet, however, still} good {get; guess, mention},  
 {beautifully bright; fair, beautiful} {shall, will} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we}  
 {than; they; that, the; this} {voice, measure, speak}  
 {but, and, than, when, if} {flat; false} {mean, believe, think, intend, purpose}  
 and {pay, repay} {falsehood, levity, fickleness, loose life, frivolousness} {against, at, by, near,  
 of, on, to, with; we} {lie, falsehood}.

If you find another  
 That who you ill belief  
 Wish from he still good mention,  
 Fair shall with they speak  
 But false think  
 And repay falsehood with falsehood.

If you encounter another  
 That you mistrust  
 And still wish from him good words,  
 Speak fair with them  
 But think falsely  
 And repay falsehood with falsehood.

Treat people fairly and you should receive treatment in kind. But if this person is not someone who you really trust be wary at all times and expect from the worst. At least then if the person acts with honor it will be a pleasant surprise.

46. Það er enn um þann  
er þú illa trúir  
og þér er grunur að hans geði,  
hlæja skaltu við þeim  
og um hug mæla;  
glík skulu gjöld gjöfum.

{There; it, that} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {still, yet, as yet, again, further, moreover}  
{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {than; they; that, the; this}  
{who, that, which, whose} {thou, you} {ill, badly; ill treated} {belief, faith}  
and you {who, that, which, whose; is, when} {suspicion, presentiment, misgiving} {of, about,  
around, round, during, by, at, for} his {mood, temper, disposition, mind, spirits, liking},  
laugh {Shall, will} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we} they  
and {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {mind, thought} {voice, measure, speak};  
likely shall repay {gift, present, donation; feed of hay}.

There is still about they  
Who you ill belief  
And you is suspicion of his liking,  
Laugh shall with they  
And of mind speak;  
Likely shall repay gift.

If about you is  
One you mistrust  
And you are wary of his good will,  
Laugh with them  
And speak your mind;  
Your gift shall likely be repaid.

This verse is similar to the previous, but a little more up-beat. Treat people as you want to be treated and the other people will repay you in kind - or that was the belief at the time that the poem was composed.

47. Ungur var eg forðum,  
fór eg einn saman,  
þá varð eg villur vega;  
auðigur þóttumk  
er eg annan fann,  
maður er manns gaman.

Young {stay, sojourn; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist}  
I {formerly, anciently, of yore},  
{go, travel, start, leave} I {one, alone} together,  
{then, at the time; accept, receive} {cairn, memorial, guard, watch} I {bewildered; erring,  
astray} {weigh, be of weight, smite, slay, kill; way, road, journey; manner; dimension,  
direction};  
wealth seem to me  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} I {other, another, second} {find, discover, invent, perceive,  
notice, feel},  
{man, person; faded} {who, that, which, whose; is} man's {pleasure, amusement, fun, sport}.

Young be I formerly,  
Travel I alone,  
Then watch I erring journey;  
Wealth seem to me,  
When I another find,  
Man is man's pleasure.

Young I once was,  
I traveled alone,  
I then lost my way;  
Rich I seemed,  
When I found another,  
Man is man's pleasure.

Boiled down this verse says that loneliness is a bummer. The poorest person is rich if s/he has friends.

48. Mildir, fræknir  
menn best lifa,  
sjaldan sít ala;  
en ósnjallur maður  
uggir hotvetna,  
sýtir æ glöggur við gjöfum.

{mild, gentle, lenient, merciful}, {valiant, brave}  
men best {live, be alive, survive},  
{seldom, rarely} {grief, sorrow, affliction} {give birth, bear; entertain; support; stall feed};  
but {unwise, unskilled} {man, person; faded}  
{fear, apprehend, apprehension; fin of a fish} threat-winter-get,  
{wail, mourn} {alas; ever, always} {clear, distinct, sharp, keen, clear sighted; stingy} {against,  
at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we} {gift, present, donation; feed of hay}.

Merciful, brave  
Men best live,  
Seldom grief bear;  
But unwise man  
Fear threat-winter-get,  
Wail ever keen against gift.

Merciful, brave  
Men live best,  
Seldom they suffer grief;  
But unwise men  
Fear the coming winter  
Ever eager to mourn despite gifts.

Here we have good advice - don't whine. Make the best of what you have; use it to make yourself stronger, better. Those people are not afraid of old age for they are prepared for the winter of life.

49. Voðir mínar  
gaf eg velli að  
tveim trémönnum;  
rekkar það þóttust  
er þeir rift höfðu;  
neis er nökkviður halur.

{danger, peril, dangerous object; clothes} mine  
{give, present, make a present} I {boil; cry, scream, flow; level ground, ground, plain,  
field} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}  
{two; both} {wood, tree, limb; three - man; refinement, breeding, culture, civilization};  
warrior {there; it, that} {pride in oneself; thought}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} they clothes head;  
{refusals; shamed} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {some extensive; naked} man.

clothes mine  
{give, present, make a present} I {boil; cry, scream, flow; level ground, ground, plain, field}  
{of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for; in, on}  
{two; both} {wood, tree, limb; three} - man;  
warriors themselves {pride in oneself; thought}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} their clothes they had;  
{refusals; shamed} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {some extensive; naked} man.

Clothing mine  
Gave I field in  
Two wooden men;  
Warriors themselves thought  
When their clothes they had;  
Shamed is naked man.

My clothes  
I gave in a field  
To two wooden men;  
They thought themselves warriors  
When they had clothes;  
Shamed is a naked man.

Originally, I came up with a completely different translation. However, after much consultation with others more versed in ON than I, I came back to the more conventional translation. The only thing that I have to say about this verse though, is that with this translation, it appears to me that this verse must be a later addition after the Christianization of the Nordic people. During the heathen period, while it was illegal for men to dress as a woman, there were no laws against nudity, nor does there appear to be any prudity toward being nude.

50. Hrörnar þöll  
sú er stendur þorpi á,  
hlýr-at henni börkur né barr.  
Svo er maður  
sá er manngi ann.  
Hvað skal hann lengi lifa?

{fall into decay, become infirm, worn by age; decay} {thole pin - pin(s) to hold oar(s) on  
to gunwale; endure, suffer, tolerate}  
who {who, that, which, whose; is, when} stood village {on upon, in, of, at, by, about},  
{warm, mild, snug; cheek, bow of a ship} - {that, who; to, towards, against; at, in, from} his bark  
nor bare.  
{so, thus, then} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {man, person: faded}  
{sow; who, that} {who, that, which, whose; is, when} man-not {and; one, only; allow}.  
Where shall he {long, for a long time} {live, be alive, survive}?

Become infirm suffer  
Who is standing village in,  
Warm-against his bark nor bare.  
Thus that man  
So is man-not only.  
Where shall he long live?

Suffer aging  
Who is standing in the village,  
His clothes and skin cold.  
Hence that man,  
He is so alone.  
Where shall he dwell?

The old man  
Who is standing in the village,  
His clothes and skin cold.  
Hence that man,  
He is so alone.  
Where shall he dwell?

This is an admonition not to discard the elderly; to treat them with respect and compassion.

51. Eldi heitari  
brennur með illum vinum  
friður fimm daga,  
en þá slokknar  
er hinn sétti kemur  
og versnar allur vinskapur.

{stall feeding, maintenance; oxygen; fire} {promise/vow-eagle; call/ name-eagle; hot}  
{Burn, be on fire, be consumed by fire} with {bad, evil, wicked} friend(s)  
peace five day,  
but {then, at the time; accept, receive} {expire, go out}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} {the, this, that, the other} {set, place; this; to be} come  
and {grow worse} {all, whole, entire, completely} friendship.

Fire hot  
Burn with bad friends  
Peace five days,  
But then goes out  
When that is come  
And grow worse entire friendship.

Fire hot  
With bad friends burns  
Peace for five days,  
But then goes out  
When that passes  
And the friendship fails.

This verse is telling us that "friendships" with people who are false to you will last only a short period of time. I think that in this case the poet did not mean a literal five days, but used it as a metaphor for a short period of time.

52. Mikið eitt  
skal-a manni gefa;  
oft kaupir sér í litlu lof;  
með hálfum hleif  
og með höllu keru  
fékk eg mér félagu

{great, large} {poison, venom; oath}  
shall-not {man, person, husband; moon} {give, present, make a present};  
{often, frequently} {bargain, purchase, buy} {oneself; this; to see} {in, into, during}  
{little, small} {praise, good report; permission, leave, license};  
with half loaf  
and with {palace, hall} {vessel, tub, pool}  
get I {bruise, jam, crush; be bruised; to me; with} {association, club, company, society; partner,  
companion}

Great oath  
Shall-not man give;  
Often purchase oneself in little praise;  
With half loaf  
And with hall vessel  
Get I to me companion.

Great oaths  
Shall no man give;  
He often gains with a little praise;  
With half a loaf  
And with a cup  
I gained a companion.

The first two lines would seem to indicate that you should not be a braggart or to make oaths that you can't keep. The third line means that you can make friends and gain aid if you just give people so praise on occasion - as long as it is genuine. The last half continues in this vein in that by sharing with those that have little, even if you have little yourself - or especially so - you can gain good strong friends.



53. Lítilla sanda,  
lítilla sæva,  
lítill eru geð guma;  
því allir menn  
urðu-t jafnspakir;  
hálf er öld hvar.

{little, small, short} {sand, sea shore, sandy bank, sandy ground},  
{little, small, short} {ocean, sea},  
{little, small} was {mood, temper, disposition, mind, spirits, liking, affection} {praise  
excessively, boast; man};  
{consequently, therefore, why, for, because} {all, whole, entire, completely} men  
{to happen-not; was the} {even, equal/wise, quiet, learned};  
half {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {age, century; men, people} {where, everywhere; who,  
each}.

Small sea shore,  
Small sea,  
Little was liking man;  
Because all men  
Happen-not equally wise;  
Half is man everywhere.

A small beach,  
A small sea,  
Was little to man's liking;  
Since all men  
Are not equally learned;  
Fools are everywhere.

The first half of the verse deals with the nature of Norse economy. These people were primarily fishermen and merchants. The larger the body of water and the larger the beaches where they could beach their ships, the more fish or people they could attract.

The last half is a warning that intelligence is not equal among everyone; watch out for those of low intelligence and be prepared to deal with them. But remember, rudeness is not the way to deal with anyone.

54. Meðalsnotur  
skyli manna hver,  
æva til snotur sé.  
Þeim er fyrða  
fegurst að lifa  
er vel margt vitu.

middle wise

{shelter, shed} {man, person, husband} {who, which, what; every, each; hot spring},  
never {to, towards, of, concerning, on, as, for, obtain; too} wise {to see; this, to be, stay}.  
their {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {men; before, in front of}  
{beauty, loveliness, good looks; glad, joyful, fain} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at,  
for} {live, be alive, survive}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when} {well, readily, easily, gladly} many wits.

Middle wise

Shelter man who  
Never too wise to be.  
There is men  
Glad at be alive  
That readily many wits.

Middle wise

The man who holds  
Never to be too wise.  
There are men  
Glad to be alive  
Many have quick wits.

Each person should attain a broad knowledge base; to know something about many things - at least enough to be competent in those areas. Do not try to become an expert in too many fields.

The last half tells us that having this broad knowledge can possibly save your life some time.

55. Meðalsnotur  
skyli manna hver,  
æva til snotur sé,  
því að snoturs manns hjarta  
verður sjaldan glatt  
ef sá er alsnotur er á.

middle wise

{shelter, shed} {man, person, husband} {who, which; every, each; hot spring},  
very {to, towards} wise {to see; this, to be, stay},  
{consequently, therefore, why, for, because} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for}  
    wiseman's {heart, mind}  
{worth, meal, fitting; to happen, come to pass, take place} {seldom, rarely} {glad,  
    cheerful, merry}  
{if, in case; doubt} {sow; that, who, the, he, } {who, that, which, whose; is; when}  
    {all wise} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {on, upon, in, of, by, at, by, about}.

Middle wise

Shelter man who  
Never too wise to be.  
Because at wiseman's heart  
Come to pass seldom glad  
If he is allwise that about.

Middle wise

The man who holds  
Never to be too wise.  
Because in a wiseman's heart  
Seldom comes joy,  
If he knows about all.

This verse repeats the previous, while the second half elaborates the first.

56. Meðalsnotur  
skyli manna hver,  
æva til snotur sé.  
Örlög sín  
viti engi fyrir,  
þeim er sorgalausastur sefi.

middle wise

{shelter, shed} {man, person, husband} {who, which; every, each; hot spring},  
very {to, towards} wise {to see; this, to be, stay}.  
{fate, destiny} one's  
{signal, beacon, lighthouse; bode} {meadow, grassland; no none, nobody, no one}  
{before, in front of, because of, on account of},  
them {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {grief free love} {mind, affection}.

Middle wise

Shelter man who  
Never too wise to be.  
Fate one's  
Signal none before,  
Them is grief free love mind.

Middle wise

The man who holds  
Never to be too wise.  
One's fate  
None should know,  
They have a mind free of sorrow.

More of the same. Here, though, the last half seems to council against trying to find out too much about ones future.

57. Brandur af brandi  
 brenn uns brunninn er,  
 funi kveikist af funa;  
 maður af manni  
 verður að máli kunnur  
 en til dælskur af dul.

{sword blade, firebrand, brand} {by, of, from, with} {sword blade, firebrand, brand}  
 {Burn, be on fire, be consumed by fire} {until, till} {Burn, be on fire, be consumed by fire}  
 {who, that, which, whose; is, when},  
 {blaze, flame, glow} {light, kindle, blaze, solder, arouse, give rise to} {by, of, from, with}  
 {blaze, flame, glow};  
 {man, person; faded} {by, of, from, with} {man, person, husband; moon}  
 {worth, meal, fitting; to happen, come to pass, take place} {of, about, around, round, during, by,  
 at, for} {affair, case, dimensions, language, lawsuit, matter, measurement, speech, tale,  
 story; time} known  
 {but, and; then; when, if} {to, towards; too} {hollow talk; familiarity; gentle rain} {by, of, from,  
 with, on} {concealment, conceitedness, conceal, disguise, make secret of}.

Brand by brand  
 Burn until consumed by fire is,  
 Flame give rise to flame;  
 Man by man  
 Come to pass story known  
 And too familiarity with concealment.

Brand by brand  
 Burn until spent,  
 Flame gives rise to flame;  
 Man by man  
 His story becomes known  
 And also known from [his] actions.

This verse has two meanings, although both are similar. First, as fire moves from one piece of fuel to another, so does the story of someone new to the community move from one person to the next. Second, it is an admonition against gossip.

58. Ár skal rísa  
sá er annars vill  
fé eða fjör hafa.  
Sjaldan liggjandi úlfur  
lær um getur  
né sofandi maður sigur.

{year, twelve month, plenty, fruitfulness; early; oar} shall {arise, rise}  
{sow; that, who, the, he, } {who, that, which, whose} {else, otherwise, for the rest}  
{be willing, wish, want}  
{sheep, cattle, livestock, money, possessions} {or; mud ooze} {live, liveliness, briskness,  
activity, vigor} {have, use}.  
{seldom, rarely} {high/low water slack; laying} wolf  
{learn, teach; bone} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {get, receive}  
nor sleeper {man, person; faded} victory.

Early shall rise  
He that otherwise want  
Livestock or vigor have.  
Seldom laying wolf  
Bone of get  
Nor sleeper man victory.

Early shall he rise,  
He that wants  
To have money or health.  
Seldom the sleeping wolf  
Gets a bone  
Nor a sleeping man victory.

I believe this to be the origin of Ben Franklin's saying "early to bed, early to rise, makes a man health, wealthy, and wise".

59. Ár skal rísa  
 sá er á yrkjendur fáa  
 og ganga síns verka á vit.  
 Margt um dvelur  
 þann er um morgun sefur.  
 Hálfur er auður und hvötum.

{year, twelvemonth, plenty, fruitfulness; early; oar} shall {rise, arise}  
 {sow; that, who, the, he, } {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {on, upon, in, about, by, at}  
 compose again/end {catch, have, make use of, put, give, inflict, receive, suffer; color or  
 fashion runes}  
 and {walk, go, pass, march, course, gait, corridor, passage, graze} one's {work, act, operate}  
 {on, upon, in, of, by, about, to, towards} {sense, reason, intelligence}.  
 Many {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for; if} {delay, stay, tarry, wait}  
 {than; that, the; they} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {of, about, around, round, during, by,  
 at, for; if} morning {soothe, assuage, appease, calm; mind, affection}.  
 {half; half a month, fortnight} {who, that, which, whose; is; when} {great riches, wealth; empty,  
 void, desolate, uninhabited} {wound; under, beneath} {incentive, impulse, spur,  
 inducement, motive}.

Early shall rise  
 He who by compose end runes,  
 And go one's work towards intelligence.  
 Many by delay  
 They is in morning calm.  
 Half is wealth under motive.

Early shall rise  
 He who makes runes,  
 And goes to work with wits.  
 Many by delaying  
 In the morn are calm.  
 Wealth is half the motivation.

Again, be up and at your work early, but don't be in a rush. Do not let money be your sole motivation for anything in your life, though.

60. Þurra skíða  
og þakinna næfra,  
þess kann maður mjöt,  
og þess viðar  
er vinnast megi  
mál og misseri.

{dry, arid; seasoned} {billet of wood, fire wood}  
and the roof {birch bark for thatching},  
This {to know, know how to, be able; kin, kindred} {man, person; faded} right measure,  
and this {reaching, against, towards, at, greet, with; farther, far and wide, in many places}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; as} {employment, job, labor, work; perform, process, win,  
work; friend} {son, kindred; able, may}  
{speech, speaking, power of speech, tale, story} and {six month season, half year, season}.

Seasoned fire wood  
And a roof birch thatched,  
This to know man right measure,  
And this greet,  
As friend's may  
Speech and season.

Seasoned wood  
And a birch thatched roof,  
This a man needs measure right,  
And greet this,  
As friends shall  
With speech and hospitality.

The first two lines of the verse are examples of the need to plan carefully for the future. Do your work in a cheerful manner, don't gripe and grumble.



61. Þveginn og mettur  
 ríði maður þingi að  
 þótt hann sé-t væddur til vel.  
 Skúa og bróka  
 skammist engi maður  
 né hests in heldur  
 þótt hann hafi-t góðan.

Washed and {having eaten one's fill, satiated, satisfied}  
 {ride, go on horse back; knit, twist, weave} {man, person; faded} {meeting, assembly,  
 parliament, council, consult, consider, discuss} {that, though, although, towards, against,  
 up to, to, at}  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} he {to see; this; to be, stay}-not clothes(?) {to, towards;  
 too} well.  
 Shoes(?) and {fisherman's skin trousers, breeches, trousers}  
 {scold, revile, brawl} {meadow, grassland; no, none, nobody, no one} {man, person; faded}  
 nor horse {in, the} {watertight, waterproof; rather, but, on the contrary; held}  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} he {have, use, criticize, find fault}-not {priest, chieftain;  
 dear}.

Washed and satiated  
 Ride man assembly to  
 Though he be-not clothed too well.  
 Shoes and trousers  
 Scold no man  
 Nor horse the hold  
 Although he have not chieftain.

Washed and fed  
 A man rides to the assembly  
 Though he is not well dressed.  
 For shoes and trousers  
 Scold no man  
 Nor his horse  
 Even if he has no chieftain.

When going to the assembly, be washed and well fed, and dress the best you can. Do not mock the appearance of another's clothes or possessions as even the poorest have the right to attend assemblies.

More than this, in the modern era, regardless of ones appearance, even the poorest of citizens has the right to participate in government.

62. Snapir og gnapir  
er til sævar kemur  
örn á aldinn mar;  
svo er maður  
er með mörgum kemur  
og á formælendur fáa.

{sponge, snuffle} and {stoop forward, hang over}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {to, towards; too} ocean come  
eagle {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about; to} {old, ancient} {contusion, bruise; sea; horse};  
{so, thus, then} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {man, person; faded}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} with morning come  
and {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about, to; river; to own, have, possess} {spokesman, advocate}  
{get, take, catch, have, make use of, receive, suffer}

Snuffle and stoop,  
When towards ocean come,  
Eagle to old sea;  
So is man  
Who with morning come  
And have spokesman get.

Snuffling and stooped  
When to the ocean comes,  
An old sea eagle;  
So is the man,  
Who with morning comes  
And needs to find a spokesman.

Do not be so proud as to avoid help when needed; ask for help with humility and courtesy.

63. Fregna og segja  
skal fróðra hver  
sá er vill heitinn horskur.  
Einn vita  
né annar skal,  
þjóð veit ef þrír eru.

{hear, be informed, told, ask} and {say, tell, declare}  
{shall, ought, must} {well instructed, learned} {who, which; every, each; hot spring}  
{sow, that, who; so} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {be willing, wish, want}  
{promised, deceased, late; call, name} wise.  
{one, alone} {know, be aware of}  
nor {one of two; other, another, second, different} {shall, ought, must}  
{nation, people} {know, be aware of} {if, in case; doubt} three are.

Ask and tell  
Shall learned who  
Who that wish name wise.  
One know  
Not another must,  
People know if three are.

To ask and to tell  
Who shall be learned,  
Those who wish the name wise.  
If one knows  
Not another must,  
For everyone knows if three do.

This is two lessons in one verse. The first half says that to become wise you must ask questions to learn and to share the knowledge that you have. The second half speaks about keeping secrets - don't tell anyone! Once three people know your secret, it won't be long until everyone knows. If you must tell someone, tell the dead.

64. Ríki sitt  
skyli ráðsnotra hver  
í hófi hafa.  
Þá hann það finnur  
er með fræknum kemur  
að engi er einna hvatastur.

{kingdom, empire, realm} their  
{shelter, shed} {council wise} {who, which; every, each; hot spring}  
{in, into, during; the} {moderation, moderately} {have, use}.  
{then, at the time; thaw} he {there, it, that} {find, discover, invent, perceive, notice, feel}  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} with {valiant, brave} come  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} {meadow, grassland; none, nobody, no  
one} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {one, alone} great haste.

Their kingdom  
Shelter council wise each  
In moderation use.  
Then he that finds  
When with brave come  
At meadow is alone great haste.

In their kingdom  
Wise council each harbors  
Used in moderation.  
He then finds that  
When the brave arrive  
The quick are alone at the field.

A ruler should make sure that the people have wise council, but it should be offered in moderation. This avoids a ruler from becoming too intrusive. One should not be too quick to rush to battle; the brave wait to see who will be there to offer aid and how many the enemy has. Brave does not equal foolhardy.

65. Orða þeirra  
er maður öðrum segir  
oft hann gjöld um getur.

{talk of, word a letter, frame a document, draw a map; word speech} their  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {man, person; faded} {furious, frantic} {say, tell,  
declare}  
{often, frequently} he pay {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {means, resources,  
ability, power; to get, have}.

Speech their  
Which man frantic say  
Often he pay for ability.

Their words  
Which men frantically say  
Often he pays for [this] ability.

This verse is most likely a fragment as it contains only three lines while the rest are usually six. It is, however, powerful in its brevity. Be careful of the words you use as you may just have to pay for your brashness.

66. Mikilsti snemma  
kom eg í marga staði  
en til síð í suma.  
Öl var drukkið,  
sumt var ólagað;  
sjaldan hittir leiður í lið.

Great early  
come I {in, into, during} many {place, spot, parts}  
but {to, towards} late {in, into, during} summer.  
{ale, beer, liquor} {stay, sojourn; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist} {drunk,  
drank},  
{some, some part of} {stay, sojourn; being, entity; purpose, intention, view; be, exist} unfit;  
{seldom, rarely} {hit, meet with, come across} disliked {in, into, during} {troops, army, aid,  
assistance}.

Great early  
Come I into many places  
But to late during summer.  
Ale being drunk  
Some be unfit;  
Seldom meet with dislike during assistance.

Too early  
I come to many places  
But late to them in the summer.  
When drinking ale  
Some become unfit;  
Seldom is assistance met with disfavor.

Come at a reasonable time - too early and the hosts won't be ready, too late and you shame them and yourself by the lack of provisions. The last half of this verse says that if some one becomes drunk help them to bed or home; they won't object to the aid.

67. Hér og hvar  
myndi mér heim um boðið  
ef þyrftag að málungi mat  
eða tvö lær hengi  
að ins tryggva vinar  
þar er eg hafða eitt etið.

here and everywhere  
{shall, will, be sure to, must, can be} to me {home, region, world} {of, about, around, round,  
during, by, at, for} {offer, feast, festival, summons}  
{if, in case; doubt} in need {that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} {be very  
poor} food  
{or, if} two bone suspend  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} the {safe, secure} friends  
{there, at that place} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} I {have, use} eating  
{Always time; always desire; always usual/ happening}.

Here and everywhere  
Shall to me home for feast  
If in need that are very poor food  
If two bones suspended  
At the safe friends  
At that place that I have eat always time.

Here and there  
Shall at my home feast  
If the poor are in need of food,  
If two hams hang  
With good friends  
There I may always eat.

The first half of the verse says that we should help the poor and starving - personally. I would see this as starting with ones family, including the extended one; then move to the local community (or if in a very large city, your neighborhood); then extend out in ever widening circles. By helping one's community, you help to make that community stronger. Once your community is strong, it can help move out to the state, the country and the world.

The last half of the verse states that it is alright to accept an invitation to a meal as long as it does not impoverish your hosts. If to stay would put a hardship on the host, find a probable excuse not to stay - one that will not insult them.

68. Eldur er bestur  
með ýta sonum  
og sólar sýn,  
heilindi sitt,  
ef maður hafa náir,  
og án við löst að lifa.

{fire, eruption} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at } best  
with {men's}son  
and solar {sight, appearance, vision; show, exhibit, display, evince, manifest; visible, clear,  
evident},  
{good health, sincerity, uprightness} one's,  
{if, in case; doubt} {capita, man, husband, person} {have, use} {reach, get, attain},  
{and, also} without {respect; against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with; we; greet} {vice, fault}  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} {live, be alive, survive}.

Fire is best  
With men's son  
And solar sight,  
Sincerity one's,  
If man have reach,  
And without respect vice towards live.

Fire is best  
Among the sons of men  
And the sight of the sun,  
One's honesty  
If man retains it,  
And without respect vices thrive.

Humans need the light and warmth of the sun to survive. Likewise, man need to be honest and respectful or vice and crime grow.



69. Er-at maður alls vesall  
 þótt hann sé illa heill.  
 Sumur er af sonum sæll,  
 sumur af frændum,  
 sumur af fé ærnu,  
 sumur af verkum vel.

{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at}-not {man, person; faded} {altogether, quite}  
 {wretched, poor, miserable, unwell, indisposed}  
 {thought to be, seem to be; although} he {to be; to see; this} {ill, badly; ill treated}  
 {foreboding, omen, luck; entire, hale, sound}.  
 {some, some part of} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {by, of, from, with} son  
 {happy, blessed},  
 {some, some part of} {by, of, from, with} {kinsman, relative, cousin, relation},  
 {some, some part of} {by, of, from, with} {sheep, cattle, livestock} {sufficient, plentiful, great},  
 {some, some part of} {by, of, from, with} {work, business, deed, effect} well.

Is not man altogether wretched  
 Although he is ill health.  
 Some is by son blessed,  
 Some with kinsmen,  
 Some with cattle plenty  
 Some with deed well.

No man is completely wretched  
 Even if he is unwell.  
 Some are blessed with sons  
 Some with kinsmen,  
 Some with wealth,  
 Some with good works.

No matter how bad off someone seems at the moment, there is something in their life that shows that they have worth.

70. Betra er lifðum  
en sé ólifðum,  
ey getur kvikur kú.  
Eld sá eg upp brenna  
auðgum manni fyrir  
en úti var dauður fyr durum.

{better, improve} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {live, be a live, survive}  
{but; and, than, when, if} {to be; to see; this} {death, death wound},  
{island, isle; not; ever} {means, resources, ability, power, get} {quick, alive, living, lively, brisk,  
swarming} {heap, pile; cow}(?).  
{fire; cook} {sow, that, who, the, this, to see} I {up, above, upstairs} {Burn, be on fire, be  
consumed by fire}  
{enrich, grow rich, wealthy} {man, person, husband; moon} {before, in front of, because of, on  
account of}  
{but, and, than, when, if} {out, out of doors, abroad, in the open air} was dead {before, in front  
of} {sooner, previously, before} door.

Better is life  
Than to be dead,  
Ever get living cow.  
Fire to see I upstairs burn  
Wealthy man before  
But out of doors was dead before door.

Better is life  
Than to be dead,  
The living can earn a cow.  
I see a fire burning upstairs  
Before a wealthy man  
But outside was a corpse before the door.

If you are alive you can do something to be useful. This was at least true at the time the poem was composed. The second half is a warning to the wealthy not to be greedy or inhospitable - it is shameful to allow some one to die outside your door if you can do something to help.

71. Haltur ríður hrossi,  
hjörð rekur handar vanur,  
daufur vegur og dugir.  
Blindur er betri  
en brenndur sé,  
nýtur manngi nás.

{lame, limping, halt, halting} {ride, go on horse back} horse,  
{flock, herd} {way, road, mode, manner, direction; honor, distinction; to drive} hand  
{accustomed, used; wanting, missing},  
{languid, sluggish, dull, sad, downcast, flat, vapid, weak, fail} {way, road, mode; manner,  
direction; honor, distinction; lift, smite, fight, kill} and {active, help, aid, avail;  
doughtiness, prowess}.  
Blind {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} better  
{but, and, than, when} {Burn, be on fire, be consumed by fire} {to be; to see; this},  
{fit, able, useful} man-not corpse.

Lame ride horse,  
Flock to drive hand missing,  
Dull fight and active.  
Blind is better  
Than burn to be,  
Useful man-not corpse

The lame may ride,  
The handless drive sheep,  
The dull fight and be useful.  
To be blind is better  
Than to be burned,  
A corpse is useful to no one.

This verse is fairly self-evident; Everyone can be useful to the community to some extent. Even those with mental or physical disabilities.

72. Sonur er betri  
þótt sé síð um alinn  
eftir genginn guma.  
Sjaldan bautarsteinar  
standa brautu nær  
nema reisi niður að nið.

Son {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} better  
{Thought to be, seem to be; although} {To be; to see; this} late {of, about, around,  
round, during, by, at, for} {give birth, bear; entertain; support; stall feed}  
{after, along, according to} {dead, deceased, gone} {praise excessively, boast; man}.  
{seldom, rarely} {stone monument, stone pillars}  
{stand, be standing} {road, path, track} {almost, nearly; near}  
{take, halt, catch, strike against, amount to, hear, unless, except} {raise, erect, build,  
withstand} {hostility, kinsman, son, scion, down} {that, though, although, towards,  
against, up to, to, at} {hostility, kinsman, son, scion, down}.

Son is better  
Although to be late at give birth  
After dead man;  
Seldom stone monuments  
Stand road near  
Unless raise son to kinsman

A son is better  
Although born late  
After his father died;  
Seldom are stones  
Stood near the road,  
Unless raised by sons to kinsmen.

This verse refers to ones immortality - children. However, while it may have been the sons that put the memorial stones in place, it was usually the wife of the deceased that paid for the carving.

73. Tveir eru eins herjar,  
tunga er höfuðs bani;  
er mér í hédin hvern  
handar væni.

Two are {one, only} {harry, lay waste, devastate},  
tongue {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {head, beak of a ship, pillar capital} death;  
{who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {to me} {in, into, during; among; at} {from here,  
hence} {who, which; what}  
{hand; side, part; against} {outlook, prospect}.

Two are only wasted,  
Tongue is head death;  
Is to me among from here who  
Against prospect.

Only two are wasted,  
The tongue is the head's death;  
Among the missing is to me one  
Without prospects.

The first half says that lying can get one dead - physically, socially, culturally, or any combination of the three. The second half states that the lazy are useless to those around them and might as well be gone.

74. Nótt verður feginn  
 sá er nesti trúir,  
 skammar eru skips rár;  
 hverf er haustgríma;  
 fjöld um viðrir  
 á fimm dögum  
 en meir á mánuði.

night {worth, meal; happen, become, take place} {glad, joyful, fain}  
 {sow; that, who; that, the} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} provisions {faith, belief,  
 trust},  
 {scold, abuse, revile, brawl, bandy words; short; shame} are ships {sail-yard};  
 {turn around, be lost to sight, disappear, vanish; changeable} {who, that, which, whose; is;  
 when; at} {autumn night};  
 {multiple, large number} {of, about, around, round, during, by, at, for} {with, against; at, greet;  
 tree, beam, forest, wood; wide; air, ventilate, weather}  
 {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} five day  
 {but, and, than, when, if} {more, in a higher (greater) degree} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
 {month, monthly}.

Night happen glad  
 He who provisions trust,  
 Short are ships sails;  
 Changeable is autumn night;  
 Large number of weather  
 In five days,  
 But more in month.

Night is welcomed  
 When stores are plenty,  
 Short are ships sails;  
 Fickle is the autumn night;  
 Weather can change  
 In five days,  
 But more in a month.

When fall comes it is time to put up the boat and finish preparing for winter. In the colder months it does not take long for weather to change and over the period of a month it changes greatly.

75. Veit-a hinn,  
er vætki veit,  
margur verður af aurum api.  
Maður er auðigur,  
annar óauðigur,  
skyli-t þann vítká vár.

{know, be aware of}-not {that, the other},  
who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} nothing {know, be aware of},  
many {worth, meal; happen, become, take place} {by, of, from, with} ounce of silver {monkey,  
ape}.  
{man, person; faded} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {rich, wealthy},  
{one of two; other, another, second, different} poor,  
{shelter, shed}-not {than, that, the} {wit, learned, knowledgeable-not} {spring; us; our; was}.

Know not the other  
Who nothing know,  
Many become from ounce of silver ape.  
Man is wealthy,  
Another poor,  
Shelter-not the wit-not us.

Know not those  
Who know nothing,  
Silver makes many a fool.  
One man is wealthy,  
Another poor,  
We expose the fool.

This verse tells us to stay away from those that are unable to manage their money. Those who are foolish with their money can drag down those around them. Expose them to others so that they can be avoided

76. Deyr fé,  
deyja frændur,  
deyr sjálfur ið sama;  
en orðstír  
deyr aldregi  
hveim er sér góðan getur.

Die {sheep cattle, livestock},  
die {kinsman, relative, cousin, relation},  
die {self} {restless, motion, fidgeting} {benefit, become, befit; same};  
but {fame, good report}  
die never  
{them, everyone} {who, that, which, whose; is; when; at} {this, to see, to be} {good, fine, noble,  
brave} {get; means, resources, ability, power}.

Die cattle,  
Die kinsmen,  
Die self restless same;  
But fame  
Die never  
Everyone which to be good gets.

Cattle die,  
Kinsmen die,  
The restless die just the same;  
But fame  
Never dies  
Which everyone good gets.

While no one is physically immortal, if you can earn a good name and reputation, you will be remembered long after you die.



77. Deyr fé,  
deyja frændur,  
deyr sjálfur ið sama.  
Eg veit einn  
að aldrei deyr:  
dómur um dauðan hvern.

Die {sheep, cattle, livestock},  
die {kinsman, cousin, relative, relation},  
die self {restless, motion, fidgeting} {benefit, become}.  
I {know, be aware of} {one, alone}  
{that, though, although, towards, against, up to, to, at} never die:  
{judgment, sentence, doom, court of justice, opinion} {of, about, around, round, during,  
from here, hence; by, at, for} {death, dead} {who, which; every, each; hot spring}.

Die cattle  
Die kinsmen  
Die oneself motion become.  
I know one  
That never die:  
Judgement at death each.

Cattle die  
Kinsmen die  
Even the restless die.  
I know one thing  
That never dies:  
The judgement of one at death.

This verse is practically the same as the previous. Here, however, the last line qualifies that your reputation at death is the one you will be known by for a very long time.

78. Fullar grindur  
sá eg fyr Fitjungs sonum.  
Nú bera þeir vonar vöð.  
Svo er auður  
sem augabragð:  
hann er valkastur vina.

Full {gate, pen, fold, framework}  
{sow, see} I before Fitungs sons  
No carry they hope {choice, field, see}  
So {is, when, that, who, which} empty, void, great wealth, riches}  
As {moment, instant, eye twinkling}  
He is unstable friend

Full pens  
See I before Fitungs sons.  
Now they carry hope fields.  
So are riches  
As an eyes blink:  
He is an unstable friend.

Full pens  
I saw before Fitungs sons.  
Now their fields carry only hope.  
Thus are riches  
Gone in an eye-blink:  
Wealth is an unstable friend.

This verse is saying that at any moment one can go from prince to pauper. Ones wealth is always dependant upon unseen forces and those forces can turn against the rich at any time.

79. Ósnotur maður,  
ef eignast getur  
fé eða fljóðs munuð,  
metnaður honum þróast,  
en mannvit aldregi:  
fram gengur hann drjúgt í dul.

Unwise men  
If {ownership, possession, money} gets  
Cattle or women shall,  
Ambition his increase  
{but, and, then, when} wisdom never:  
Forward walks his substantial in conceit

The foolish man  
If possession he gets  
Of cattle or women shall,  
His ambition ever increase,  
But his wisdom never:  
Forward he walks in substantial conceit

The foolish man,  
If he get possession,  
Of money or women shall,  
Ever increase his ambition,  
But never his wisdom:  
Arrogant he becomes.

If one gains wealth and prestige, don't flaunt it. It is easy to act the fool after making great gains, but keep in mind the previous verse. That wealth can leave as fast as it came. And the fool is left alone, while the wise person has made true friends who will help in the time of need.

80. Það er þá reynt,  
er þú að rúnum spyr  
inum reginkunnum,  
þeim er gerðu ginnregin  
og fáði fimbulþulur;  
þá hefir hann best ef hann þegir.

Then is when proved  
{when, that, who, which, is} you {before, that, though, towards} runes ask  
the knowing gods  
they {when, that, who, which, is} {doing, act, deed} great gods  
and {polished, burnished} terrible-wise-man  
then have his best {if, than, when, but} his silence

Then when proved,  
When you towards runes asked  
The knowing gods,  
They who act great gods  
And burnished shaman;  
Then have his best whe his silence.

Then it is proved,  
When you aked the runes  
The wise gods,  
The great gods who make  
And the profound shaman;  
His silence is best to have.

It is my belief that this verse is saying “once you have an answer, stop asking.” People are wont to over analyze things, especially if we are not getting the answer we want. But remember, we don’t always get what we want. Sometimes what we want is not what is best for us.

81. Að kveldi skal dag leyfa,  
konu er brennd er,  
mæki er reyndur er,  
mey er gefin er,  
ís er yfir kemur,  
öl er drukkið er.

{before, first, that, towards, at} evening shall day {allow, praise}  
Wives {that, when, who, is} burned {that, when, who, is}  
Swords {that, when, who, is} proved {that, when, who, is}  
Maiden {that, when, who, is} given {that, when, who, is}  
Ice {that, when, who, is} over come  
Ale {that, when, who, is} drunk {that, when, who, is}

Towards evening shall day praise,  
Wives when burned are  
Swords that proved are,  
Maiden that given is,  
Ice when over come,  
Ale when drunk is.

Praise the day at evening,  
A wife when burned,  
Swords that have been tested,  
Maidens when married,  
Ice when crossed  
Ale when drunk.

In a nut-shell: Don't praise anything until you know that the item is completed and done the job it should have done. In other words, don't jinx yourself. Things can change and a day that started great may end terribly. You could say you have a great spouse and the next day they walk out on you. Ice can look safe, but actually be too thin to support you. This does not mean that you give no praise at all, just when it is appropriate.

82. Í vindi skal við höggva,  
veðri á sjó róa,  
myrkri við man spjalla:  
Mörg eru dags augu.  
á skip skal skriðar orka,  
en á skjöld til hlífar,  
mæki höggs,  
en mey til kossa.

In wind shall {at, by, near} {hew, cut, strike}  
In fine weather {on, in, of, at, by} sea {smooth, calm}  
In darkness {at, by, near} man talk  
Many are days eyes  
{on, in, of, at, by} ship shall glide be able  
{then, when, but, and} {on, in, of, at, by} shield {to, in, of, concerning,, as, for} {cover, shelter}  
the swords strokes  
{then, when, but, and} maidens {to, in, of, concerning, as, for} kissing

In wind shall at hew,  
In fine weather on sea calm,  
In darkness by man talk:  
Many are days eyes.  
On ship shall glide be able,  
And of shield concerning shelter,  
The swords strokes,  
But maidens for kissing.

Cut wood in the wind,  
In fine weather sail calm seas,  
Talk of secrets at night:  
The day has many eyes.  
On a ship you can flow,  
And find a shield for shelter,  
From sword strokes,  
But a maiden for kissing.

To everything there is a time and place. IF the weather is not good for sailing, cut wood, work on the farm, finish those projects. When it is good, do those things that you can only do in good weather. If you must talk about things in secret, talk at night in the dark so that you can't be seen if you are overheard. Lastly, use things according to their proper use.

83. Við eld skal öl drekka,  
en á ísi skríða,  
magran mar kaupa,  
en mæki saurgan,  
heima hest feita,  
en hund á búi.

{at, by, near} fire shall ale drink  
{then, but, and, when} {on, in, of, at, by} the ice crawles  
Thin {horse, sea} buy  
{then, but, and, when} sword {defile, dirty, soil, pollute}  
at home horse fat  
{then, but, when, and} hound {on, in, of, at, by} {dweller, inhabitant, neighbor, farm}

By fire shall ale drink,  
When on the ice crawl,  
Thin horse buy,  
And sword dirty,  
At home horse fatten  
And dogs at farm.

You should drink ale by the fire,  
Creep over the ice,  
Buy a thin horse,  
And a dirty sword,  
Fatten a horse at home,  
And a hound on the farm.

The first line means that while there is daylight do productive work and leave the ale drinking until evening. The second line is on the simple level a caution about crossing ice; on the deeper level it is a caution that things are not always as firm and safe as they may seem – take nothing for granted.

The next two lines suggest that one should take somethings that are apparently second-rate and make them better – make them something of yourself, take pride in making something better than the way you got it. The last two lines are a continuation of the previous two.

## ii. MANSÖNGUR - MENS SONGS

84. Meyjar orðum  
skyli manngi trúa  
né því er kveður kona,  
því að á hverfanda hveli  
voru þeim hjörtu sköpuð,  
brigð í brjóst um lagin.

Maidens words

{due, obligation, right, shall} man-not {faith, believe, credit}  
Not at the moment {say, declare} women  
{since, because, for} {on, at, by, of} turned {wheel, globe}  
Are {they, them, their} hearts shape  
{breaking, breech, annul} in breast {by, in, about, of, during, if} {layer, position, log}

Maidens words

Shall men not believe  
Not when say women,  
Because on turned wheel  
Are their hearts shape,  
Breech in breast by position.

A maidens word

A man should not believe  
Nor the words of women,  
Because on a turning wheel  
Their hearts are shaped,  
Lies are lodged in their breasts.

This is another verse that does not fit with the whole based on the knowledge we have of Nordic society before and during the Viking Age. During that time women were held in very high regard; they could own property and businesses, they could not be forced into marriage and could divorce on their own accord. It must be, that if written by the same poet as the rest of the Havamal, the poet must just had a nasty break-up with some woman.



85. Brestanda boga,  
brennanda loga,  
gínanda úlfi,  
galandi kráku,  
rýtanda svíni,  
rótlausum viði,  
vaxanda vogi,  
vellanda katli,

Twanging bow  
Burning logs  
The gaping wolf  
The screaming crow  
Grunting swine  
Rootless {sea, willow}  
{waxing, growing} {balance, dare, bay, inlet}  
boiling cauldron

Twanging bow,  
Burning logs,  
The gaping wolf,  
The screaming crow,  
Grunting swine,  
Rootless willow,  
The growing inlet,  
Boiling cauldron,

A twanging bow,  
Burning logs,  
The gaping wolf,  
The screaming crow,  
Grunting pigs,  
A rootless tree,  
The swelling tide,  
A boiling cauldron,

This verse continues into the next three and commentary will be made at that point.

86. Fljúganda fleini,  
fallandi báru,  
ísi einnættum,  
ormi hringlegnum,  
brúðar beðmálum  
eða brotnu sverði,  
bjarnar leiki  
eða barni konungs,

flying dart  
falling { waves, pine needles }  
the ice one night  
the serpent laid coiled  
brides bed-talking  
{ or, and, but } broken sword  
bear's play  
{ and, or, but } child kings

Flying darts,  
Falling waves,  
Ice one night old,  
A coiled serpent,  
A bride's bed talk  
Or a broken sword,  
Playing bears  
Or the children of Kings,

Commentary - see verse 87.

87. Sjúkum kálfi,  
sjálfráða þræli,  
völu vilmæli,  
val nýfelldum.

Sickly calves  
Independent slaves  
{ankle-bone, seeress} kind-words  
{hawk, slain} new fallen

sickly calves  
independent slaves  
seeresses kind-words  
slain new fallen

A sickly calf,  
An independent slave,  
The kind words of a seeress,  
The newly fallen slain.

The above three verses are a listing of things that men should not put a lot of stock or trust into. Most are fairly common sense – if you hear a bow twanging it means an arrow has been loosed, a boiling cauldron is hot, etc. A couple of the lines need a little explaining.

The “rootless tree” is a man with no family or home. This is what is called a kenning. In Nordic society, family was very important and a man without one was usually an outlaw and someone dangerous to deal with. While this is possible anachronistic for the Viking age, the line about a bride’s bed talk means that women will often say things in bed to get a man to do something he might otherwise not do. We men tend to be a little slow witted when in rut.

The line dealing with the slave is a bit trickier. During the Viking Age, a slave that could be trusted to work independantly was thought to bring high status. However, one that was too independent would not be as easily trusted as they may try running away. Thus, it becomes difficult to judge the level of independence that one allows one’s slaves.

Lastly, the line about the seeress. The Nordic people tend to be fairly stoic and a bit on the pragmatic side. Very few people went to see a seeress, and those that did expected to hear the worst from them. Thus, if one is getting nothing but good news all the time, it was thought that the seeress could not be trusted.

88. Akri ársánum  
trúi engi maður  
né til snemma syni:  
Veður ræður akri.  
en vit syni:  
hætt er þeirra hvort.

Fields early sown  
{truth, believe, trust} {none, no} men  
nor {to, from, in, of, for} early sons  
weather {ride, twist} fields  
{but, than, and, that} wits son  
{cease, risk, dangerous, high} {is, when, which, what} {they, them, their} {if, whether, both}

fields early sown  
trust no men  
nor in early sons  
weather rides fields  
and wits son  
risk is them if

In fields early sown  
No men trust  
Nor in early sons:  
The weather rides the fields.  
And a son's wits  
There is risk in them both

This verse is a continuation of the previous three, but only covering two topics: sons and fields. In an agricultural society, if fields are sown too early, the ground may not be properly thawed or the heavy rains not done falling. In the first case birds will eat too much of the seed for a good crop to grow. In the second, the seeds become waterlogged and will not germinate. In either case the farm has insufficient grain to last the coming winter.

In the case of the sons, children born too early, if they survive the birthing process, are often sickly and weak and therefore unable to be of much help as they grow. Also, a son often tries to prove their worth to their fathers often with knowledge they either do not really have or with knowledge that is incomplete. It is a warning not to let ones children grow up too fast.

89. Bróðurbana sínum,  
þótt á brautu mæti,  
húsi hálfbrunnu,  
hesti alskjótum:  
Þá er jór ónýtur,  
ef einn fótur brotnar.  
Verði-t maður svo tryggur  
að þessu trúi öllu.

{fratricide, brother's bane} their  
{though, washed} {upon, on, in, of, at, by, about} road {meet, encounter, value}  
house half-burned  
horse all-thrust  
{at, that, towards, to} {is, what, which, who} horse useless  
{if, whether, lest} one foot broken  
become-not man so {trusty, true, safe}  
{at, that, towards, to} this {true, belief, faith} {wholly, completely}

Brother's bane their  
Though upon road meet  
House half burned.  
Horse all thrust:  
When horse useless,  
If one foot broken.  
Become not man so trusting  
That this belief completely.

A brother's killer  
Though met upon the road,  
is a house half burned,  
A too fast horse:  
That is a useless horse,  
If one foot is broken.  
Become not so trusting a man  
That you trust completely.

Taking vengeance in a chance encounter is a dangerous thing to attempt. Wait until the time is right so that no one becomes injured except the intended person. In other words. Take legal problems to court, don't handle them on your own.

90. Svo er friður kvenna,  
 þeirra er flátt hyggja,  
 sem aki jó óbryddum  
 á ísi hálum,  
 teitum, tvevetrum  
 og sé tamur illa,  
 eða í byr óðum  
 beiti stjórnlausu,  
 eða skyli haltur henda  
 hrein í þáfjalli.

So {then, is, and} {peaceful, handsome} woman  
 They {is, then, but, and} flat think  
 {as, that, while, when, who} drive horse bad-edge  
 {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} ice men  
 {merry, cheerful} two-year-old  
 and {is, see} tame {ill, bad}  
 {or, and, but} in fair-wind {wades, furious}  
 {sail-near-wind, beat, pasture, bait, graze} {governless, anarchy, immoderate, enormous}  
 {or, and, but} shall lame hand  
 {reindeer, clean, clear, pure} in thaw-mountains

so is handsome woman,  
 they but flat think,  
 when drive horse bad-edge  
 on the ice men,  
 merry, two-year-old  
 and is tame bad,  
 or in fair-wind wades  
 sail-near-wind governless,  
 or shall lame hand  
 reindeers in thaw-mountain

A beautiful woman is such,  
 They merely think not,  
 When driving a horse recklessly  
 Men on the ice,  
 Merrily, as a child  
 And is poorly taught,  
 Or wading in fair winds  
 Sailing without care,  
 Or rashly shall  
 Guide reindeer in high mountains.

This verse is a warning against letting oneself become a fool when one falls in love. While this can apply to women, this verse is directed at men who tend to do rash and careless acts trying to impress women – like riding horses on lakes where the ice is thin, letting a boat drift while wooing the lady, etc.

91. Bert eg nú mæli,  
því að eg bæði veit,  
brigður er karla hugur konum:  
Þá vér fegurst mælum,  
er vér flást hyggjum:  
það tælir horska hugi.

{clear, bear, naked} I now {voice, speak}  
{that, because, the, of} {before, first, until, that, to, at} I both {know, soil, grant, give, convey}  
{annul, breaking} {is, who, that, which, when} man {mind, spirit, heart, courage, desire} woman  
{then, accept, thaw} we fair speak  
{is, who, that, which, when} we {float, flay, rash} {thought, mind, opinion}  
{from, thence} {entice, decoy, deceive, impose} wise {mind, thought, spirit}

clear I now speak,  
Because that I both know,  
breaking is man spirit woman:  
then we fair speak,  
when we rash thought:  
thence deceive wise mind.

Now I speak clearly,  
For that I know both,  
Men break oaths when they desire women:  
We then speak fair,  
When rashly we think:  
Then wise minds are deceived.

This is further advice against losing one's self-control when in love. Be cautious and do not lose your honor.

92. Fagurt skal mæla  
og fé bjóða  
sá er vill fljóðs ást fá,  
líki leyfa  
ins ljósa mans:  
Sá fær er fríar.

Fairly shall speak  
And {cattle, wealth, position} {provide, invite, giver}  
{sow, that, the, see} {is, who, that, which, when} will {woman, love} get  
{match, equal, form, shape, like} {permit, allow}  
the {light, clear, bright} {man, thrall}  
{sow, that, the, see} {get, take, few} {is, who, that, which, when} {free, peace, handsome}

Fairly shall speak  
And wealth provide  
The which will woman get,  
Match allow  
The bright thrall:  
See get who free.

I shall speak fairly  
And provide wealth  
Which the woman will get,  
Permit the match  
To the bright thrall:  
See who gets free.

While this verse certainly fits with the previous two, this is more a marriage proposal than advice. The “bright thrall” is a kenning for the groom who is saying that he will, in essence, be a slave to his bride. He is offering to never mistreat his bride to be and to provide her with wealth and station.



93. Ástar firna  
skyli engi maður  
annan aldregi.  
Oft fá á horskann,  
er á heimskan né fá,  
lostfagrir litir.

{love, woman} wonder  
shal not man  
{other, another} never  
often get {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} wise  
{is, who, that, which, when} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} the foolish {not, nor} get  
A maiden so fair {dye, see, behold}

Love wonder  
Shall not man  
Another never.  
Often get by wise,  
Which about the foolish not get,  
So fair behold.

Love's wonder  
Shall not a man  
Another's have.  
The wise often gets,  
Which the foolish do not,  
A maiden so fair to behold.

The first half of the verse is a warning to both avoid another's mate and also that who is attracted to whom is not something that should be attempted to be understood. The second half shows that by paying attention to the needs of the one you love, it is the wise person that gets the mate of his or her desire.

94. Eyvitar firna  
er maður annan skal,  
þess er um margan gengur guma.  
Heimska úr horskum  
gerir hölda sonu  
sá inn máttki munur.

{not, never, isle}-{wits, know, find out, turned, proved} {wonder, great quantity}  
{is, who, which, when} man {another, other, second, business, work} {shall, must, ought}  
they who {around, about, over, by at, for, in} many able to walk man  
Fool {watch, from, drizzle} wise  
{yeast, swarm, greedy, make, do, send} man sons  
{sow, so, that, the, see} the mighty-not {shall, will, difference, importance, mind, longing,  
delight, love}

Not-wits great quantity  
Is man another must  
They who about many able to walk man  
Fools from wise  
Make man sons  
That the might-not love

Many a fool  
Is a man made,  
They who many thought strong.  
The wise become fools  
Man's sons are made  
To see the maiden's delight.

Love can make the strongest man into a fool (or for that matter a strong woman, too). People who fall too deeply into a passionate love often do things they later regret.

95. Hugur einn það veit  
er býr hjarta nær,  
einn er hann sér um sefa.  
Öng er sótt verri  
hveim snotrum manni  
en sér engu að una.

{mind, thought, spirit, heart} {one, alone} {thence, concerning} {know, grant, give}  
{is, when, who, which} {prepare, array, dwell, be, ready} heart {near, nearly, when, until}  
{one, alone} {is, when, who, which} {his, he} {they, see} {on, by, around, about, in, of} {sooth,  
mind, affection}  
{narrow, straight} {is, who, which, when} {illness, sickness} {worse, man}  
{who, which, what} wise man  
{then, but, and, when} {they, see} {none, squirm} {that, towards, against, to, at} {contented,  
enjoy, love}

Mind alone then know  
Who dwell heart near  
Alone is he seen in affection.  
Narrow is illness worse  
Which wise man  
And see none that enjoy

Then the mind alone knows  
Who dwells near the heart  
Alone he is seen in affection.  
Loneliness is a worse illness  
Which wise men  
When seen that none enjoy.

In this verse we learn that only the person in love knows why they are in that state. The wise person knows that know one is truly happy when they are alone. And there is a difference between being alone and being by oneself.

96. Það eg þá reynda  
er eg í reyri sat  
og vætta'g míns munar.  
Hold og hjarta  
var mér in horska mær:  
þeygi eg hana að heldur hefi'g.

Thence I {then, thaw, accept} {try, prove}  
{is, when, who, which} I in {try, prove, fasten, reed, tie, lash} sat  
and {hope, witness} mine remember  
skin and heart  
was to me the wise {maid, girl, glorious, grand}  
yet-not I {see here, her} {that, towards, against, to, at} {rather, but, hold} {lift, raise, have not}

Thence I thaw try  
When I in reeds sat  
And hope mine remember.  
Skin and heart  
Was to me the wise maid  
Yet-not I her that but have not.

Then I tried to warm  
When I sat in the reeds  
And remembered my hopes.  
Body and heart  
Was to me the wise maid:  
Still against her I was not held.

This verse tells how a young man, sitting in hiding, was hoping to gain his love, but in spite of everything, did not get her. I think it likely that this verse is saying if you want to win a mate, you cannot hide the fact that you have feelings for the person – you cannot “sit among the reeds and dream of your desires”.

97. Billings mey  
eg fan beðjum á  
sólhvíta sofa.  
Jarls yndi  
þótti mér ekki vera  
nema við það lík að lifa.

Billings maiden  
I found bed {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
Sunwhite {sleep, sofa}  
Jarls {delight, happiness}  
Seem to me nothing {be, stay, done, happen}  
{take, catch, hear, unless, except} {against, towards, at, with, beside} thence like {that, towards,  
against, to, at} to live

Billings maiden  
I found bed in  
Sunwhite sleep.  
Jarls delight  
Seems to me nothing to be  
Unless against thence like to to live

Billings daughter  
I found in bed  
Beautiful in sleep.  
A Jarls delights  
Seem to be nothing to me  
Not unless as a result to live with love.

This verse makes reference to the wooing of Billings daughter by Odin (?). This story is unknown in other sources. In the verse it seems clear that the poet has fallen deeply for the maiden, that there are no delights in the world without the girls love. Coupled with other verses above and to come, one should keep in mind that these are verses warning that one too deeply in love and not in control of one's wits, generally gets made a fool.

98. "Auk nær aftni  
skaltu, Óðinn, koma,  
ef þú vilt þér mæla man.  
Allt eru ósköp  
nema einir viti  
slíkan löst saman."

{ok, add, increase} {near, when, until} become evening  
shall you Odin come  
if you {will, wish} you speak {man, servant, thrall, remember}  
all are {fatality, enormous}  
{take, catch, hear, unless, except} {juniper, one, only} {wits, signal, punishment}  
such {vice, fault} together

Ok when become evening  
Shall you, Odin come,  
If you wish you speak the servant.  
All are fatality  
Catch juniper punishment  
Such vice together

Good when evening comes  
Shall you, Odin, come,  
If you wish to speak to the maid.  
All are dead  
If caught in the bushes  
Together in such vices.

He odin is told that is he wishes to meet with the young woman, he should come toward evening.  
He is also warned to be very careful and to keep things on an honorable level for otherwise he  
and his coconspirator will be killed.

99. Aftur eg hvarf  
og unna þóttumst  
vísun vilja frá.  
Hitt eg hugða  
að eg hafa mynda  
geð hennar allt og gaman.

back I {disappearance, where, who, each}  
and {love, grant, allow} seemed to me  
{manner, certain, verse, show, king} {will, wish} {learn, ask, from}  
{hit, here, possessive pronoun} I {mind, thought, spirit, heart}  
{that, towards, against, to, at} I have {shall, form, shape}  
{mind, liking, affection} her all and {pleasure, delight}

Back I where  
And love seemed to me  
Certain will ask.  
Here I thought  
That I have shaped  
Affection her all and delight.

Back I went  
And love seemed to me  
Certain for the asking.  
Here I thought  
That I had shaped  
All her affection and delight.

100. Svo kom eg næst  
að in nýta var  
vígdrótt öll um vakin,  
með brennöndum ljósum  
og bornum viði:  
svo var mér vílstígur of vitaður.

So come I next  
{that, towards, against, to, at} the night was  
battlemaster all {on, by, around, about, in, of} awake  
with burning-eyes {bright, clear, light}  
and children {against, provide wood, widely, the sea, tree, wide}  
so was to me favored-path {pride, over, across, through, around, about, for, because of, too} {to  
know, be aware}

So come I next  
That the night was  
Battlemaster all about awake,  
With burning eyes bright  
And children wide  
So was to me the favored path too aware

So next I came  
The night was such  
The Battlemasters were all awake,  
With bright burning eyes  
And children about:  
So to me was the maiden barred.

Odin returns later to find that all the warriors and children are still awake – by design or chance is unknown – and thus not able to meet with the maiden at this time. From this, and from the verses above, we can guess that the assignation is not entirely an honorable one. Either the Billing does not see Odin as a worthy mate for his daughter, or shee does not wish to meet with him. In either case, someone is trying to thwart the Allfather.



101. Og nær morgni,  
er eg var enn um kominn,  
þá var saldrótt sofin.  
Grey eitt eg þá fann  
innar góðu konu  
bundið beðjum á.

and near morning

{when, who, which, is} I was {still, again, further} {around, about, past, over, across, of, from}  
come

{thaw, then, accept} was hall-warriors asleep

dog one I {thaw, then, accept} found

{the, in, accomplish, pay, farther in, within} good {woman, wife}

bound bed {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}

And near morning

When I was again about come,

Then was hall-warriors asleep.

Dog one I then found

The good woman

Bound bed upon.

And near morning

When I came again,

The Hall-warriors were asleep.

I then found a dog

The good woman

Bound upon the bed.

It now become slightly clearer that it is probably the young woman who is hindering Odin. If not she is at least agreeable with her father's wishes.

Both this and the previous verses use wonderful kennings for the men of the household. The earlier verse uses *vígrótt*. The first part – *víg* – means battle. The second part – *drótt* – is from *dróttinn* which means lord, ruler or master. I chose battle master as it has a “nicer” ring to it. In this verse the kenning is *saldrótt*. The first part here – *sal* – comes from *salur*, meaning a hall. One needs to remember that at this time a hall was not the same as a corridor, but a large room where meeting, feasts and drinking bouts took place. In the Norse context, it usually refers to the main room where all general life took place.

Lastly, in Viking homes people did not have separate bedrooms. Bed-boxes lined the walls that had low divideres between each section. Viking Age Scandinavians were not bound by the later Christian concept of modesty. People were polite and did not watch if two people were having relations.

102. Mörg er góð mær,  
 ef görva kannar,  
 hugbrigð við hali.  
 Þá eg það reynda,  
 er ið ráðspaka  
 teygða eg á flærðir fljóð.  
 Háðungar hverrar  
 leitaði mér ið horska man,  
 og hafða eg þess vætki vífs.

Many {is, when, which, who} good maiden  
 {if, whether} {make, build, write, give, do, send, cause become} {can, tankard, search, explore}  
 {mind, heart, soul – break} {against, at, by, near, of, on, to, with, we, wood, far, wide, large}  
 {tail, man, hero}  
 {thaw, then, accept} I {thence, concerning} {test, try, indeed, really}  
 {is, when, who, which} {to do, restless, eddy, bowels} wise-council  
 entice I {upon, on, in, of, at, by, about} deciet {flood, tide, woman}  
 {shame, disgrace} {who, which, each, every, hot spring}  
 {seek, search} to me {do, restless, eddy, bowel} wise {man, servent, remember}  
 and have I {that, the} {stained-not, hope-not, wet-not, nothing} woman

Many which good maiden,  
 If cause search,  
 Heart break by hero.  
 Then I thence test,  
 When do wise council  
 Entice I by deciet woman.  
 Disgrace every  
 Seek to me do wise maid  
 And have I the nought woman

That many good maidens,  
 If a cause was searched,  
 Are heart-broken by heroes.  
 Then I tried,  
 By wise council  
 I enticed women by deceit.  
 Every disgrace  
 The wise maid sought to do me  
 And I had naught of the woman.

The first three lines tell us that it is so-called “heroes” that cause women to be broken-hearted. This then would not be the case for the average man. Thus as our story unfolds from the previous verses, Odin must first have shown up in the guise of a young hero whom the young

maiden distrusted. He then tried enticing her by showing that he was a wise and sagacious man. However, she say through all this and still rebuffed him.

103. Heima glaður gumi  
og við gesti reifur,  
svinnur skal um sig vera,  
minnugur og málugur,  
ef hann vill margfróður vera.  
Oft skal góðs geta.  
Fimbulkambi heitir  
sá er fátt kann segja:  
það er ósnoturs aðal.

{home, region, world} {glad, merry} man  
and {against, at, by, near, of, to, with, we, wood, far, wide, large} guest cheerful  
{swift, wise} shall {on, by, around, about, in, of} victory be  
mindful and talkative  
if he will learned be  
often shall good get  
{long-winded, terrible-winded, monstrous fool} called  
{sow, see, this, the} {is, who, which, when} few know {say, tell}  
{thence, concerning} {is, who, which, when} unwise {nature, disposition, principal, chief, main,  
general}

Home glad man  
And to guest cheerful,  
Wise shall in victory be.  
Mindful and talkative,  
If he will learned be.  
Often shall good get.  
Monstrous fool called  
This who few know say:  
Thence is unwise nature.

Be glad at home  
And cheerful to guests,  
Take wisdom from victories.  
Listen and ask,  
If you wish to learn.  
Often shall you gain.  
“Monstrous fool” called  
This who speaks little wit:  
Thus is the nature of the unwise.

The first six lines are much like those from the Gestapáttur – Be happy at home, treat guests well, learn by asking questions and listening to the answers. The last three are the admonition that if you are going to open your mouth, say something smart – don’t make a fool of yourself.

104. Inn aldna jötun eg sótta,  
nú em eg aftur um kominn:  
fátt gat eg þegjandi þar.  
Mörgum orðum  
mæltu eg í minn frama  
í Suttungs sölum.

the old giant I seek  
now am I back {around, about, past, over, across, of, from} come  
few got I silent there  
many words  
spoke I in my {forward, promote, further, courage, fame}  
in Suttung's halls.

The old giant I seek,  
Now am I back from come:  
Few got I silent there.  
Many words  
Spoke I in my fame  
In Suttung's hall.

The old giant I sought,  
Now I have come back:  
Little I got from silence.  
Many words  
I spoke of my fame  
In Suttung's hall.

This starts us into the story of the winning of the Mead of Inspiration.

105. Gunnlöð mér um gaf  
gullnum stóli á  
drykk ins dýra mjaðar.  
Ill iðgjöld  
lét eg hana eftir hafa  
síns ins heila hugar,  
síns ins svára sefa

Gunnlöð to me {around, about, past, over, across, of, from, by} gave  
golden throne {on, upon, at, in, to, towards, by}  
drink the {animal, door, dear, expensive} mead  
{bad, ill, evil, ugly} compensation  
{put, place, concede yield, leave, lose} I her {after, along} have  
hers the {forboding, omen, luck, whole, entire, enchant, spell} {mind, heart, spirit}  
hers the answer {rush, sedge, soothe, mind, affection}

Gunnlöð to me over gave  
Golden throne on  
Drink the dear mead.  
Ill compensation  
Leave I her after have  
Hers the enchanted heart  
Hers the answer affection

Gunnlöð gave over to me  
On the golden throne  
The dear mead to drink.  
Ill compensation  
After I have left her  
Her enchanted heart,  
Her answered affections.

This verse says that Odin felt he got the better of the deal when he traded his “affection” for Suttung’s mead. The last four line show that he feels this affection he let her assume on his part was “ill compensation” for the mead.

106. Rata munn  
létumk rúms um fá  
og um grjót gnaga.  
Yfir og undir  
stóðumk jötna vegir,  
svo hætta eg höfði til.

{rat, stupid, fall down} mouth  
{let, put, hold back – to me} rooms {on, by, around, in, of} get  
and {on, by, around, in, of} stones gnaw  
{over, above} and under  
{stood to me} giant {way, road, honor, glory}  
so {cease, risk, venture, dangerous, custom, manner} I head {too, to, in of, on, as, for, until}

Rat mouth  
Let to me rooms in get  
And on stones gnaw.  
Over and under  
Stood to me giant glory,  
So risk I head too.

A rat's mouth  
Let me gain the rooms  
And gnaw on stones.  
Over and under  
The giant's glory stood,  
So I risked my head.

First, it would seem that this verse is out of sequence, Having Odin gaining the room with the mead after he had been given it by Suttung's daughter. Also, this verse is out of kilter with the story in Snorri's Edda. In the other Edda, Odin gains access to the chamber by having Suttung's brother bore through the mountain with an auger and Odin entering in the form of a serpent. Here we have him gaining entrance on his own in the form of a rat which gnawed through the rock. In either case, he does indicate that to be caught would be his death.

107. Vel keypts litar  
hefi eg vel notið.  
Fás er fróðum vant.  
Því að Óðrerir  
er nú upp kominn  
á alda vé jarðar.

well to buy look  
{have, heave, lift} I well {use, note, match, equal}  
{get, take, catch, have, use, put, receive, suffer, color} {is, who, which, when} {wise, learned,  
foam} {difficult, lacking, accustomed, missing}  
{because, for} {that, towards, up, to, at} Óðrerir  
{is, who, when, which} now up come  
{on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} {age, old} holy-earth

Well to buy look  
Have I well note.  
Get when wise missing.  
For to Óðrerir  
Is now up come  
Upon old holy earth.

Look well when buying  
Have I well noted.  
The wise get when missing.  
For to Óðrerir  
Now is coming  
Upon old holy earth.

The first two lines, on the surface, are simply saying “look before you buy – don’t buy sight unseen”. However, in context with the previous verses they would mean that Gunnlöð should have been more careful in dealing with someone she had just met. And this is sound advice for everyone all the time.

The third line is a continuation of the previous two – the wise will get what they need when they are missing something. In this case, Odin knew he needed the mead and had the wisdom to get it.

The last three lines would seem to indicate that the ultimate source for the mead, or maybe that the cauldron itself, is the Earth

108. Efi er mér á  
að eg væra enn kominn  
jötna görðum úr,  
ef eg Gunnlaðar né nytta'g,  
innar góðu konu,  
þeirrar er lögðumk arm yfir.

doubt {is, who, when, which} to me {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about}  
{that, towards, up, to, at} I was {still, yet} come  
giant {making, building} {drizzle, watch, out of, from}  
if I Gunnlaðar {not, nor} {use, eat, useful, enjoy}  
{the, further in, in, pay} good {wife, woman}  
hers {is, who, when, which} lay to me {arm, poor, wretched} {above, over}

Doubt is to me of  
That I was yet come  
Giant building from,  
If I Gunnlaðar not enjoy,  
The good woman,  
hers who lay to me arm above.

I was in doubt  
That I would leave  
The giant's hall,  
If Gunnlöð I had not loved,  
The good woman,  
Who lay her arms about me.

Again, Odin is stating that without the help of Gunnlöð had not offered her help – even if it was through a false belief that Odin loved her – he would not likely have left Suttung's abode whole and hale.



109.    Ins hindra dags  
           gengu hrímþursar  
           Háva ráðs að fregna  
           Háva höllu í.  
           Að Bölverki þeir spurðu,  
           ef hann væri með böndum kominn  
           eða hefði honum Suttungur of sóið.

the {hinder, prevent, impede, skilled} days  
 walked frost-giants  
 high council {that, towards, up, to, at} {news, learn, hear of}  
 high halls in  
 {that, towards, up, to, at} Bölverk they {ask, question, injure}  
 if he was with {farmers, yeomen, franklins, gods} come  
 or had him Suttung {over, across, for, round, too} {destroy, sacrifice}

The impeded days  
 Walked frost-giants  
 High council to hear of  
 High hall in.  
 Towards Bölverk they asked,  
 If he was with gods come  
 Or had him Suttung too destroyed.

Long days  
 Walked the Frost-giants  
 To the High council to hear of  
 In the High halls.  
 About Bölverk they asked,  
 If he had come among the gods  
 Or had Suttung destroyed him too.

According to Snorri, Suttung chased Odin out of the hall with both in the form of eagles. However, according to this verse, Odin, still in the guise of Bölverk, made it out unnoticed by the giants. The verse tells us that they travelled for days to Asgard to ask if the gods knew what happened to Bölverk.

110. Baugeið Óðinn  
hygg eg að unnið hafi.  
Hvað skal hans tryggðum trúa?  
Suttung svikinn  
hann lét sumbli frá  
og grætta Gunnlöðu.

ring-oath Odin

think I {that, against, up, to, at} {allow, grant, love} {have, use}  
{what, how} shall, his {faith, fidelity, guarantee, secure, guard} {belief, faith}  
Suttung {deceive, betray, cheat}  
he {put, place, let, yield, leave, lose, behave, say, sound} banquet {from, about, of}  
and grieve Gunnlöðu

Ring-oath Odin

Think I that allow use.  
How shall his faith belief?  
Suttung deceive  
He leave banquet from  
And grieve Gunnlöð

Odin ring-oathed

I think he did.  
How shall he be trusted?  
Suttung was deceived  
When he left the feast  
And Gunnlöð was grieved.

I believe it is from this verse that the idea of Odin as an oath breaker comes from. However, the second line states that it is unsure as to whether an oath was made about anything. The rest of the verse speaks true – Suttung was deceived about the nature of Bölverk and Gunnlöð was grieving the loss of her lover.

### iii. heilræði - wholesome council

111. Mál er að þylja  
þular stóli á  
Urðarbrunni að.  
Sá eg og þagða'g,  
sá eg og hugða'g,  
hlydda eg á manna mál.  
Of rúnar heyrða eg dæma,  
né um ráðum þögðu  
Háva höllu að,  
Háva höllu í,  
heyrða eg segja svo:

{speech, song} {is, who, which, when} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {repeat, patter, speak,  
recite chant}

{endure, tolerate, words} {chair, seat} {upon, on, in, of, at, by, about}

Urð's well {that, towards, against, up, to, at}

{so, that, saw, the, see} I and silence

{so, that, saw, the, see} I and {interest, affection, thought}

hear I {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} men's {songs, speak}

{over, across, through, about, for, too} runes hear I {judge, proclaim}

{not, nor} {around, about, by, over, in, on} {council, advise} silence

high hall {that, towards, against, up, to, at}

high hall in

hear I {say, tell, stipulate} {so, thus}

Song when that recite

Words seat by

Urð's well at.

See I and silence,

See I and thought,

Hear I of men's speak.

Through runes hear I proclaim,

Not in council silence

High hall at,

High hall in.

Hear I say thus:

That song is recited

Seated in words

From Urð's well.

I see and am silent,

I see and I think,

I hear men's speech.

Through runes I hear told,

Nor is council silent

At the high hall,

In the high hall,

I heard said thus:

This is the opening of another list of wisdom verses. This verse tells the listener to do just that – sit, listen, and reflect of what is to be said.

The name of the section – Heilræði – means health council.

112. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
að þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
Þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Nótt þú rís-at  
nema á njósn sér  
eða þú leitir þér innan út staðar.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
night you rise not  
{take, catch, hear, unless, except} {on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} {spying, scouting, news}  
{saw, see, their}  
{and, or, but} you {seek, search, find, go, attempt, put, place, let, yield, leave, lose, behave,  
sound} within out {stead, place, spot}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Night you rise not  
Except about news see  
Or you go within out stead.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
Rise not at night  
Except to get news  
Or to go to the privy.

Several of the next verses start with the same four lines.

The last three are good advice – when you go to bed, stay there unless someone comes with important news or you have to go to use the lavatory.

113. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
að þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Fjölkunnigri konu  
skal-at-tu í faðmi sofa,  
svo að hún lyki þig liðum.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
skilled-in-magic {wife, woman}  
shall not you in embrace sleep  
so {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {her, she} {shut, close, enclose, surround} {receive, accept,  
you} {troops, pass away, go, pass, glide}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Skilled in magic woman  
Shall not you in embrace sleep  
So that her enclose you pass away.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
A witch woman  
Sleep not in her arms  
So that in her bed you die.

While the meaning of the verse is fairly self-evident, I believe that this verse is a later addition to the poem. In the Viking Age, witchcraft in and of itself was not feared. The Scandinavians knew of several different forms. Witches were only feared and distrusted if it had been shown that they were of an injurious bent. It was only after the coming of Christianity that all forms of magic were considered to be evil.

114. Hún svo gerir  
að þú gáir eigi  
þings né þjóðans máls.  
Mat þú vilt-at  
né mannskis gaman.  
Fer þú sorgafullur að sofa.

she so {make, compose, give, act, send, cause}  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {look, heed, mind, attend} not  
{assemblies, meetings} {not, nor} {people, ruler} {songs, speech}  
food you will not  
{not, nor} man-not {pleasure, fun, amusement}  
{go, move, travel} you sorrowful {that, towards, against, up, to, at} sleep

She so make  
That you heed not  
Assemblies nor people speech.  
Food you will not  
Nor man-not pleasure.  
Go you sorrowful to sleep.

She will make  
That you heed not  
Assemblies nor speech of people.  
Eat you will not  
Nor women pleasure.  
Go you sorrowful to sleep.

This is, as it is placed, meant to be a follow-up to the previous verse. However, this sound just like a man who has fallen in love with any woman, witch or not. It would be my guess that the composer – if these two verses are from the original – may have been upset at the loss of a friend.

115. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
að þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Annars konu  
teygðu þér aldregi  
eyrarúnu að.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
another {wife, woman}  
entice you never  
earmysterics {that, towards, against, up, to, at}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Another wife  
Entice you never  
Earmysterics to

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
Another's wife  
Entice you never  
To be a confidant

Sound advice. While nothing improper may actually be going on, the appearance of impropriety between yourself and the others spouse may lead to severe difficulties for all parties concerned.

116. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Á fjalli eða firði,  
ef þig fara tíðir,  
fástu að virði vel.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
{on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} {hill, mountain} {or, and, but} firth  
{if, whether} {accept, receive, you} {go, travel, leave} time  
fast {that, at, towards, against, up, to} {value, worth} well

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
By hill or firth,  
If you leave time,  
Fast to value well.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
By hill or firth,  
If you leave on time,  
Fasten your valuables well.

Again, sound straight forward advice. No matter how you are traveling – by land or water (or even air now) – leave on time and package your stuff well so that it doesn't get damaged.



117. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Illan mann  
 láttu aldregi  
 óhöpp að þér vita,  
 því að af illum manni  
 fær þú aldregi  
 gjöld ins góða hugar.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 {ill, bad} man  
 {put, place, let, allow, yield, leave, lose, behave, say, sound} never  
 misfortune {that, at, towards, against, up, to} you know  
 {that, the} {that, at, towards, against, up, to} {of, from, with} {ill, bad} men  
 {get, take, few} you never  
 {payment, repay, pay} the good {mind, thought, heart, spirit, courage, desire}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Bad men  
 Allow never  
 Misfortune towards you know,  
 That up from Ill men  
 Get you never  
 Repayment the good thought.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Men of ill  
 Never allow  
 To know your misfortunes,  
 From wicked men  
 You never get  
 Repayment for good thoughts.

Advice to not be so naïve. If you know someone to be of ill-repute, do not make them a confidant as they will only use the information against you.

118. Ofarla bíta  
eg sá einum hal  
orð illrar konu.  
Fláráð tunga  
varð honum að fjörlagi  
og þeygi um sanna sök.

a sharp bite

I {saw, saw, that, the} one man

{word, speech, message} {ill, bad} {woman, wife}

{false, deceitful} tongue

{expect, watch, cairn} {he, his} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {death, kill, slaughter, ransom  
one's life}

and yet not {around, about, over, in, past, by} {affirm, assert, make good, prove, proof} {change,  
offense, suit, battle, condition, cause, reason}

A sharp bite

I saw one man

Word bad woman.

Deceitful tongue

Expect him to death

And yet not in proof cause.

Wounded

I saw a man

[By an] ill spoken woman.

A deceitful tongue

Caused his death

And yet there was not proof.

During the Viking Age it was quite common for a duel to be fought over allegedly slanderous statements. Occasionally, these duels were fought without either of the fighting parties checking on the veracity of the statements. There is a good example of this happening in Njal's Saga.

119. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur  
 þer munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Veistu ef þú vin átt  
 þann er þú vel trúir,  
 farðu að finna oft.  
 Því að hrísi vex  
 og hávu grasi  
 vegur er vætki treður.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 know you if you friend {one, only, own, have, possess, marry}  
 {then, that, the} {is, who, which, what} you well {truth, belief, faith}  
 {travel, go, move, behave, fare, happen, receive – you} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} find  
 often  
 {for, because} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} brushwood {wax, grow, increase}  
 and high grass  
 {way, road, direction} {is, who, what, which} nothing tred

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Know you if you friend possess  
 That is true,  
 Travel you to find often.  
 For that brushwood grow  
 And high grass  
 Road who nothing tred.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Remember that if you have a friend  
 That is true,  
 Visit him often.  
 For brushwood grows  
 And tall grass  
 On roads that are not travelled.

Visit good friends often or the friendship can be lost.

120. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Góðan mann  
teygðu þér að gamanrúnum  
og nem líknargaldur meðan þú lifir.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
good men  
{stretch out, draw, allure, entice} you {towards, that, against, up, to, at} joyful conversation  
and {take, catch, hear, unless, except, acquire} {healing spells, healing charms}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Good men  
Draw you to joyful conversation  
And acquire healing spells.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
Good men  
Draw you into joyful conversation  
And obtain healing spells.

This is two pieces of advice. First, make friends with good people as they will supply you with good conversations. Here the word “joyful” does not mean that each conversation will be of the light-hearted, fluff-bunny type. Some may be heated debates. However, whenever you have a conversation with people who are friends and people who are not trying to gain some advantage over you, even the heated debate is joyful as it gives you the opportunity to grow in wisdom, or at least knowledge.

The second part, the last line, is an admonition to learn as much magic as will allow you to heal yourself and others. Whether this healing is on the physical or spiritual level would be determined by one's abilities. Since magic does not have the effect today that it did 1,000 years ago, I would take this to mean that you should be up to date of the various first aid techniques and maybe some form of mental health knowledge – not necessarily to the level of a therapist.

121. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Vin þínum  
 ver þú aldregi  
 fyrri að flaumslitum.  
 Sorg etur hjarta,  
 ef þú segja né náir  
 einhverjum allan hug.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 friend your  
 {was, cover, sea, egg gathering place} you never  
 {former, before, first} {towards, that, against, up, to, at} {breach of friendship}  
 {sorrow, grief} eats heart  
 if you {say, tell} {not, nor} {reach, get, obtain}  
 {some time, once, anyone, some, each} all {thought, mind, heart}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Friend your  
 Was you never  
 First to breach of friendship.  
 Sorrow eats heart,  
 If you tell nor get  
 Anyone all mind.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 [With] your friend  
 Never be  
 First to break the affection.  
 Sorrow eat the heart,  
 If you never get to tell  
 Anyone all your mind.

Basically, the first part of the actual advice, tells us that we need to work to keep our friendships. Don't be the first to let on go. The second part says that loneliness is a terrible burden. That if we have no one to confide in, our hearts will suffer greatly, that sorrow will lead to many health problems.

122. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemi.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Orðum skipta  
þú skalt aldregi  
við ósvinna apa,

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
Words {divide, share, exchange, have dealings, decide, depend, amount, happen, assign}  
You shall never  
{against, towards, at, greet, with, by, close, beside, upon, equal, to, back} {not wise, not swift}  
{mock, ape}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Words exchange  
You shall never  
With not wise ape

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
Exchange words  
You should never  
With a foolish ape,

Simply put, “Don’t argue with a fool”. Every one knows that to argue with a fool just makes a bigger fool out of themselves. You just can’t win.

123. Því að af illum manni  
mundu aldregi  
góðs laun um geta.  
En góður maður  
mun þig gjörva mega  
líknfastan að lofi.

{for because} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {of, by, with, from, close} {ill, bad} man  
would never  
{good, fine, noble, brave} {secrecy, reward} {around, about, in, past, through, across, of,  
concerning, during} {get, obtain, persuade, guess}  
{but, then, and, when, if, one} good man  
will {accept, receive, you} {whole, entire} {be permitted, allow, able}  
{strong in favor, beloved, like firmly} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} praise

For that from ill men  
Would never  
Good reward about get.  
But good men  
Will you entire able  
Strong in favor towards praise.

From bad men  
Never will  
You get good rewards.  
But good men  
Will get you praise.

This is a continuation of the previous verse and maintains the theme that you will get the kind of reputation you deserve from the people you chose to make friends with. Bad people will use you and bring you grief, good people will make you well liked and bring you praise.

124. Sifjum er þá blandað,  
 hver er segja ræður  
 einum allan hug.  
 Allt er betra  
 en sé brögðum að vera.  
 Er-a sá vinur öðrum  
 er vilt eitt segir.

{affinity, relations} {is, who, when, which} {than, accept, receive} {mix, have dealings with}  
 {who, what, which, each, every} {is, who, which, what} {say, tell} {advise, council, plot}  
 one all thought  
 all {is, who, which, what} better  
 {but, and, then, when, if, one} {the, see, know of, understand} {breach, break} {that, against,  
 towards, up, to, at} be  
 {is, who, which, what – not} {that, the, sow, saw, knew, took care} friend {prattle, words,  
 speak}  
 {is, who which, what} will one say

Relations who then have dealings with  
 Each who say advise  
 One all thought.  
 All is better  
 See breach to be  
 Is not the friends words  
 Which will one say.

When dealing with family  
 Everyone has advice  
 Everyone knows.  
 All is better  
 When the break is seen.  
 They are not friend's words  
 Which are said.

Because of the differences in syntax and usage in poetry as opposed to prose, this is a difficult verse to translate so that it sounds “right” to the English language listener. However, the meaning is fairly clear. All one's family has some kind of advice to offer to other members of the family.

The second half of the verse however, isn't quite so clear. Here the pverse says that is is best to break off a relationship if the other person does not speak plainly to you. Friends tell you the truth, even if it hurts. They then help to fix the situation.



125. Ráðumk,Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Þremur orðum senna  
 skal-at-tu við þér verra mann:  
 Oft inn betri bilar,  
 þá er inn verri vegur.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 three words bandy  
 shall not you {against, at, by, near, of, on, with} you worse man  
 often the better {fail, give way}  
 when the worse {way, road, manner, mode, honor, distinction}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Three words bandy  
 Shall not you with you worse man  
 Often the better give way  
 When the worse way

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Bandy three words  
 With a lesser man you should not:  
 Often the better gives way  
 When the worse fights.

Again, more advice to not argue with lesser people than one's self. Be the "bigger" person by just walking away.

126. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Skósmiður þú verir  
 né skeftismiður,  
 nema þú sjálfum þér sér.  
 Skór er skapaður illa  
 eða skaft sé rangt,  
 þá er þér böls beðið.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 shoe-smith you be  
 {not, nor} shaft-smith  
 {take, catch, hear, learn, except, save, but, unless} yourself you {see, their, the}  
 shoe {is, which, what, who} made {bad, ill}  
 {or, but, and} shaft {is, looks} wrong  
 when you {evil, grief, sorrow, misfortune} {wait, stay, sustain, suffer}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Shoe-smith you be  
 Nor shaft-smith  
 Save yourself you see.  
 Shoe is made bad  
 Or shaft is wrong,  
 When you grief suffer.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Be you shoe-smith  
 Nor shaft-smith  
 Save for yourself you see.  
 The shoe is made bad  
 Or the shaft is not right,  
 When you suffer grief.

Most earlier translations have the last three lines saying that if the shoe or arrow-shaft is bad, that the person the items were made for will call down a curse upon the maker. However, this is not what the line says. Actually, the verse is saying that certain items should only be made for oneself for if you are not in a good frame of mind the items can come out wrong and then they will be unsellable. This is obviously a verse geared toward the merchant.

127. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Hvar er þú böll kannt,  
 kveð þú það bölvi að  
 og gef-at þínum fjándum frið.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 {where, everywhere, who, each} {is, who, which, when} you {evil, grief, sorrow, misfortune}  
 know  
 {say, declare} thence {curse, swear} {that, towards, against, to, at}  
 and give-not your {foe, enemy, fiend, devil} peace

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Everywhere when you sorrow know  
 Declare thence curse against  
 And give not enemies peace

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Everywhere you know sorrow to be,  
 Speak curses against it  
 And give not your enemies peace.

This is another verse telling us not to allow injustice to grow and/or take root. Help those that deserve it and drive out those who bring problems to a neighborhood.

128. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Illu feginn  
 ver þú aldregi,  
 en lát þér að góðu getið.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 {bad, evil, wicked, ill} joy  
 {man, sea, case, worse} you never  
 {then, but, and, when} {loss, decrease} you {that, towards, against, at, to} good {get, able}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Evil joy  
 Man you never  
 Then loss you that good get.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Wicked joy  
 You never take,  
 Then you lose the good you get.

Another verse admonishing us to not take pleasure in acts of evil. Do good to get good – do bad get bad.

129. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Upp líta  
 skal-at-tu í orrustu!  
 - gjalti glíkir  
 verða gumna synir -  
 síður þitt um heilli halir.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 up look  
 shall not you in battle  
 - mad with terror {like, resemble}  
 {become, grow} man {sight, appearance, sons} –  
 {side, late, at last, custom, long, less} you {of, about, around, across, over} {foreboding, omen,  
 whole, entire, enchant} {man, hero}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 Up look  
 Shall not you in battle  
 - Mad with terror like  
 Become man's sons -  
 Long you about enchant hero

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 Look up  
 Shall you not in battle!  
 - Like mad with terror  
 Become men's sons -  
 Enchanted become the heros.

This verse refers to the tactic of throwing a spear over an enemy army and thus dedicating the dead to the god Odin. The advice means that if you don't look up, you won't see the spear and so will not fall under the spell of terror that the sight could cause.

130. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Ef þú vilt þér góða konu  
 kveðja að gamanrúnum  
 og fá fögnuð af,  
 fögru skaltu heita  
 og láta fast vera.  
 Leiðist manngi gott, ef getur.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 if you wish you good {wife, woman}  
 {say, declare, salute, greet} {that, towards, against, to, at} {pleasure-runes, letters, speech}  
 and get {entertained, delight} {out of, from, of, because, with}  
 {entertain, delight} shall you {promise, vow, name, call}  
 and {put, place, set, let, allow, yield, leave, lose, say, behave, declare, sound} {fast, strong} to be  
 {past, loathing, dislike, weary, bored} man-not good if gets

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 If you wish a good wife  
 Say that pleasure-speech  
 And get entertainment from,  
 Entertain shall you promise  
 And fast to be.  
 Weary man-not good, if gets.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 I you wish a good wife  
 That speaks pleasant words  
 And enjoyable to be with  
 Promise to be engaging  
 And to be true.  
 No man wearies of good, if got.

This advice applies to women as well as men. If you wish to get a spouse that you will be happy with for the rest of your life, speak fair and true, don't be boring, and keep your word.

131. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Varan bið eg þig vera  
og eigi of varan.  
Ver þú við öll varastur  
og við annars konu  
og við það ið þriðja  
að þjófar né leiki.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
aware {delay, wait, ask, pray} I {accept, receive, you} {to be, stay}  
and not {too, too much, excess, pride, over, across, through, around, because of, for} aware  
{worse, man, case, sea} you {against, toward, at, greet, with} ale be careful  
and {against, toward, at, greet, with} anothers {wife, woman}  
and {against, toward, at, greet, with} {to do, restless, bowels} thence third  
{that, towards, against, to, up, at} thief {not, nor} {play, act, perform, sport}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Aware ask I you to be  
And not too aware.  
Man you with ale be careful  
And with another's wife  
And against do thence third  
That thief not act

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
I ask you to be aware  
And not too aware.  
You man with ale be careful  
And with another's wife  
And also this third  
That thieves act not.

This verse in meanin is much like those from the Gestapáttur, be aware of your surroundings but don't become paranoid. Don't mess with another's spouse, and watch for thieves.

132. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Að háði né hlátri  
hafðu aldregi  
gest né ganganda.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
{That, towards, against, at, to} {scoff, mock, ridicule, dependant} {not, nor} laugh  
have you never  
guest {not, nor} {traveler, walker, wanderer}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
To mock nor laugh  
Have you never  
Guest nor traveler

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
To mockery nor laughter  
You never expose  
Guest or traveler.

Basically, treat people as you would wish to be treated in a strange place.



133. Oft vitu ógerla  
þeir er sitja inni fyrir  
hvers þeir eru kyns er koma.  
Er-at maður svo góður  
að galli né fylgi,  
né svo illur að einugi dugi.

often know not-exactly  
they {is, when, who, which} {sit, stay, remain} {within, in, the} before  
{who, which, every, each} they are {kin, kindred, origin, kind} {is, who, which, when} come  
{is, which, who, when – not} man so good  
{that, towards, against, to at} {bellow, defect, fault, flow} {not, nor} {help, support}  
{not, nor} so {bad, ill} {that, towards, against, to, at} {only, but, one fear} {help, aid}

Often know not-exactly  
They who sit within before  
Who they are kin when come.  
Is not man so good  
That fault nor help,  
Not so bad that one fear help.

Often unsure is known  
Who sits within  
Those who come are kin.  
No man is so good  
That he's faultless nor helpless,  
Nor so bad that one fears to help.

Treat your guests like family. Remember also that no one is perfect nor so bad that they cannot be helped. To me, it would seem that this verse is a later addition for it contradicts several earlier verses which warn us to stay away from those people that are bad.

134. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
 en þú ráð nemir.  
 Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
 þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
 Að hárum þul  
 hlæ þú aldregi.  
 Oft er gott það er gamlir kveða.  
 Oft úr skörpum belg  
 skilin orð koma  
 þeim er hangir með hám  
 og skollir með skrá  
 og váfir með vílmögum.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
 {that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 {enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
 you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
 {that, towards, against, at, to up} {grey hair, high, tall} {sage, wise man}  
 laugh you never  
 often {is, who, when, which} good thence {is, who, which, when} old {say, declare, greeting}  
 often {drizzle, watch, from} {shrunken, sharp, keen, acute, bitter, vehement} {skin-bag, skin,  
 bellows}  
 understand word come  
 they {is, who, which, when} hang {with, by} {feathered bird skin, snake skin, shape}  
 and {fox, devil} {with, by} {scratch, scar}  
 and {wrapping, wrapped, doubt, flickering} {with, by} wretched thralls

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you council take.  
 Use remember if you take,  
 You will good if you get:  
 At grey-haired sages  
 Laugh you never.  
 Often is good thence which old say.  
 Often from shrunken skin  
 Understand word come  
 They who hang with skins  
 And fox by scar  
 And doubt by wretched thralls.

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
 That you take this council.  
 Remember to use it,  
 It will do you good:  
 At grey-haired sages  
 Never laugh.  
 There is often good said by the old.  
 Often from the wizened  
 Comes understanding  
 Those whose skin hangs  
 And scarred by battle  
 And doubted by fools.

This verse reminds us that wisdom comes from age. Just because some one is old, don't discard them. They have seen much life and fought many battles – literally and figuratively. From these experiences they have attained knowledge and wisdom that has allowed them to reach the level

of life that they have. In some cases this may not seem like much, but wealth is not always measured in the amount of money one has.

135. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Gest þú né geyja  
né á grind hrekir.  
Get þú voluðum vel.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
guest {not, nor} {bark, scoff, revile}  
{not, nor} {on, upon, at, in, to, towards} {gate, pen, fold, grate, framework} {refute, disprove,  
worry, vex, knock}  
{be able, get, beget} you {wretched-, miserable-man} well

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Guests you not revile  
Nor at gate vex.  
Get you the wretched-man well

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
Abuse not your guests  
Nor at the gate torment them.  
Help the wretched man.

More advice that tells us to treat guests well, not to abuse or break the laws of hospitality. This was very important during the Viking Age as people were very dependant upon friends and family to help them with many of life's problems. Guest could become in-laws, neighbors, or even important people like the king (in period), or the gods (Odin was famous for this) who are traveling in disguise.

The last line shows that there was a belief in charity (for lack of a better word). Send a guest off in better shape than s/he arrived in. It was very common to give a traveler a new set of clothing as well as other gifts both when they would arrive and leave. While this is not always pragmatic

today, it does show us that aiding people within one's community is an acceptable and worthwhile thing to do.

136. Rammt er það tré,  
er ríða skal  
öllum að upploki.  
Baug þú gef,  
eða það biðja mun  
þér læs hvers á liðu.

{strong, vehement, biter, sharp} {is, who, which, when} thence {tree, wood, limb, three}  
{is, who, which, when} {tremble, shiver, reel, ride, knit, twist} {shall, ought}  
{all, whole, everything} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {up-lid, cover, latch, bolt}  
ring you {give, present}  
or thence {ask, beg, pray} {remember, will, mind, heart, difference}  
you {able to read, lock, close} {who, which, every, each} {on, upon, in, of at, by, about} {joint,  
degree, generation, passed}

Strong is thence limb,  
Who ride shall  
All up to latch.  
Ring you give,  
Or thence pray remember  
You close about each joint.

Strong is the limb,  
Who shall ride  
Up to the door.  
You give rings,  
Or remember to pray  
When each closes upon your joints.

This was a difficult verse. The first three lines are often translated to refer to a latch being strong to be opened and closed frequently without breaking. However, while this fits with the theme of hospitality, I do not believe it is what the verse says. The verse does deal with being generous, but more to one's household and followers. In keeping with the second three lines, it tells us that we need to be generous to our households or they may rise up against the master of the house. In period context, it is a reminder that the first person at the door will be the strongest and bravest of the party. Thus break rings for them (give them appropriate compensation for their services) or you will be praying to the gods as the attackers grab your arms and legs – usually at the elbow and knee joints.

(Because of the length of this verse it takes two pages to cover the whole of it.)

137. Ráðumk þér, Loddfáfnir,  
en þú ráð nemir.  
Njóta mundu ef þú nemur,  
þér munu góð ef þú getur:  
Hvar er þú öl drekkir,  
kjós þú þér jarðar megin,  
því að jörð tekur við öldri,  
en eldur við sóttum,  
eik við abbindí,  
ax við fjölkynngi,  
höll við hýrógi,  
- heiftum skal mána kveðja, -  
beiti við bitsóttum,  
en við bölví rúnar.  
Fold skal við flóði taka.

{I council, advise} you Loddfáfnir  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} you {council, advise, mean} {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
{enjoy, use} {remember, will} {if, whether} you {take, catch, hear, unless, except}  
you {will, remember} good {if, whether} you get  
where {is who, which, when} you drink ale  
{choose, select, return} you you (plural) {bury, earth} {strength, might, sides}  
{that, the} {that, towards, against, up, to, at, by} {earth, soil} take {reaching to, against, towards, at,  
greet, with, by} ale  
{then, but} fire {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} {illness, sickness}  
oak {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} binding  
{ear, axe} {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} {witchcraft, black magic}  
{palace, hall} {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} fluff-slander  
{hate, spite, fury} {shall, ought} moon {say, declare, greet, salute}  
{bait, graze, handle, use, sharp, sail near wind} {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by}  
bite-sickness  
{but, then} {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} {curse, cursing, evil-minded} runes  
{earth, country} {shall, ought} {reaching to, against, towards, at, greet, with, by} {flood, high water}  
{take, hold, catch, grasp}

I advise you, Loddfáfnir,  
That you council take.  
Use remember if you take,  
You will good if you get:  
Where when you drink ale,  
Choose you earth strength,  
That by earth take against ale,  
But fire against illness,  
Oak against binding

Axe against black magic  
Hall against fluff-slander.  
- Hate shall moon greet, -  
Bait against bite sickness,  
And against curse runes.  
Earth shall against high water hold.

I advise you, Loddfáfñir,  
That you take this council.  
Remember to use it,  
It will do you good:  
When you drink ale,  
Chose the earth's strength,  
Take earth against ale's effects,  
But fire against illness,  
Oak against binding,  
An axe against black magic.  
The hall against silly talk.  
-Hate shall greet the moon,-  
Bait against rabies,  
And against curse runes.  
Earth shall hold against high water.

Here we have a unique verse showing, possibly, some of ancient Scandinavia's medical practices; or at least home remedies. The first two lines (after the "standard" opening for most of this section) say that by swallowing an amount of dirt, it will help prevent drunkenness. Then next line I would interpret to mean that you should keep the ill person warm – keep them near the fire and let them sweat out the illness.

Next we have a line with a cure for constipation. Some translations translate the word *eik* as "acorn". However, whether the acorn or some other part of the oak tree was used, the reality is that it is unclear what part to use. Acorn can be poisonous if not prepared properly.

In the later Middle Ages it was believed that the possessing of iron was proof against magic. However, our Nordic ancestors were a bit more pragmatic than that. Here, when compared to the Sagas, we know that when the poet said "an axe against black magic", it is meant to put the axe into the magic user's head.

The next line can seem a bit strange. "What, I'm supposed to drop a building on this person?" No, it means "Stay home and forget about it." Most of the time stuff said is harmless and only gains strength if you make a fuss over it. The set of lines goes with this line and is meant to mean that as a human, hating the moon is about as useful as bothering with people who say piddling things about you.

Unfortunately, since there were several types of bait even in the Viking Age, the next two lines are a bit of a mystery. One translator translates the word *beiti* as "earthworm". Could be that is the only type of bait he figured the Norse to have. I have translated "bite-sickness" to rabies as it is the only disease that I could think of that would be transmitted by biting in Scandinavia.

Malaria I do not believe was known in Scandinavia. However, how any type of bait would be affective against curse runes is a mystery to me.

The last line is simple – if you know a river is going to flood, build a dyke to hold the water back.

#### ÍV. ÞÍSLIR OG RÚNIR Passion and Runes

138. Veit eg að eg hékk  
vindgameiði á  
nætur allar níu,  
geiri undaður  
og gefinn Óðni,  
sjálfur sjálfum mér,  
á þeim meiði  
er manngi veit  
hvers af rótum renn.

know I {that, towards, against, up, to, at, by} I hung  
{wind-go-tree} {on, upon, in, of, by, about}  
nights all nine  
{slashed, gore, spear} wound  
and given Óðin  
self myself to me  
{on, upon, in, of, by, about} {they, them} {tree, injure}  
{is, which, who, when} man-not know  
{who, which, what, each, every, where} {by, of, off, from, with} root run

Know I that I hung  
Wind go tree upon  
Night all nine,  
Spear wound  
And given Óðin  
Self myself to me,  
Upon them injure  
Which man-not know  
Where from root run

I know that I hung  
Upon the windy tree  
Nights all nine,  
Spear wounded  
And given to Óðin  
Myself to myself,  
Injured upon them  
Which women know  
Where the roots run.

This is the opening verse of the section wherein Odin finds the runs. The first six lines are fairly self-evident. The line *á þeim meiði* is usually translated as “upon that tree”, and while the first and third words can translate as “upon” and “tree” respectively, the middle word does not mean “that”. By using the pronoun, it still refers to the tree, but now it means the branches of the tree.

The word *manngi* is often translated as “no man”. However, this would be incorrect. The “not” portion is not the same as “no”. Here it would indicate that the person is not a man, therefore a woman or possibly a child. Since Odin is hanging on Yggdrasil, and the roots of the tree are

cared for by the Norns, who are women, the more obvious choice would be “woman”. This then also make the final two lines more clear.

139. Við hleifi mig sældu  
né við horni-gi.  
Nýsta eg niður,  
nam eg upp rúnar,  
æpandi nam,  
féll eg aftur þaðan.

{against, towards, at, greet, with} loaf {my, me} {bolt, sift, bliss, happiness, to give}  
{not, nor} {against, towards, at, greet, with} horn - not  
pierce I {down, decent, purl}  
take I up runes  
screaming take  
fell I after thence.

Against loaf me give  
Nor with horn-not.  
Piercing I down,  
Take I up runes,  
Screaming take,  
Fell I after thence.

No loaf given me  
Nor with cup.  
I peered down,  
I took up the runes,  
Took screaming,  
Then after I fell.

While hanging on Yggdrasil, Odin received neither food nor drink. This is often the case when a person goes through a shamanistic venture. The person suffers a physical ordeal as well as deprivation of food and drink. This is said to bring on a state of ecstasy, which allows the person to learn things not knowable under normal means. In this state Odin sees the runes fully formed and attains full knowledge of them. He then grabs them and the effort is physically painful bringing on the screaming. With the gaining of the Odin falls from the tree.



140. Fimbulljóð níu  
nam ef af inum frægja syni  
Bölþorns, Bestlu föður.  
Og eg drykk of gat  
ins dýra mjaðar,  
ausin Óðreri.

terrible song nine  
{take, study } {if, increase, doubt} {of, by, off, from, with} the famous son  
Bölþorns, Bestlu föður  
and I drank {over, across, through, around, about, because, of, for, during, too,} {hole, path,  
road}  
the {dear, expensive, animal} mead  
{bale, scoop, dip} Óðreri

Terrible songs nine  
Study increase with the famous son  
Bölþorn, Bestla's father.  
And I drank over hole  
The dear mead  
Dipped Óðreri

Nine terrible songs  
My studies grew with the famous son  
Bölþorn, Bestla's father.  
And I drank the cup  
The dear mead,  
Dipped from Óðrerir.

After Odin learned the runes, he went to study magic from his maternal uncle. There, too, he drank of the mead of inspiration.

141. Þá nam eg frævast  
og fróður vera  
og vaxa og vel hafast,  
orð mér af orði  
orðs leitaði,  
verk mér af verki  
verks leitaði.

then took I to learn  
and wise to be  
and grow and well {have, use}  
words to me {by, off, from, with, of} {talk, order}  
words {seek, search}  
{deed, work} to me {by, off, from, with, of} {work, deed}  
{work, deed} {seek, search}

then took I to learn  
and wise to be  
and grow and well use,  
words to me from talk  
words seek,  
deeds to me from deeds  
deed seek.

Then I took to learning  
And to be wise  
And to grow and use well,  
Words from words  
Seeking words,  
Deeds from deeds  
Seeking deeds.

With the knowledge gained so far, Odin started looking for more knowledge. He searched in the words of others and in their deeds.

142. Rúnar munt þú finna  
og ráðna stafi,  
mjög stóra stafi,  
mjög stinna stafi,  
er fáði fimbulþulur  
og gerðu ginnregin  
og reist Hroftur röгна.

runes will you find  
and {solutions, interpretations} staves  
{much, very much, very} {great, large, big} staves  
{much, very much, very} {stiff, strong} staves  
{is, when, who, which} {colored, painted} {mighty-, terrible-sage, -wiseman}  
and {doing, act, deed, making, building, shape} great gods  
and {raise, carve} Hroftur the god

Runes will you find  
And interpret staves,  
Very great staves,  
Very strong staves,  
Which colored mighty wisemen  
And shape great gods  
And carve Hroftur the god.

Rune you will find  
And staves interpret,  
Very great staves,  
Very strong staves,  
Which great sages color  
And great gods shape  
And the god Hroftur carved.

With this verse it is difficult to determine whether the “you” in the first line is referring to Odin or the person reading the poem and presumably also wanting to learn rune usage. In any case, once one starts learning the runes and their usages, that the power within is very great and wide ranging in their abilities.

The verse also is the first to indicate that the runes were colored in some fashion after they were carved. Also, the following line leads us to believe that the power invested into the runes comes, consciously or not, from the gods themselves.

Lastly, Hroftur is a by-name for Odin himself.

143. Óðinn með ásum,  
en fyr álfum Dáinn,  
Dvalinn dvergum fyrir,  
Ásviður jötnum fyrir.  
Eg reist sjálfur sumar.

Odin {with, using, by, among} the gods  
{then, but} {soon, before, for} the elves Dainn  
Dvalinn dwarves {soon, before, for}  
Ásviður the giants {soon, before, for}  
I {raised, carved} self {summer, some}

Odin among the gods,  
But for the elves Dáinn,  
Dvalinn the dwarves for,  
Ásviður the giants for.  
I carved self some.

Odin among the gods,  
But Dáinn for the elves,  
Dvalinn for the dwarves,  
Ásviður for the giants.  
I carved some myself.

It has always been thought that Odin himself was the author of the Hávamál. However, this verse would give the impression that this is otherwise. However, whatever the origin of the author, the rest of the verse would seem to be a listing of the best rune masters of each of the four great races.

144. Veistu hve rísta skal?  
Veistu hve ráða skal?  
Veistu hve fáa skal?  
Veistu hve freista skal?  
Veistu hve biðja skal?  
Veistu hve blóta skal?  
Veistu hve senda skal?  
Veistu hve sóa skal?

know you how carve {shall, ought}  
know you how color {shall, ought}  
know you how understand {shall, ought}  
know you how {try, test} {shall, ought}  
know you how ask {shall, ought}  
know you how sacrifice {shall, ought}  
know you how send {shall, ought}  
know you how {waste, squander} {shall, ought}

Know you how carve shall?  
Know you how color shall?  
Know you how understand shall?  
Know you how test shall?  
Know you how ask shall?  
Know you how sacrifice shall?  
Know you how send shall?  
Know you how waste shall?

Know how you shall carve?  
Know how you shall color?  
Know how you shall understand?  
Know how you shall test?  
Know how you shall ask?  
Know how you shall sacrifice?  
Know how you shall send?  
Know how you shall waste?

This verse asks the would be rune user if s/he knows the necessary “rituals” that go with creating and casting one’s own set of rune-staves. While some of the lines are easily understood, others are a little more obscure. There are certain procedures that should be followed when carving the set. Then they need to be colored – some think with blood, others just a red stain. One needs to understand the meanings and powers of the individual staves – to use otherwise can be dangerous. Can you test your work without causing harm? Do you know what to ask? Not everything should be known. Do you know the proper amount to offer in sacrifice for the

request being made? When doing the casting of the runes it is necessary to send out a great deal of one's own energy. Lastly, you need to know how to destroy what has been created if it is created incorrectly.

145. Betra er óbeðið  
en sé ofblótið.  
Ey sér til gildis gjöf.  
Betra er ósent  
en sé ofsóið.  
Svo Þundur um reist  
fyr þjóða rök,  
þar hann upp um reis,  
er hann aftur of kom.

better {is, who, which, when} {not-, un-wait, -stay, -sustain, -suffer}  
{but, then} {be, see, the} over-sacrifice  
{island, not, ever} {saw, know, they, them, their, understood} {too, to, in, of} {worthy, fine} gift  
better {is, when, who, which} {un-, not-sent}  
{then, but} {see, be, the} {over, in, of, about, great quantity, excess, pride, conceit, too-squander,  
-waste}  
so Thundur {by, in, over, of, about} {rise, carved}  
{soon, before, for} creation of mankind  
there he up {by, in, over, of, about} rise  
{is, who, which, when} he after {over, in, of, about, great quantity, excess, pride, conceit, too}  
come

Better is un-wait  
Then be over-sacrifice.  
Ever know of worthy gift.  
Better is unsent  
Then be overwasted.  
So Thundur about carved  
Before creation of mankind,  
There he up about rise,  
When he after over come.

Better to leave  
Than to over-sacrifice.  
Worthy gifts are known.  
Better is unsent  
Then to send too much.  
So Thundur carved about  
Before the creation of man,  
There he rose up,  
When after he over came.

Again, in many cases it is better to do nothing than to do too much. Over doing something, especially in magic, can be dangerous. The last four lines indicate that this is advice Odin (Thundur is a by-name for Odin) gave before the creation of Ask and Embla, and just after coming off Yggdrasil.

## V. GALDUR - CHARMS

146. Ljóð eg þau kann  
er kann-at þjóðans kona  
og mannskis mögur.  
Hjálp heitir eitt,  
en það þér hjálpa mun  
við sökum og sorgum  
og sítum görvöllum.

{song, lay, poem} I {nevertheless, yet, if} {can, know}  
{is, when, who, which} {know-not, cannot} {nation, people, prince, ruler} {wife, woman}  
and man – not sons  
{help, aid, assist} {call, name} one  
{then, but, one, and} thence you {help, aid, assist} {remember, mind, difference, will}  
{to, against, there} {change, offense, because of} and sorrow  
and {grief, sorrow} {all, whole, entire}

Song I yet know  
Which know-not people wife  
And man-not sons.  
Help called one,  
And thence you help will  
Against offense and sorrow  
And grief all.

Yet I know a song  
Which men's wives know not  
Nor women's sons.  
One is called help,  
And this will help you  
Against offences and sorrow  
And all grief.

This section is entitled *Galdur*, which translates as “charms” or “magic songs”. This first verse of the section is just that, the first charm. This one will relieve a person's sorrows and griefs and protect the person from people offending against the caster or whomever the caster does the charm for.

Unfortunately, the charm here, and all others from this point forward, are not described and therefore we do not know exactly what the charm was or what it looked like. *Galdur* charms were a combination of sound and bind-runes.

147. Það kann eg annað  
er þurfu ýta synir,  
þeir er vilja lækna lífa.

thence know I another  
{is, who, which, when} need {shove, push, man} son  
them {is, who, which, when} {will, wish} {cure, heal, physician } life.

Then know I another  
Which need man sons  
Them when wish heal life.

Then I know another  
Which men's sons need  
When they wish to heal life.

This would be a wonderful one to know on a battlefield.



148. Það kann eg hið þriðja:  
ef mér verður þörf mikil  
hafts við mína heftmögu,  
eggjar eg deyfi minna andskota,  
bíta-t þeim vopn né velir.

thence know I {the, lair, den} third  
if to me {happen. come, change, worth, fitting} {need, use} great  
{bonds, chains} {against, by, at, near, of, on, to} mine {spite-, fury-, angry-, deadly-son}  
{incite, encourage, edge} I {blunt, deaden, stupefy} mine enemy  
bite-not their weapons {not, nor} {round sticks, cylinders}

Thence know I the third:  
If to me come need great  
Bonds on mine deadly-son,  
Edge I blunt mine enemy,  
Bite-not their weapons nor round-sticks.

Then I know the third:  
If to me comes great need  
On my enemy chains,  
I blunt my enemy's edges,  
Their weapons nor clubs bite not.

Yet another great battlefield charm. This one can chain and enemy, blunt their weapons, and prevent both weapons and clubs from causing harm.

149. Það kann eg ið fjórða:  
ef mér fyrðar bera  
bönd að bóglimum,  
svo eg gel  
að eg ganga má,  
sprettur mér af fótum fjötur,  
en af höndum haft.

thence know I {restless, to do} fourth  
if to me {men, before} {bear, bring}  
bound {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {shoulder-limb}  
so I {crow, scream}  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} I {walk, go} {may, can, blur, rub}  
{spring, rise, unfasten, undo, growth, sprint, run} to me {of, from, by, with} feet fetter  
{then, but, one} {of, from, by, with} hands {bond, chain}

Thence know I to do fourth:  
If to me men bring  
Bound at shoulder-limb,  
So I scream  
That I go can,  
Unfasten to me from feet fetter,  
Then from hands chain.

Then I know to do a fourth:  
I men bring to me  
Bound of arm,  
So I scream  
That I can go,  
Unfasten from my fettered feet,  
Then the chain from hands.

This is another charm that allows the user to free him/herself from being bound in ropes and chains.

150. Það kann eg ið fimmta:  
Ef eg sé af fári skotinn  
flein í fóki vaða,  
fýgur-a hann svo stinnt  
að eg stöðvig-a-g,  
ef eg hann sjónum of sé'g.

thence know I {restless, to do} fifth  
if I {see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} {of, from, by, with} {go, travel, start, leave} {the  
shot, missile, tail}  
{pike, dart} in {drifting, tossing} {wade, pass, through, clothes}  
fly not him so {stiff, rigid, unbending}  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} I {stand-fight-I-not, stop-not-I}  
if I him {look, see, sight} {over, across, through, about, for, during, too} {see, am, know, that,  
towards, against, up, to, at-I}

Thence know I to do fifth  
If I saw from start the shot  
Dart in tossing pass,  
Fly no him so stiff  
That I stop-not-I,  
If I him sight about see I.

Thence I know to do a fifth:  
If the shot I saw from the start  
The flying dart,  
Not so straight  
That I cannot stop it,  
If my eyes see it.

This particular charm can stop arrows and spears in their flight as long as the caster can see the flying missile.

151. Það kann eg ið sétta:  
Ef mig særir þegn  
á rótum rás viðar,  
og þann hal  
er mig heifta kveður,  
þann eta mein heldur en mig.

thence know I {restless, to do} sixth  
if {my, me} {wound, hurt, conjure, sure, bail, swear, oath} {subject, citizen, man}  
{on, upon, in, of, at, by, about} roots {race, hurry, stray, run} {wood, widely, the sea, tree, wide}  
and {that, the} man  
{is, which, who, when} {me, my} {hate, spite, fury} {say, greet}  
{that, the} {eat, egg on} {harm, hurt, injure} {rather, hold} {one, then, but, and} {me, my}

Thence know I to do sixth:  
If me wound man  
On roots run tree,  
And that man  
Who me hate say,  
That eats harm rather then me.

Then I know to do a sixth:  
If a man wounds me  
By the tree's running roots,  
And that man  
Who says spiteful [things at] me,  
It eats the harm rather then me.

This charm causes the hateful words said by another to loose their effect on the intended victim.

152. Það kann eg ið sjöunda:  
Ef eg sé hávan loga  
sal um sessmögum,  
brennur-at svo breitt,  
að eg honum bjargig-a-g.  
þann kann eg galdur að gala.

thence know I {restless, to do} seventh  
if I {see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} {high, large} flame  
hall {around, about, in, over, across, by} {seat-sons}  
burn-not so {broad, wide}  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} I {he, his, him} {save-not-I}  
{that, the} know I {magic, charms} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {crow, scream, sing,  
bellow}

Then I know to do a seventh:  
If I see high-accustomed fire  
Hall about seat-sons,  
Burns not so wide,  
That I him save-not-I  
Threknow I magic to crows.

Then I know to do a seventh:  
If I see a high flame  
[In] the hall about the bench-mates,  
[It] burns not so wide,  
That I cannot save them.  
I know the magic to sing.

This charm allows the chanter to extinguish a fire burning the hall around his fellow warriors.

153. Það kann eg ið átta,  
er öllum er  
nytsamlegt að nema:  
Hvar er hatur vex  
með hildings sonum  
það má eg bæta brátt.

thence know I {to do, restless} eighth  
{is, who, which, when} {ale, all} {is, who, which, when}  
{useful, profitable, serviceable} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {take, catch, hear, learn, have,  
except, save, but, unless}  
{where, which, each, both} {is, where, when, who} hatred {wax, grow, increase}  
with chiefs sons  
thence {blur, able, can, may} I {better, improve, restore} soon

Thence know I to do eighth,  
Which all is  
Useful to learn:  
Where is hatred grow  
With chiefs son  
Thence can I improve soon.

Then I know to do an eighth  
Which [for] everyone is  
Useful to learn:  
Where hatred grows  
With the sons of chiefs  
I can then soon improve.

Here the poet says that he has a very useful charm for everyone. This one allows the caster to dispel hatred that grows among people thus ensuring peace in the place. However, I think that this charm must have been lost very soon after its discovery as would be evidenced by the sagas.

154. Það kann eg ið níunda:  
Ef mig nauður um stendur  
að bjarga fari mínu á floti,  
vind eg kyrr  
vogi á  
og svæfi'g allan sæ.

thence know I {to do, restless} ninth  
if {me, my} need {about, round, in, by, across} stand  
{see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} {rock, save} {drift, opportuniy, passage} mine {on,  
upon, at, in} {float, fleet}  
wind I quiet  
{balance, dare, venture, bay} {on, upon, at, in}  
and {hush-, lull-I} all seas

Thence know I to do ninth:  
If my need in stand  
Against rock drift mine at fleet,  
Wind I quiet  
Bay upon  
And lull I all seas.

Then I know to do a ninth:  
If I stand in need  
From my ships difting against rocks,  
The wind I quiet  
Upon the bay  
And I lull all the seas.

This is a great one for sailors; to be able to quiet the storm winds and keep ships from hitting rocks.

155. Það kann eg ið tíunda:  
Ef eg sé túnriður  
leika lofti á,  
eg svo vinn'g  
að þeir villir fara  
sinna heimhama,  
sinna heimhuga.

thence know I {to do, restless} tenth  
if I {see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} {witch, ghost}  
{fidgeting, play, sport} {air, sky, loft, lift} {on, upon, at, in}  
I so {work, perform, do, win, gain, conquer, overcome, accomplish – I}  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} they {erring, astray, be mistaken}  
{his, her, their} home-skins  
{his, her, their} {home-mind, -spirits, -hearts}

Thence know I to do a tenth:  
If I see witch  
Play sky in,  
I so work-I  
That they be mistaken  
Their home-skins,  
Their home-minds.

Then I know to do a tenth:  
If I see a witch  
Playing in the sky,  
I can work it so  
That they mistake  
Their own skins,  
Their own minds.

This verse seems to show a more accurate view of witchcraft during the Viking period. The word *túnriður* while translated here as “witch” and often used that way in period poetics, really translates as “dwelling-rider” or “house-rider”. This is like astral projection. In many of the sagas there is an episode where some supernatural being has been causing great damage to a farm by “riding” the roof of the main building. There is a great example of this in Grettir's Saga. Witchcraft in and of itself was not feared, as stated above. It was how it was used that brought about fear. If the witch used her or his power to cause harm, they would be attacked in some way.



In this verse, we see that the charmer is using magic to defeat another magic user. The charm here prevents the witch from returning to her natural body. According to the sagas, if a witch did not return to her/his form by sunrise the witch would never be able to return and thus die.

156. Það kann eg ið ellefta:  
Ef eg skal til orrustu  
leiða langvini,  
und randir eg gel,  
en þeir með ríki fara  
heilir hildar til,  
heilir hildi frá,  
koma þeir heilir hvaðan.

thence know I {to do, restless} eleventh  
if I shall {too, to, in, of, as, for} {battle, fight}  
{way, lead, route} {long, long lasting}  
{wound, under} shield I {crow, scream, bellow}  
{then, but, and, one} they with {kingdom, realm, empire} {travel, go, leave}  
{health, whole} battle {too, to, in, of, as, for}  
{health, whole} battle from  
come they {health, whole} whence

Thence know I to do eleventh:  
If I shall to battle  
Lead long,  
Under shield I crow,  
And they with kingdom travel  
Healthy battle to,  
Healthy battle from,  
Come they healthy whence.

Then I know to do an eleventh:  
If I go to battle  
[And] lead long,  
Under my shield I say  
And they travel with the King  
Healthy to battle,  
Healthy from battle,  
Health they come home.

This is another great battle charm. This one makes sure that the charmer's battle companions return from battle healthy and hale. Another one that I'm sorry to see lost.

Ursula Dronke, a noted scholar on Nordic religion, states that the Vanir had magic that allowed for the resurrection of the dead to a whole and healthy state. It was this magic that brought about

a stalemate in the Æsir/Vanir war. After the war, when Njord, Frey and Freyja came to live among the Æsir, Freyja taught new magic to Odin. It is possible that this charm is part of that information.

157. Það kann ef ið tólfta:  
Ef eg sé að tré uppi  
váfa virgilná,  
svo eg ríst  
og í rúnum fá'g  
að sá gengur gumi  
og mælir við mig.

thence know I {to do, restless} twelfth  
if I {see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} {that, towards, against, up, to, at} {tree, limb,  
three} up  
{doubt, flocker, ghost, swing, hang} {corpse on gallows}  
so I carve  
and in runes color I  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} {sow, that. see, the} walk man  
and speak {against, towards, at, greet, with} {me, my}

Thence know I t do twelfth:  
If I see tree up  
Hang corpse,  
So I carve  
And in runes color I  
That the walk man  
And speak with me.

Then I know to do a twelfth:  
If I see up in a tree  
A corpse hanging,  
I can carve  
And I color runes  
That [cause] the man to walk  
And speak with me.

For a god who is constantly seeking more knowledge, this can be a very useful charm. However, I think that for the majority of the world's population, this is one charm better lost.

158. Það kann eg ið þrettánda:  
ef eg skal þegn ungan  
verpa vatni á,  
mun-at hann falla,  
þótt hann í fólk komi:  
hnígur-a sá halur fyr hjörum.

thence know I {to do, restless} thirteenth  
if I shall {people, man, nation} young  
{throw, edge, border} water {on, upon, in, of, at, about}  
{will-, remember-not} he fall  
{though, that} he {in, the} {people, army} come  
{sink-, open-not} {sow, that, the, see} man before swords

Thence know I to do thirteenth  
If I shall man young  
Throw water on,  
Will not he fall,  
Though he the army come:  
Sink not the man before swords.

Then I know to do a thirteenth:  
If a young man I shall  
Throw water on,  
He will not fall,  
Though he face an army:  
The man sinks not before swords.

As stated at the start of the section, *Galdur* was a combination of singing and runes. However, in this particular case, there is the addition of a physical material/action also being involved in the form of putting water upon the young warrior. The word, as can be seen above, does mean “throw”, but some translators put in “sprinkle”. There was a practice during the Viking Age of fathers sprinkling new borns with water as a sign of accepting the child. It is possible that these two items are the same – fathers were performing this charm to protect their sons when they were older.

159. Það kann eg ið fjórtánda:  
ef eg skal fyrða liði  
telja tíva fyrir,  
ása og álfa  
eg kann allra skil.  
Fár kann ósnotur svo.

thence know I {to do, restless} fourteenth  
if I {shall, must, ought} man {troops, army, pass away, suffer, joint, degree of generation}  
{count, number} gods {before, for, first, present}  
Æsir and Elves  
I know all {distinction, understand, sever, shed, separate, part}  
{mischief, few, little} know unwise so

Thence know I to do fourteenth:  
If I must man degree  
Number gods first,  
Æsir and Elves  
I know all distinction.  
Few know unwise so.

Then I know to do a fourteenth:  
If to men I must list  
The number of gods first,  
The Æsir and Elves  
I know the differences.  
The unwise know so few.

Since this is listed as a charm, I would have to guess that it is meant to enhance the memory.  
There are several Gods, Goddesses, and other supernatural beings listed in the Eddas and sagas.  
It is difficult to remember all of them.

160. Það kann eg ið fimmtánda  
er gól Þjóðrerir  
dvergur fyr Dellings dyrum.  
Afl gól hann ásum,  
en álfum frama,

hyggju Hroftatý.

thence know I {to do, restless} fifteenth  
{is, when, which, who} {howl, scream, cry} Þjóðrerir  
dwarf before Delling's door  
{power, force, forge} {howl, scream, cry} his gods  
{one, then, and} elves {formed, ahead, courage, fame}  
{think, believe, thought, mind, opinion, understanding} Hroftatý

Thence know I to do fifteenth:  
When cry Þjóðrerir  
Dwarf before Delling's door.  
Power cry his gods,  
And elves fame,  
Thought Hroftatý

Then I know to do a fifteenth:  
When Þjóðrerir cried  
Before dwarf Delling's door.  
Powerful cried the gods,  
And the elves formed,  
Hroftatý's understanding.

I'm not sure how this one counts as a charm. In any event, the verse tells us that the dwarves, elves and other gods all contributed to the knowledge and wisdom of Odin (Hroftatý is an alternate name for Odin).

161. Það kann eg ið sextánda:  
Ef eg vil ins svinna mans  
hafa geð allt og gaman,  
hugi eg hverfi  
hvítarmri konu  
og sný eg hennar öllum sefa.

thence know I {to do, restless} sixteenth  
if I {wish, will, want} the {swift, wise} {house folk, thrall}  
have {mind, liking} all and {pleasure, delight}  
{mind, heart, soul} I {turn, disappear}  
white-armed {wife, woman}  
and {turn, alter, change} I her all {soothe, calm}

Thence know I to do sixteenth:  
If I want the wise house folk  
Have liking all and pleasure,  
Heart I turn  
White-armed woman  
And turn I her all calm.

Then I know to do a sixteenth:  
If I want the wise maid  
[To] have all love and pleasure,  
I turn the heart  
[Of] the white-armed woman  
And I make her calm.

Now we return to actual charms. This one is a love charm that is to be used on a young lady that might not be too willing.

162. Það kann eg ið sautjándá  
að mig mun seint firrast  
ið manunga man.  
Ljóða þessa  
munðu, Loddfáfnir,  
lengi vanur vera.  
Þó sé þér góð ef þú getur,  
nýt ef þú nemur,  
þörf ef þú þiggur.

thence know I {to do, restless} seventeenth  
{that, towards, against, up, to, at} {me, my} {remember, shall, will, difference, mind, longing,  
love, delight} {slowly, later} shun  
{to do, restless} young man {house folk, thrall, female servant, young girl}  
{song, poem, compose} {this, that}  
will Loddfáfnir  
long {accustomed, lacking, used, wanting} {to be, to stay}  
{yet, wash} {see, am, that, towards, against, up, to, at} you good if you get  
{new, use, useful} if you {take, halt, unless}  
{need, use} if you {accept, receive}

Thence know I to do seventeenth  
Against my love later shun  
Restless young man serving girl.  
Song this  
Will, Loddfáfnir,  
Long accustomed be.  
Yet see you good if you get,  
Useful if take,  
Use if you accept

Then I know to do a seventeenth:  
Later my love will not shun  
The lively young maid.  
This song  
Will, Loddfáfnir,  
Long familiar be.  
Yet it will do you good if you get it  
Useful if you take it,  
Use it if you accept it.

The first part of the verse tells of another love charm. The rest of the verse is a summing of the earlier part of the poem where Odin was telling Loddfáfnir to make sure he uses the information he had received.

163. Það kann eg ið átjanda,  
er eg æva kenni'g  
mey né manns konu,  
- allt er betra  
er einn um kann;  
það fylgir ljóða lokum, -  
nema þeirri einni  
er mig armi ver  
eða mín systir sé.

thence know I {to do, restless} eighteenth  
 {is, when, who, which} I never {know, taste, feel, name, teach – I}  
 maiden {nor, not} man's {wife, woman}  
 - all {is, who, which, when} better  
 {is, when, which, who} one {round, about, in, over, by} know  
 thence {help, support, follow} {song, poem, compose} {lid, cover, latch, bolt, shut, close, end,  
 perish, }  
 {take, perceive, catch, hear, learn, except, save, but, unless} they {one, only, alone, same}  
 {is, when, who, which} {me, my} arm {sea, case, husband, man, worse}  
 or my sister {be, see, the}

Thence know I to do eighteenth,  
 Which I never teach  
 Maiden nor man's wife,  
 - All is better  
 When one about know;  
 Thence follow poem end,-  
 Hear they alone  
 Which my arm case  
 Or my sister be.

Then I know to do an eighteenth,  
 Which I never teach  
 [To] maiden nor man's wife,  
 - All is better  
 When only one knows;  
 Thus follows the poems end, -  
 They alone hear  
 Which my arms encase  
 Or is my sister.

This verse does not disclose the nature of the charm, only that the charmer will only reveal it to his own wife or his sister. This is, however, a contradiction to the opening where the poet says that he will teach it to neither maiden nor man's wife.

## VI. LJÓÐALOK- LAST VERSE

164. Nú eru Háva mál kveðin  
 Háva höllu í,  
 allþörf ýta sonum,  
 óþörf jötna sonum.  
 Heill sá er kvað!  
 Heill sá er kann!  
 Njóti sá er nam!



Heilir þeir er hlýddu!

Now are Har's {song, speech, time} {say, utter, declare}  
Har's {hall, place} in  
{all need, used} {push, shove, man} sons  
{not-need, -used}giants sons  
{omen, luck, whale, entire, late, sound} {sow, that, the, see} {is, when, which, who} {say,  
declare,  
utter}  
{omen, luck, whale, entire, late, sound} {sow, that, the, see} {is, when, which, who} know  
{enjoy, use} {sow, that, the, see} {is, when, which, who} study  
{omen, luck, whale, entire, late, sound} {they, them} {is, which, when, who} {listen, hear}

Now are Har's song say  
Har's hall in,  
Used man's sons,  
Not-used giants sons.  
Luck that who say!  
Luck that who know!  
Enjoy that who study!  
Luck they who hear!

Now are Har's songs sung  
In Har's hall,  
Used [by] mens' sons,  
Unused by giant's sons.  
Luck to those who say [them]!  
Luck to those that know [them]!  
Enjoyed when used!  
Luck to those who hear [them].

The name of this section, *Ljóðalok*, literally means “last verse” and literally is the last verse. Such is the humor of the Norse. The verse simply states that the poem is done and that those that listen to its wisdom and follow it will have good luck – unless they happen to be of giant stock.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

As has been shown, the *Hávamál* is a good source of information on what our Scandinavian ancestors thought of as ideal social behavior. This is shown in the first two sections *Gestaþáttur* and *xxx*. These sections offer advice that can be used today, even if some of the advice needs slight adaptation due to changes in modern societies. The verse that advises carrying a weapon at all time, for instance. Today in most states in the U.S. and in some other countries, it is illegal to carry a weapon without special permits. Remember, Viking Age Scandinavians respected the law (at least of their own culture).

We also see some of the beliefs in one form of magic from the *Galdur* section. As stated earlier, the use of magic was not prohibited nor necessarily feared. It was the use of antisocial magic that brought about problems. In *Eyrbyggja Saga*, the witch Kayla was executed/murdered (depending on one's point of view) for using magic to interfere with the search for her son who was accused of murder. The saga does not, in translation, indicate whether the magic was *galdur* or *seið*. As mentioned in the text above, *galdur* used both singing and runes. *Seið*, on the other hand, was more akin to the shamanistic type of magic. In any event, Kayla used her magic to hide her son from his pursuers. The frustration that resulted caused the men to take Kayla along with the son when he was found and these men stoned Kayla to death.

This poem also contains the story of the stealing of the Mead of Inspiration. There is a slight difference in the story as told here as opposed to the way it is told in *Snorri's Edda*. Here, Odin in the form of a rat gnaws through the mountain into the chamber wherein the mead is kept. In the other version, Suttung's brother uses a magic auger supplied by Odin to bore through and then Odin transforms into a serpent to enter. Both versions have Odin having a relationship with Gunnlöð in which she is used and left. Another variation though, has the giants coming to Asgard days later looking for Bolverk in the *Hávamál* where the in the other version Suttung chases Odin back, both in the forms of eagles.

It has been suggested that each section was originally separate, individual poems that were later combined by the monk(s) who copied and collected the whole of the manuscripts that became the *Elder* or *Poetic Edda*. In this scenario, the scribe sees that the verses of the sections have a kind of continuity or similarity to each other. Seeing this, he combines them into a comprehensive poem.

It is my hope that you have found this version of the *Hávamál* enlightening and, at the least, entertaining. I would strongly suggest that everyone read as many versions of the poem, and the whole of the *Poetic Edda*. Each version is slightly different, mostly just in choice of synonyms. However, these variations do offer some insight (mostly into the biases of the translators) into the culture and language of the Nordic people.