

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 heimtíur
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 sylv 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 some one 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
 reindeed 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 inspite 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 now 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 briggðum 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, Loddáfáfnir,
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 persons 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 séttá:
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.