

## Celtic Mythology



## Scandinavian Mythology



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# Myth and Religion of Northern Europe: Class Five

Masaryk University :: Dept. of Religion  
Professor Michael Strmiska :: RLB 501 ::  
Myth and Religion of Northern Europe

# Themes for today's class, second Norse lecture

- 1. Discussion of *Völuspá*
- 2. Dumézilian interlude: The War Between the Functions and the social order in *Rigspula*
- Hávamál: Earthy wisdom, Odin, Gunnloth and the mead of poetry; Odin's shamanistic hanging on the world tree; rune magic
- 3. From the sublime to the ridiculous...Odin and Thor's insult-contest in *Harbardslođ*; Thor in drag in giantland in *Thrymskviđa*; Loki's insults in *Lokasenna* (The "Flyting" of Loki) funny, but note serious point at end: Loki restrained, chaos contained, stage set for Ragnarök

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 1-2)

- 1. Hearing I ask | from the holy races,  
From Heimdall's sons, | both high and low;  
Thou wilt, Valfather, | that well I relate  
Old tales I remember | of men long ago.
- 2. I remember yet | the giants of yore,  
Who gave me bread | in the days gone by;  
Nine worlds I knew, | the nine in the tree  
With mighty roots | beneath the mold.
- *The Volva, or wise-woman, called upon by Othin, answers him and demands a hearing. Evidently she belongs to the race of the giants and speaks to Othin unwillingly, compelled to do so by his magic power.*
- *Nine worlds: the worlds of the gods (Asgarth), of the Vanir (Vanaheim), of the elves (Alfheim), of men (Mithgarth), of the giants (Jotunheim), of fire (Muspellsheim), of the dark elves (Svartalfaheim), of the dead (Niflheim), and the dwarfs . The tree: the world-ash Yggdrasil, symbolizing the universe.*

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 3-4)

- 3. Of old was the age |  
when Ymir lived;  
Sea nor cool waves |  
nor sand there were;  
Earth had not been, |  
nor heaven above,  
But a yawning gap, |  
and grass nowhere.
- 4. Then Bur's sons lifted  
| the level land,  
Mithgarth the mighty |  
there they made;  
The sun from the south  
| warmed the stones of  
earth,  
And green was the  
ground | with growing  
leeks.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 5-6)

- 5. The sun, the sister | of  
the moon, from the south  
Her right hand cast | over  
heaven's rim;  
No knowledge she had |  
where her home should  
be,  
The moon knew not |  
what might was his,  
The stars knew not |  
where their stations  
were.
- 6. Then sought the gods |  
their assembly-seats,  
The holy ones, | and council  
held;  
Names then gave they | to  
noon and twilight,  
Morning they named, | and  
the waning moon,  
Night and evening, | the  
years to number.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 7-8)

- 7. At Ithavoll met | the  
mighty gods,  
Shrines and temples |  
they timbered high;  
Forges they set, and |  
they smithied ore,  
Tongs they wrought, |  
and tools they  
fashioned.
- 8. In their dwellings at  
peace | they played at  
tables,  
Of gold no lack | did the  
gods then know,--  
Till thither came | up  
giant-maids three,  
Huge of might, | out of  
Jotunheim.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 9-11 )

- 9. Then sought the gods |  
their assembly-seats,  
The holy ones, | and council  
held,  
To find who should raise | the  
race of dwarfs  
Out of Brimir's blood | and the  
legs of Blain.
- 10. There was Motsognir | the  
mightiest made  
Of all the dwarfs, | and Durin  
next;  
Many a likeness | of men they  
made,  
The dwarfs in the earth, | as  
Durin said.
- 11. Nyi and Nithi, | Northri  
and Suthri,  
Austri and Vestri, | Althjof,  
Dvalin,  
Nar and Nain, | Niping, Dain,  
Bifur, Bofur, | Bombur, Nori,  
An and Onar, | Ai, Mjothvitnir.
- [List of dwarves continues, and  
is largely impossible to  
understand, as we do not have  
any information about the  
names...no myths, no stories,  
no art...nothing!]

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 17-18) -creation of mankind-

- 17. Then from the  
throng | did three come  
forth,  
From the home of the  
gods, | the mighty and  
gracious;  
Two without fate | on  
the land they found,  
Ask and Embla\* |  
empty of might.
- [\*ash and elm (trees)]
- 18. Soul they had not, |  
sense they had not,  
Heat nor motion, | nor  
goodly hue;  
Soul gave Othin, | sense  
gave Hönir,  
Heat gave Lothur | and  
goodly hue.



# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v.19-20 )

- 19. An ash I know, |  
Yggdrasil its name,  
With water white |  
is the great tree wet;  
Thence come the dews |  
that fall in the dales,  
Green by Urth's well |  
does it ever grow.
- 20. Thence come the  
maidens | mighty in  
wisdom,
- Three from the dwelling |  
down 'neath the tree;  
Urth\* is one named, |  
Verthandi\*\* the next,--  
On the wood they scored,--  
| and Skuld\*\*\* the third.  
Laws they made there, and  
life allotted  
To the sons of men, and set  
their fates.
- [\*past, \*\*present, \*\*\*future]

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 21-22 ) (The War Between The Functions I)

- 21. The war I remember, |  
the first in the world,  
When the gods with  
spears | had smitten  
Gollveig,  
And in the hall | of Hár  
had burned her,  
Three times burned, |  
and three times born,  
Oft and again, | yet ever  
she lives.
- 22. Heith they named her  
| who sought their home,  
The wide-seeing witch, |  
in magic wise;  
Minds she bewitched |  
that were moved by her  
magic,  
To evil women |  
a joy she was.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 23-25) (The War Between The Functions II)

- 23. On the host his spear | did  
Othin hurl, Then in the world  
| did war first come;  
The wall that girdled | the  
gods was broken,  
And the field by the warlike |  
Vanes [Vanir] was trodden.
- 24. Then sought the gods |  
their assembly-seats,  
The holy ones, | and council  
held, Whether the gods |  
should tribute give, Or to all  
alike | should worship belong.
- 25. Then sought the gods |  
their assembly-seats,  
The holy ones, | and council  
held, To find who with  
venom | the air had filled,  
Or had given Oth's bride\* |  
to the giants' brood.
- *[\*Oth's (Odin's) bride may be  
Freyja; passage may refer to  
Freyja almost being given to the  
frost-giants]*

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 26-29 )

- 26. In swelling rage | then rose  
up Thor,--  
Seldom he sits | when he such  
things hears,--  
And the oaths were broken, |  
the words and bonds,  
The mighty pledges | between  
them made.
- 27. I know of the horn | of  
Heimdall, hidden  
Under the high-reaching | holy  
tree;  
On it there pours | from  
Valfather's pledge  
A mighty stream: | would you  
know yet more?
- 28. Alone I sat | when the Old  
One sought me,  
The terror of gods, | and gazed  
in mine eyes:  
"What hast thou to ask? | why  
comest thou hither?  
Othin, I know | where thine  
eye is hidden."
- 29. I know where Othin's | eye  
is hidden,  
Deep in the wide-famed | well  
of Mimir;  
Mead from the pledge | of  
Othin each mom  
Does Mimir drink: | would you  
know yet more?

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 30-31)

- 30. Necklaces had I | and  
rings from Heerfather,  
Wise was my speech |  
and my magic wisdom;  
· · · · ·  
·  
Widely I saw | over all the  
worlds.
- 31. On all sides saw I |  
Valkyries assemble,  
Ready to ride | to the  
ranks of the gods;
- Skuld bore the shield, |  
and Skogul rode next,  
Guth, Hild, Gondul, | and  
Geirskogul.  
Of Herjan's maidens | the  
list have ye heard,  
Valkyries ready | to ride  
o'er the earth.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 32-34)

- 32. I saw for Baldr, | the  
bleeding god,  
The son of Othin, | his  
destiny set:
- Famous and fair | in the  
lofty fields,  
Full grown in strength | the  
mistletoe stood.
- 33. From the branch which  
seemed | so slender and  
fair  
Came a harmful shaft |  
that Hoth should hurl;
- But the brother of Baldr |  
was born ere long,  
And one night old | fought  
Othin's son.
- 34. His hands he washed  
not, | his hair he combed  
not, Till he bore to the  
bale-blaze | Baldr's foe.
- But in Fensalir |  
did Frigg weep sore—  
For Valhall's need: |  
would you know yet more?
-

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 35-39 )

- 35. One did I see | in the wet  
woods bound,  
A lover of ill, | and to Loki like;  
By his side does Sigyn | sit, nor  
is glad  
To see her mate: | would  
you know yet more?
- 36. From the east there pours  
| through poisoned vales  
With swords and daggers | the  
river Slith.
- 38. A hall I saw, | far from the  
sun,  
On Nastrond it stands, | and  
the doors face north,
- Venom drops | through the  
smoke-vent down,  
For around the walls | do  
serpents wind.
- 39. I saw there wading |  
through rivers wild  
Traacherous men | and  
murderers too,  
And workers of ill | with the  
wives of men;  
There Nithhogg sucked | the  
blood of the slain,  
And the wolf tore men; |  
would you know yet more?

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 40-41)

- 40. The giantess old | in  
Ironwood sat,  
In the east, and bore |  
the brood of Fenrir;  
Among these one | in  
monster's guise  
Was soon to steal | the  
sun from the sky.
- 41. There feeds he full |  
on the flesh of the  
dead,  
And the home of the  
gods | he reddens with  
gore;  
Dark grows the sun, |  
and in summer soon  
Come mighty storms: |  
would you know yet  
more?



# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 44-45) -the beginning of Ragnarök-

- 44. Now Garm howls loud  
| before Gnipahellir,  
The fetters will burst, |  
and the wolf run free;
- Much do I know, |  
and more can see  
Of the fate of the gods, |  
the mighty in fight.
- 45. Brothers shall fight |  
and fell each other,  
And sisters' sons | shall  
kinship stain;
- Hard is it on earth, | with  
mighty whoredom;  
Axe-time, sword-time, |  
shields are sundered,  
Wind-time, wolf-time, |  
ere the world falls;  
Nor ever shall men |  
each other spare.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v.46-48)

- 46. Fast move the sons |  
of Mim, and fate  
Is heard in the note | of  
the Gjallarhorn;  
Loud blows Heimdall, |  
the horn is aloft,  
In fear quake all | who on  
Hel-roads are.
- 47. Yggdrasil shakes, |  
and shiver on high  
The ancient limbs, | and  
the giant is loose;
- To the head of Mim |  
does Othin give heed,  
But the kinsman of Surt |  
shall slay him soon.
- 48. How fare the gods? |  
how fare the elves?  
All Jotunheim groans, |  
the gods are at council;  
Loud roar the dwarfs | by  
the doors of stone,  
The masters of the rocks:  
| would you know yet  
more?

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 49-50 )

- 49. Now Garm howls  
loud | before  
Gnipahellir,  
The fetters will burst, |  
and the wolf run free  
Much do I know, | and  
more can see  
Of the fate of the gods,  
| the mighty in fight.
- 50. From the east  
comes Hrym | with  
shield held high;  
In giant-wrath | does  
the serpent writhe;  
O'er the waves he  
twists, | and the tawny  
eagle  
Gnaws corpses  
screaming; |  
Naglfar is loose.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 51-53) -the death of Odin-

- 51. O'er the sea from the north | there sails a ship  
With the people of Hel, |  
at the helm stands Loki;  
After the wolf | do wild  
men follow,  
And with them the  
brother | of Byleist goes.
- 52. Surt fares from the south | with the scourge  
of branches,  
The sun of the battle-gods  
| shone from his sword;
- The crags are sundered, |  
the giant-women sink,  
The dead throng Hel-way,  
| and heaven is cloven.
- 53. Now comes to Hlin |  
yet another hurt,  
When Othin fares | to  
fight with the wolf,  
And Beli's fair slayer |  
seeks out Surt,  
For there must fall | the  
joy of Frigg.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 54-56) -the death of Thor-

- 54. Then comes Sigfather's |  
mighty son, Vithar, to fight  
| with the foaming wolf;  
In the giant's son |  
does he thrust his sword  
Full to the heart: |  
his father is avenged.
- 55. Hither there comes |  
the son of Hlothyn,  
The bright snake gapes | to  
heaven  
above; . . . . .  
Against the serpent | goes  
Othin's son.
- 56. In anger smites | the  
warder of earth,--  
Forth from their homes |  
must all men flee;-  
Nine paces fares | the son  
of Fjorgyn,  
And, slain by the serpent, |  
fearless he sinks.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 56-58) -the destruction of the world-

- 57. The sun turns black,  
| earth sinks in the sea,  
The hot stars down |  
from heaven are  
whirled;
- 58. Now Garm howls  
loud | before  
Gnipahellir,  
The fetters will burst, |  
and the wolf run free;
- Fierce grows the steam  
| and the life-feeding  
flame,  
Till fire leaps high |  
about heaven itself.
- Much do I know, | and  
more can see  
Of the fate of the gods,  
| the mighty in fight.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 59-60) -renewal of the world-

- 59. Now do I see | the  
earth anew  
Rise all green | from the  
waves again;  
The cataracts fall, | and  
the eagle flies,  
And fish he catches |  
beneath the cliffs.
- 60. The gods in Ithavoll  
| meet together,  
Of the terrible girdler |  
of earth they talk,  
• And the mighty past |  
they call to mind,  
And the ancient runes |  
of the Ruler of Gods.

# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 61-62) -return of (some) gods-

- 61. In wondrous beauty  
| once again  
Shall the golden tables |  
stand mid the grass,  
Which the gods had  
owned | in the days of  
old,  
· · · · ·
- 62. Then fields unsowed  
| bear ripened fruit,  
All ills grow better, |  
and Baldr comes back;  
Baldr and Hoth dwell |  
in Hropt's battle-hall,  
And the mighty gods: |
- Would you know yet  
more?



# From Eddic poem Völuspá (v. 64-66)

- 64. More fair than the sun,  
| a hall I see,  
Roofed with gold, | on  
Gimle it stands;  
There shall the righteous |  
rulers dwell,  
And happiness ever | there  
shall they have.
- 65. There comes on high, |  
all power to hold,  
A mighty lord, | all lands he  
rules. . . . .
- 66. From below the dragon  
| dark comes forth,  
Nithogg flying | from  
Nithafjoll;
- The bodies of men on | his  
wings he bears,  
The serpent bright: | but  
now must I sink.

# Dumézilian Interlude 1

- Dumézil's analysis of Norse mythology brings out some interesting features.
- 1. In *Voluspá* v. there is a conflict between the Aesir and Vanir gods. D. Showed this to be an I-E theme, the "war between the functions," 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Functional groups against 3<sup>rd</sup>, resulting in compromise and blending to constitute a complete society/world
- The full story is told in a later text, *Ynglingasaga*. Aesir gods: Týr and Odin (1<sup>st</sup> function, authority, magic, knowledge), Thor (2<sup>nd</sup> function), versus Vanir deities Freyja, Freyr, Njord (fertility, 3<sup>rd</sup> function)
- Neither side can win war, which ends in truce, with Njord, Freyr and Freyja joining the Aesir to form a single family of gods

# Dumézilian Interlude 2

- Dumézil found same theme in Celtic “Second Battle of Maghe Tuiredũ” Tuatha Dé Danaan are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> function and Fomoiré 3<sup>rd</sup>
- The Tuatha are masters of magic and weapons but the Fomoiré hold the secrets of agriculture, and at end Bres’s life is spared in exchange for sharing that knowledge with the Tuatha Dé Danann
- In poem *Rígsþula*, Dumézil found a tale describing establishment of Indo-European social structure
- The god Heimdall, disguised as “Ríg,” goes among human beings, visiting and staying with three families
- In each, he sleeps with and impregnates the wife of the house, resulting in a child who represents a particular social class

# Dumézilian Interlude 3

- The first child, born to a poor family, is called *Thrall*, meaning “slave.” He is ugly, short and stupid, and represents the lowest class, the laborers or slaves of the Third Function.
- The second child, born to a farming family, is called *Karl* meaning “free-holder, free farmer,” slightly higher on social scale, still third function.
- Karl will have a child named *Smiðr* (Smith, craftsman), also third function.
- The next child, born to a higher level, noble family, is *Jarl* (“Earl,” meaning nobleman), Ríg gives this child education in many matters, but he is above all a warrior-ruler (Second Function).
- Jarl’s son, *Konr*, learns magical matters like runes, and is thus First Function.

# About the Eddic Poem *Hávamál* (Sayings of the High One)

- 1. *Hávamál* seems to combine several different texts from different sources
- 2. The first section (verses 1-95) gives down-to-earth advice on how to behave in different situations; caution, restraint, hospitality and friendship are highly praised
- 3. Somewhat negative view of women, seen as fickle and unreliable; poem is definitely pre-chivalry!
- 4. Next, v. 96-110 tells of Odin's love-affair with the giantess Gunnloth to obtain mead of wisdom and poetry
- 5. V. 110-164 explain how Odin went through a painful process of self-torture, hanging nine nights on the world tree, for knowledge of the magical runes. Use of the runes is then described in "The Rune Poem."

# *Hávamál* style wisdom (1): earthy, direct, and unpretentious

- v. 1. When you enter to a hall, always look around with care; you never know what enemies may be waiting for you there.
- v. 2. All hail to the givers! A guest has come, say where shall he sit?...
- v. 3. Warmth seeks he who has wandered long and is numb about the knees;
- ...meat and dry clothes the man needs who has fared through the cold.
- v. 4. A drink and full dishes to he who has come, a towel, and a blessing...
- v. 5. Of his wit has need he who widely fares; a dull wit may do at home, but a laughing stock will be he who lacks words when he sits among the wise...

## *Hávamál* wisdom (2)

- v. 6. To be bright of brain let no man boast, but take good heed of your tongue; the sage and silent come seldom to grief as they fare among folk in the hall; a more faithful friend you will not find than a shrewd head on your shoulders.
- v. 7. The wary guest who comes to wassail listens that he may learn, opens his ears, casts his eyes about; thus wards him the wise man against harm.
- v. 8. Happy is he who has won the love and liking of all; hard it is one's help to seek from the mind of another man.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (3)

- v. 12. Good it is not, though good it is thought, mead for the sons of men; the deeper he drinks the dimmer grows the mind of many a man.
- v. 13 . The heron of heedlessness hovers o'er the feast; and steals the minds of men. With that fowl's feathers fettered was I when Gunnloth's guest.
- v. 14. Drunk I became, dead drunk, forsooth, when I was with wise Fjalar; that [drinking] bout is best from which fetches each man his mind full clear.
- v. 17. The fool but gapes when to folks he comes, he mumbles and mopes; soon is seen, when his swill he has had, what the mind of the man is like.



## *Hávamál* wisdom (4)

- v. 15. Let us all be sparing in words, and bold in battle; glad and wholesome the hero be till comes his dying day.
- v. 16. The unwise man thinks that he long will live if from fighting he flees; but the ails and aches of old age will dog him even if spears have spared him.
- v. 36. One's home is best, though a mere hovel it be: there a man is master and lord; Though but two goats are yours and a simple thatched roof, 'tis far better than to beg...
- v. 37. One's home is best though a hovel it be: his heart does bleed who has to beg the meat for his every meal.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (5)

- v. 15. Let us all be sparing in words, and bold in battle; glad and wholesome let us be 'til our dying day.
- v. 16. The unwise man thinks that he long will live if from fighting he flees; but the ails and aches of old age will dog him even if spears have spared him.
- v. 36. One's home is best, though a mere hovel it be: there a man is master and lord; Though but two goats are yours and a simple thatched roof, 'tis far better than to beg...
- v. 37. One's home is best though a hovel it be: his heart does bleed who has to beg the meat for his every meal.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (6)

- v. 42. With his friend a man should ever be friends, and pay back gift for gift...
- v. 44. If a friend you have whom you highly regard... open your heart, withhold no gifts, and fare to find him often
- v. 45. If another there be whom you trust not at all, yet would get from him gain; speak fair to him though false your meaning, and pay him lie for lie.
- v. 46 With one you trust little, whose speech is hollow-hearted; laugh with him and lure him on, and pay him tit for tat.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (7)

- v. 47. Young was I once and fared I forth , and wandering lost my way; when a friend I found I felt me rich: man is cheered by man.
- v. 48. He who gives gladly, a good life will lead, and seldom has he sorrow; but the churlish wight is chary of all, and grudgingly parts with his gifts.
- v. 50. The fir tree dies that stands alone: shielded not by bark nor bast; thus is the man who by all is shunned; why should he linger in life?
- v. 52. Not great things are needed to give to a friend: oft brings thanks the smallest of things; with half a loaf and a half-drained cup have often I won me a worthy friend.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (8)

- v. 61. Well-groomed and washed wend thee to the Thing, though thy clothes be not the best; of thy shoes and breeches be not ashamed, and still less of your steed.
- v. 64. A wise man will not overbearing be, and stake too much on his strength; when the mighty are met to match their strength, 'twill be found that first is no one.
- v. 68. A blazing fire is a blessing to man, and also the sight of the sun; his hearty health, if he holds it well, and to live one's life without shame.
- v. 78. A full stocked farm had some farmer's sons; Now they stoop at the beggar's staff. In a twinkling flees untrustworthy wealth, it is the ficklest of friends.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (10)

- v. 76. Cattle die, kinsmen die, and soon you'll die yourself; but fair fame will never fade from the one who wins it.
- v 77. Cattle die, kinsmen die, and soon you'll die yourself; one thing, I know, will wither never: the doom over each one dead.
- v. 81. At evening praise the day, when burned down, a torch, a wife when bedded, a weapon when tried, ice when over it, ale that's been drunk.
- v. 84. A wench's words let no wise man trust, nor trust the troth of a woman; for on whirling wheel their hearts are shaped, and fickle and fitful their minds.

## *Hávamál* wisdom (11)

- v. 91. Heed my words now, for I know them both: untrue are men to women; we speak most fair when foulest our thoughts, for that wiles the wariest wits.
- v. 92. Fairly shall speak, nor spare his gifts, who will win a woman's love; praise the looks of the lovely maid: he who flatters shall win the fair.
- v. 95. One's self only knows what is near one's heart, each reads but himself aright; no sickness seems to sound mind worse than to have lost all liking for life.
- v. 96. That saw I well when I sat in the reeds, awaiting the maid I wooed; more than body and soul was the sweet maid to me, yet I worked not my will with her.

# *Hávamál* Odin and Gunnloth (1)

- v. 97. Billing's daughter on her bed I found sleeping, the sun-bright maid; a king's crown I craved not to wear, if she let me have her love.
- 98. "At eventide shall you Odin, come if you would win me to wife: unmeet it were if more than we two know of this naughty thing."
- v. 99. Back I went; to win her love I let myself be misled; for I did think, enthralled by love, to work my will with her.



## *Hávamál* Odin and Gunnloth (2)

- v. 100. When next I came at nighttime, all the warriors found I awake, with brands borne high and burning lights; such the luckless end of my love tryst!
- v. 100. Near morn when once more did I come, the folks were sound asleep; but a bitch found I the fair one had bound fast on her bed!
- v. 104. The old etin [Sutting, Gunnloth's father] I sought-- now I am back; in good stead stood me my speech; for with many words my wish I wrought in the hall of Suttungs' sons.
- v. 105. With an auger there I ate my way, through the rocks I made me room! over and under were the etins' paths; thus dared I life and limb.

## *Hávamál* Odin and Gunnloth (3)

- 106) Gunnloth gave me, her gold stool upon, a draught of the dear-bought mead; an ill reward I left her for her faithful friendship, for her heavy heart.
- 107) (Of the well-bought matter) I made good use: to the wise now little is lacking; for Öthrærir [the magic mead] now up is brought, and won for the lord-of-all-wights.
- v. 108. Unharméd again had I hardly come out of the etins' hall, if Gunnloth helped not, the good maiden, in whose loving arms I lay.

# *Hávamál* Odin and Gunnloth (4)

- v. 109. The day after, the etins [giants] fared into Har's [Odin's] high hall, to ask after Bolverk: whether the Æsir among, or whether by Suttung slain.
- v. 110. An oath on the ring did din swear; how put trust in his troth [word, oath]? Suttung he swindled and snatched his drink, and Gunnloth he beguiled.

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Odin fleeing Suttung's hall in form of eagle,  
with stolen mead of wisdom in his beak.  
Some of it drops to earth and so humans  
gain power of poetry.



# *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (1)

- v. 138. I recall that I hung on the wind-tossed tree all of nights nine, wounded by spear, dedicated to Odin, sacrificed myself to myself, upon that tree of which none can tell from what roots it doth rise
- [“That tree” = Yggdrasil, the World Tree; Ygg = Odin, Yggdrasil = “Odin’s Horse”]
- v. 139) Neither horn they upheld nor handed me bread; I looked below me--aloud I cried-caught up the runes, caught them up wailing, thence to the ground fell again.
- 140) From the son of Bolthorn, Bestla's father, I mastered mighty songs nine, and a drink I had, of the dearest mead, got from out of Óthráerir.

# *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (2)

- v. 141. Then began I to grow and gain in insight, to wax also in wisdom: One verse led on to another verse, one poem led on to the other poem.
- v. 142. Runes will you find, and rightly read, of wondrous weight, of mighty magic, which that dyed the dread God, which that made the holy hosts, and were etched by Odin
- v. 144. Know'st how to write, know'st how to read, know'st how to stain, how to understand, know'st how to ask, know'st how to offer, know'st how to supplicate, know'st how to sacrifice?
- v. 145. 'Tis better unasked than offered overmuch; for ay does a gift look for gain; thus did Odin write ere the earth began, when up he rose in after time.

# *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (3)

- v. 146. Those spells I know which the spouses of kings wot not, nor earthly wight: "Help" one is hight, with which holpen thou'lt be in sorrow and care and sickness.
- v. 148. That third I know, if my need be great to fetter a foeman fell: I can dull the swords of deadly foes, that nor wiles nor weapons avail.
- v. 149. That fourth I know, if foemen have fettered me hand and foot: I chant a charm the chains to break, so the fetters fly off my feet, and off my hands the halter.
- v. 150. That fifth I know, if from foemans's hand I see a spear sped into throng, never so fast it flies but its flight I can stay, once my eye lights on it.

# *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (4)

- v. 153. That eighth I know which to all men is needful, and good to know: when hatred runs high, heroes among, their strife I can settle full soon.
- v. 154. That ninth I know: if need there be to guard a ship in a gale, the wind I can calm, and the waves also, and wholly soothe the sea.
- v. 156. That eleventh I know, if I am to lead old friends to the fray: under buckler I chant that briskly they fare hale and whole to battle, hale and whole from battle: hale where ever they are.
- v. 157. That twelfth I know, if on tree I see a hanged one hoisted on high: thus I write and the runes I stain that down he drops and tells me his tale.



# *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (5)

- v. 161. That sixteenth I know, if I seek me some maid, to work my will with her: the white-armed woman's heart I bewitch, and toward me I turn her thoughts.
- v. 162. That seventeenth I know, if the slender maid's love I have, and hold her to me:
  - this I sing to her, that she hardly will leave me for another man's love.
  - v. 164) That eighteenth I know which to none I will tell, neither maid nor man's wife-'tis best warded I but one know it: this speak I last of my spells-but only to her in whose arms I lie, or else to my sister also.

## *Hávamál* Odin and the Runes (6)

- **v. 165. Now are Hár's) sayings spoken in Hár's hall, of help to the sons of men, of harm to the sons of etins; hail to whoever spoke them, hail to whoever knows them! Gain they who grasp them, happy they who heed them!**
- \*(Hár = “high-one” = Odin)