



Forgotten Ground Regained

A Quarterly Journal of Alliterative Verse

New Series, Issue 11, Summer 2026

Alliterative Verse in Arda

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse



Masthead

Forgotten Ground Regained (ISSN 2996-6353) is owned and edited by Paul Douglas Deane at 183 Millerick Ave., Lawrenceville, New Jersey and published at alliteration.net. Submissions in or about alliterative verse are welcome.¹ You can email the editor at pdeane@alliteration.net. All original works are copyright by their respective authors, who retain all rights except nonexclusive serial and web rights for publication on alliteration.net.²

The journal is now open for submissions for the Fall, 2026, issue, with an emphasis on the theme, “Speculative Visions”. You can read the full [call for submissions](#) later in this issue.

To join Forgotten Ground Regained's email discussion forum, navigate to the following link: <https://gaggle.email/join/forgotten-ground-regained@gaggle.email>.

The cover image is based on Yifan Jia's “Dancing Tides”. Cover layout by Julie Anne Deane. The decorative border images are [courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art](#).

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¹ Note: In poetry intended to closely imitate Old English alliterative verse, editors usually mark the caesura, or break between half-lines, by inserting four or more extra spaces between the half-lines. However, this format often leads to readers treating the caesura as a far stronger break than it really is. In some Old English manuscripts, the caesura was indicated by a small, raised dot, or *conus*. This inspired my default house style for poems closely imitating the Old English style. Unless the poet directs otherwise or the content of the poem suggests a different format, where no

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Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

Contributors

Nate Beeton has enjoyed formal verse ever since he was a student. Of particular interest to him is the poetry of historical peoples, and alliterative verse is no exception. He lives in Australia with a pet hen and goes on hikes in his spare time.

Chris Bolland is a recent graduate of California State University, Sacramento's Master of Arts program in History. His research focused on nineteenth-century American history and the ways societies remember and reinterpret the past. As a scholar and historical reenactor, he has long been drawn to the intersection of academic history and the lived experience of the past for people of all times and places. Inspired by the works of Tolkien, Lewis, Guite, Coleridge, and Owen, his poetry reflects an enduring fascination with memory, myth, and those who never leave their names in a history book.

Lisa Cooper is a formal and constraint-based poet, author of the full-length poetry volume *Hasty Corporeal Ink*. Her poetry has appeared in *The Book of Penteract*, *Ekstasis Magazine*, *Fathom Magazine*, and *The North American Anglican*, among others. She lives in Connecticut and works as a marketing manager at Paravel Insights.

Paul D. Deane is a computational linguist by vocation and a poet by avocation. He has edited *Forgotten Ground Regained* (the website) since 1999, and its quarterly journal since 2023. His poetry appears in *The Brazen Head*, *Illuminations of the Fantastic*, Indolent Press's *Second Coming* poem series, and Dennis Wise's anthology *Speculative Poetry and the Modern Alliterative Revival*.

Matthew Dickerson is a professor at Middlebury College and the author of several books. He studied Old English Literature at Cornell University while earning a PhD in Computer Science. His published fiction includes the medieval historical novels *The Finnsburgh Encounter* (1991) and *The Rood and the Torc* (2014), and the fantasy novel *The Gifted* (2015). He has also published numerous books and chapters exploring the writings of J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis.

Susan Edwards is a British fantasy author and poet. She is a long-term active member of the Tolkien Society, where she goes by the Quenya name Tuilinde ("Spring Singer"). She hosted Omentielva (the International Conference on J.R.R. Tolkien's Invented Languages) in Whitehaven in 2009. She has also published two novels (*The Great*

Gifts and *Draakoa in Danger*) and *Beauty, Light and Music: Poetry and Prose*, a collection of her poetry and fiction.

Dawn Felagund is the founder and owner of the Silmarillion Writers' Guild and has been writing based on Tolkien's world since 2004. She writes fiction, poetry, and essays about the legendarium, and her work has been published in the *Journal of Tolkien Research*, *Transformative Works and Cultures*, *Mythprint*, and in the books *Not the Fellowship! Dragons Welcome* and *Fandom: The Next Generation*. She was recently heard talking about Tolkien fanfiction on BBC's *The Conversation*.

Himring has been writing prose and verse in the Tolkien fandom since 2009, chiefly focusing on The Silmarillion. Her fanworks are mainly archived at the Silmarillion Writers' Guild (where some non-fictional contributions of hers can also be found) and at Archive of Our Own (AO3). As himring, she hosts a small community on Dreamwidth called [tolkienshortfanworks](https://www.dreamwidth.org/100000000/tolkienshortfanworks), dedicated to short forms of fan writing.

Savannah Horrell lives on the Chesapeake Bay and spends as much time as possible in museums. Her work also appears in the *Brushing Literary Journal*.

Cliff Jones Jr. is a writer, software developer, and occasional artist and poet with a background in linguistics. His fiction mostly fits into the niche genre of dreampunk. He is also the editor of two multi-author dreampunk collections: *Mirrormaze* and *Somniscopes*.

Math Jones is a British poet and a practicing Pagan, author of *Sabrina Bridge* (Black Pear Press), and *The Knotsman* (Arachne Press). His work has appeared in various journals and anthologies, including *Speculative Poetry* and *the Alliterative Revival* and on *Forgotten Ground Regained*.

Quincy R. Lehr's most recent books are *Near Hits* and *Los Classics* and *The Dark Lord of the Tiki Bar*. His poems and criticism have appeared in *Stinging Fly*, *The Village Voice*, *Northwest Review*, *Measure*, *The Dark Horse*, and *Rattle*. He lives in Los Angeles.

Colin Mackenzie received his PhD in Old Norse and Old English from the University of Glasgow in 2014. He began translating Old Norse and Old English texts into Scots in 2021 and writing original Scots *dróttkvætt* verse on moving to Orkney in 2023. "The Tale of Thorstane Grue" (*Þorstains þáttur skelks*) and "Anent Thoralf Skolms son" (*Þórálfs drápa Skólmssonar*) have been published in *Lallans: The*

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Journal o the Scots Leid Associe. His Scots *dróttkvætt* poems can be found on his blog, [Auld Norse](#). One of them, his poem "Merry Dancers", was the joint winner of the Hugh MacDiarmid Tassie for poetry in the Scots Language Society's annual Sangschaw competition.

Pat Masson (1940-1994), a resident of Devon, England, was active in the Tolkien Society and *Ɖa Englisca Gesiðas*, a British historical society. She won that society's *Cædmon Prize* in 1988 for *Dragon-Fighter* (published in *Wiðowinde*, 83). She died young from cancer, but her poetry and short stories were preserved in *Nor Bid the Stars Farewell*, a booklet her mother prepared for her funeral. One of her poems, *The Last Valkyrie*, won posthumous honorable mention in the SFPA's 2024 Rhysling Award competition. Her long poem, *A Lay of St. Boniface*, has been reviewed by Dennis W. Wise, who praises it as "a text almost unparalleled within the Modern Alliterative Revival".

Joseph Mathias is a musician and poet residing in Lansing, Michigan. He is currently working on an alliterative epic about the life of Adam and Eve after the Fall. His website is bardharp.substack.com.

Dorothy Nielsen, PhD, taught literature and writing for many years at Ontario universities. Her poems appear in such journals as *Christianity and Literature*, *The Literary Review of Canada*, *Ekstasis*, *The Fiddlehead*, and *The Dalhousie Review*, and in her poetry collection, *The Persephone Papers*. She is on the advisory board for *Traces Journal*.

Rio Wulfmare's work has appeared in *Forgotten Ground Regained*, *Amon Hen*, and his Instagram page. His Old English-style alliterative verse poems are inspired by the fragility of modern lyricists like Aurora and Editors musician Tom Smith and draw upon the non-fiction vulnerability of New Nature Writing and psychogeography. An alumnus of the University of Essex's BA creative writing programme, Wulfmare now teaches English in Essex, UK, engulfed by Legos, books, and the ocean.

Zdenka is a prolific fanfic author, with a total of 590 publications on Archive of Our Own (AO3). She has written several pieces in alliterative verse. Most notably, in addition to "The Making of Angrist", "The Death of Bëor the Old" and "The Choices of Lady Éowyn", this includes [Chapter 2](#) of her fanwork *Song and Smoke*. For more information about her, check out this [recent interview](#) on the Silmarillion Writers' Guild.

Introduction

The poems you are about to read are, in my judgment, among the best Tolkien fan poems written in alliterative verse (and related forms) to date. I therefore provide detailed information about their pre-publication history. But before I do, a few words about the nature of fan fiction and the fan fiction community.

Fan fiction occupies an unusual position in the ecosystem of books. Due to the strictures of modern copyright law, it is by definition noncommercial, and thus constitutes one of the few remaining preserves for purely noncommercial participation in popular fiction. And yet the impulse it reflects has ancient provenance, for what is most Arthurian literature save Geoffrey of Monmouth fan fiction? Even the Aeneid, classic though it be, could reasonably be classified as Homeric fan poetry. Due to its noncommercial, participatory nature, fan fiction tends to be self-organized by fans; these days, its center of gravity circles around fan-organized and administered sites like [Archive of Our Own](#) (or AO3, as fans like to call it) and the [Silmarillion Writers' Guild](#).

Since fan fiction is a highly communal, participatory endeavor, it is organized around a series of social activities. There are challenges, where writers are encouraged to write fan fiction to a set prompt; there are gift stories dedicated to another fanfic writer; there are specific length-based genres, such as micro-fiction, drabbles (stories of exactly 100 words), double or triple drabbles (at 200 or 300 words), ficlets, one-shot stories, vignettes, and the like. Fanfic stories may be classified by their relation to the original story (for instance, fix-its to solve problems in the original story; canon-divergent stories, or stories with OCs (original characters). Or they may be classified by their thematic approach: shipping (imagining relationships between specific characters), hurt/comfort (say, a story in which Elrond tends to wounded Frodo in Rivendell), and so forth. It is an entire ecosystem, one in which poetry plays a relatively small role, just as Tolkien fan fiction is just one fan community among many, and Tolkien fan poetry a small part of that. However, Tolkien's love of poetry, and his love for alliterative verse in particular, means that quite a lot of alliterative Tolkien fan poetry has been written. If you want to explore that space in depth, rather than checking out the curated set of poems presented here, look at my page for the [speculative fiction community](#) on *Forgotten Ground Regained*.

Fan fiction is normally published under pseudonyms. I have only supplied real names for poets who gave me their express permission to do so. Thus, Dawn Felagund, Himring, Rio Wulfmare, and Zdenka should be understood as *noms de plume*.

New Poems. The following poems were newly written for this issue:

Dorothy Nielsen's poem, "Tolkien's Revelation", "Rio Wulfmare's "Star-Moment", Matthew Dickerson's poem, "A Good King", Nat Beeton's "Farewell to Bëor" and "Star-Enlaced", Lisa Cooper's "Rain in the Wood", Savannah Horrel's "The Archeology of Doggerland and Old Beleriand", Cliff Jones Jr.'s "Marching Orders", Quincy R. Lehr's "From 'The Tale of the Sad King'", Math Jones' "Tolkien Dreams", Colin Mackenzie "A Selcouth Tree", and Chris Bolland's poem, "The Wight".

Dorothy Nielsen's poem, "Tolkien's Revelation" is a meditation on what Tolkien saw that can inform us in our present, difficult moment in history.

Rio Wulfmare's poem "Star-Moment" describes the moment when Lúthien is dancing in the starlight, after Daeron's music has suddenly stopped, but before Lúthien has turned to notice Beren watching. It is a female-coded moment, with Varda's star-presence explicitly described, and draws connections not only among the four characters, but also among the four classes of being (Vala, Maia, Eldar, Man), and between forces operating at a cosmic and an intimate scale. It is worth highlighting for its style, along with Nate Beeton's and Zdenka's poems, all of which fall much closer to traditional Old English metrics than most modern English imitations.

Matthew Dickerson's poem "A Good King" celebrates Faramir, the only Man besides Aragorn to resist the One Ring when that temptation stood before him. The poem was especially inspired by his response to his father's chastisement; when Denethor tells him his gentleness might be repaid with death, Faramir replies quite simply: "So be it."

Nate Beeton's "Farewell to Bëor" is one of two poems in this issue to address the friendship between Finrod Felagund and Bëor the Old, and the impact of his death, the first mortal death the Eldar experienced. His poem "Star-Enlaced" (Gilraen in Imladris) describes Gilraen's thoughts as she dwells in Rivendell, surrounded by elven beauty but alone, bearing a child whose heritage is "seven stars, and seven stones, and one white tree".

Lisa Cooper's "Rain in the Wood" describes the kind of woodland scene Tolkien loved. A woodland scene such as Treebeard might have enjoyed in Fangorn forest, in a moment of quiet and peace.

Savannah Horrel's "The Archeology of Doggerland and Old Beleriand" imagines Beleriand and the ancient, drowned world of Doggerland beneath the North Sea as one and the same, with ancient treasures getting pulled up from the deep by harried archeologists, unrecognized and unappreciated.

Cliff Jones Jr.'s "Marching Orders" puts us inside the head of an Orc during one of those long forced-marches, scheming for freedom.

Quincy R. Lehr's "From 'The Tale of the Sad King'" is an example of something that seems to happen far more often than most people realize – alliterative verse made up as an accompaniment to a fantasy roleplaying game.

Math Jones' "Tolkien Dreams" speaks for itself. It is short, and I shall say no more here.

Colin Mackenzie "A Selcouth Tree" is, like most of his other poems published in *Forgotten Ground Regained*, in modern Scots. It describes a wondrous tree: the Mallorn that Samwise planted in the Shire at the end of Lord of the Rings, though much of the imagery could easily be applied, depending on how freely you want to let your imagination run, to one of the Two Trees, or even to the holy Cross from the *Dream of the Rood*.

Chris Bolland's poem "The Wight" draws on the Norse legend of the *draugr* and Tolkien's concept of barrow wights to lead us from horror on the open seas to a being who "chants the charms of sunless days". And from there, it takes you on an unexpected ride, a sort of eucatastrophe. It is written in three-line stanzas, consisting of two half-lines followed by one full line of alliterative verse (typically with three stresses), approximating the pattern of Old Norse *ljóðahattr*.

Joseph Mathias' poem, "Middling Earth" is a humorous take on the advantages of Michigan, over against Middle Earth's rather conspicuous lack of "decent places" (as Samwise would have put it).

Collected Poems. The following poems are collected in this issue after having previously been published in Tolkien Society journals or having previously been posted to Tolkien fan fiction sites:

Patricia Masson's "Hymn to Earendil" was originally published in *Mallorn*, the Journal of the Tolkien Society, 14, p. 32 (1980). It is one of several poems by Pat Masson that I reprinted on *Forgotten Ground*

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Regained last year.

Pat Masson died young (of cancer, at only 54 years of age.) Her mother prepared a pamphlet containing her poems and short stories to be distributed at her funeral. Eventually (after much research!) I came across that booklet on ancestry.com as I was searching for her next of kin in order to get permission to reprint “Hymn to Éarendil”. For more information about Pat Masson, check out Dennis Wise’s [article about her in *Forgotten Ground Regained*](#), Spring 2026.

Dawn Felagund is moderator of [The Silmarillion Writers’ Guild](#), a Tolkien fanfiction archive. Her poem “Crossing Forest River” was written for the Round 5 creative challenge of the Hungarian Tolkien Society’s [2024 Mailing Competition](#), for the following prompt:

After The Battle of the Five Armies, Mr. Bilbo Baggins, Beorn and Gandalf took a “long and cheerless road” along the northern end of Mirkwood, where they had “many hardships and adventures”, as “the Wild was still the Wild, and there were many other things in it in those days besides goblins”. Can you imagine that? The Burglar, the Skin-Changer and the Wizard against the evils of the Wild? The Hobbits of the Shire could. They could imagine a lot of things they have never seen (as you will see in the next task, as well), and they fabricated an epic tale of this one. Reconstruct it! You can write concisely about many adventures or go into the details of one particular danger they had to overcome. You can choose the form and style as you wish: you can stick with the prose or follow one of the verse forms of The Hobbit or The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, or that of northern sagas, as you prefer. But do not forget: Hobbits “are fond of strange words, and of rhyming and metrical tricks”, and even in prose you can play a bit with words, rhymes, or alliterations. So, there should be some fun in the form.

It is written in the meter and stanza form of the Middle English poem *Pearl*, by the same poet as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

Zdenka’s poem “The Death of Beor the Old” was [first publicly posted](#) on The Silmarillion Writers’ Guild website. It was written for [Mereth Aderthad 2025](#), a celebration of the 20th anniversary of the guild. I gave a talk at that conference, [Alliterative Verse in Arda](#), for which Zdenka’s poem was a companion piece.

“The Death of Beor the Old” was specifically written in response to the following passage from *The Silmarillion*:

[A]t last Beor the Old died when he had lived three and ninety

years, for four and fifty of which he had served King Felagund. And when he lay dead, of no wound or grief, but stricken by age, the Eldar saw for the first time the swift waning of the life of Men, and the death of weariness which they knew not in themselves; and they grieved greatly for the loss of their friends.

–*The Silmarillion*, “Of the Coming of Men Into the West”

It was also influenced by *Athrabeth Finrod ah Andreth* in *HOME X: Morgoth’s Ring* and by the final conversation between Aragorn and Arwen at Aragorn’s death in *Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A: I (v).

Zdenka’s “The Making of Angrist” [was publicly posted](#) to the fan fiction site *Archive of Our Own* in July 2018, and [was also posted](#) to *The Silmarillion Writers’ Guild*. It was written for the “[Multi-fandom Drabble Exchange 2018](#)”, a coordinated writing event in which fans write *drabbles*, or fan fiction works that are exactly 100 words long. The creation of Angrist—that deadly and most unfortunate knife—by the dwarven smith Telchar of Nogrod is described in the *Silmarillion* (“Of Beren and Lúthien”, p. 177.)

Zdenka’s “The Choices of Lady Éowyn” describes Éowyn’s struggle before she decided to ride to war secretly as Dernhelm, taking Merry with her. It [was publicly posted](#) to the fan fiction site *Archive of Our Own* in March 2018 and [was also posted](#) to the *Silmarillion Writers’ Guild*. It was started for the 2017 [Half a Moon](#) Prompt Challenge, Day 6: *Choices*, and finished for the 2018 [Mini-Moon](#) challenge, Day 1: *War and Peace*.

Himring’s “Éarendil the Seafarer” is a ficlet, or short (one page) short story containing dialogue in alliterative verse. It’s in the form of a conversation between Éarendil and Elwing his wife before he sailed for Valinor to beg aid from the Valar. It [was first publicly posted](#) to *The Silmarillion Writers’ Guild* and was written for a “challenge”, or fanfic writing prompt, posted at [tolkienshortfanworks.dreamwidth.org](#) in January 2022. The prompts were: [beginnings or fresh starts](#) and [alliterative verse](#). The verse passages in “Éarendil the Seafarer” were inspired by the Old English alliterative poem “The Seafarer”.

Susan Edwards’ “Slaying the Dragon” was first published in *Mallorn*, the journal of the Tolkien Society, issue 49, p. 42, and was reprinted as a stand-alone poem on *Forgotten Ground Regained* last year. It takes the persona of Bard the Bowman, telling the tale of Smaug’s attack on Esgaroth in first person. Susan Edwards’ second

poem in this issue, “The Paths of the Dead”, was first published in *Mallorn*, the journal of the Tolkien Society, [issue 51](#), p. 34, and reprinted as a stand-alone poem on *Forgotten Ground Regained* last year. It tells the tale from *Lord of the Rings* of how Aragorn, Gimli, and Glóin dared to use the Paths of the Dead, haunted caverns under the White Mountains of Gondor, in order to reach southern Gondor in time to turn the tide against the invading fleet of Corsairs.

Finally, I wrote my poem, “**The Song of Shadows**” back in 1995 when I was playing an Elven bard, Rhunedhel, on *Elendor MUSH*, once the premier text-based Tolkien roleplaying game. Rhunedhel (as his name implies) was an Avarin elf from the Uttermost East, which meant I got to make up his backstory and family history more or less out of whole cloth. So I had fun: both with the story (which possibly involves a close encounter with the Witch King before he became the Witch King), and with the form (which isn’t traditional alliterative verse at all, but combines split-alliterative lines with a shortened version of the bob-and-wheel we find in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. (You can read Dennis Wise’s review of the poem and the form [here](#).)

Artwork. So that’s what the poems are about. I hope you enjoy them! And now for a few words about other features of this issue, most notably, the artwork. I have arranged to illustrate as many poems in this issue as I can using fan art. It hasn’t always been possible, but I think you will enjoy some of the combinations.

The cover art and one of the poem illustrations are reprinted in this issue with the permission of Yifan Jia ([yifanjiaart.com](#)). Specifically, the cover art is derived from Yifan Jia’s landscape painting, “Dancing Tides”, while Dawn Felagund’s poem, “**Crossing Forest River**” is presented in company with Yifan Jia’s fantasy landscape, “Shadow over Erebor”.

Dorothy Nielsen’s poem “**Tolkien’s Revelation**” is illustrated by Joel Lee’s fanart illustration depicting Bilbo and Gandalf. It is reproduced under a [Creative Commons 4.0 International](#) license.

Patricia Masson’s poem “**Hymn to Eärendil**” is illustrated by a photograph of the evening star taken by Rüdiger Stehn. It is reproduced under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic](#) license.

Rio Wulfmare’s poem, “**Star-Moment**” is illustrated by the author’s pen-and-ink drawing, “The Dream of an Elf”, and is

reproduced with his permission.

Zdenka’s poem “**The Making of Angrist**” is illustrated with a photograph by Jeff Kubina and is reproduced under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic](#) license. Her poem “**The Choices of Lady Éowyn**” is illustrated with artwork by KuraiGeijutsu and is reproduced with the artist’s permission. Her poem “**The Death of Bëor the Old**” is illustrated with artwork by Lefuet and is also reproduced with the artist’s permission.

Matthew Dickerson’s poem “**A Good King**” is illustrated with artwork by Peter Dickerson, *That Which They Defend*, and is reproduced with his permission.

Himring’s poem “**Eärendil the Seafarer**” is illustrated with artwork by fanwork artist Silmalope and is reproduced with the artist’s permission.

Nate Beeton’s poem “**Farewell to Bëor**” is illustrated with bluebeardcrypt’s “**Finrod and the Edain**”, with the artist’s permission, and with Thomas Fearnley’s 1839 painting, “**Old Birch Tree at the Sognefjord**”. His poem “**The Star Enlaced**” is illustrated by Thomas Moran’s 1892 painting, “**Mist in Kanab Mountain, Utah**”.

Lisa Cooper’s “**Rain in the Wood**” is illustrated by Adolf Stäbli’s 1896 painting, “**Maienregen**”.

Cliff Jones Jr.’s “**Marching Orders**” is illustrated by Kristina Pavlovic’s “**Orc Fan Art**” image, under a [CC by SA 3.0](#) license.

Math Jones’ poem, “**Tolkien Dreams**”, is illustrated with a photograph he took of a marker in the Oxford graveyard that holds J.R.R. and Edith Tolkien’s grave, pointing visitors to their grave.

Susan Edward’s poem “**Slaying the Dragon**” is illustrated with artwork by David Demaret’s *Esgaroth is Burning* and is reproduced with the artist’s permission. Her poem “**The Paths of the Dead**” is illustrated with a photograph of Putangirua Pinnacles, on the south coast of New Zealand’s North Island, where the Paths of the Dead sequence was filmed. This photograph was shot by Abigail Simpson von Ahsen and originally posted to illustrate [an article on her blog](#).

Chris Bolland’s poem “**The Wight**” is illustrated with artwork by Hannah Johnson and is reproduced with her permission.

Paul Deane’s poem “**The Song of Shadows**” is illustrated with a photograph by Zachariou Fotini and is reproduced under a [CC by SA 4.0 International](#) license.



Tolkien's Revelation

Dorothy Nielsen

He saw the signs: the sneaking, growing greed,
a creeping shadow; saw the shocking birth
of men whose power-frenzy fuels a need
to dominate all denizens of earth.

They ruthlessly would wreck Creation's jewel;
destroy all nations that might slow their pace;
and spawn their own half-human species; rule
that we pass on to *it* the pride of place.

And since he knew how sorely we'd desire
to live in sunlit times, he left us, too,
the vision of a being, burnt by fire
to purest white, who'd taught: *What can we do?*

*We can't decide which Days we dwell here; just
deem what we do with Time that's given us.*



Artwork by Joel Lee (CC by SA 4.0 International)



Hymn to Earendil³

Patricia Masson

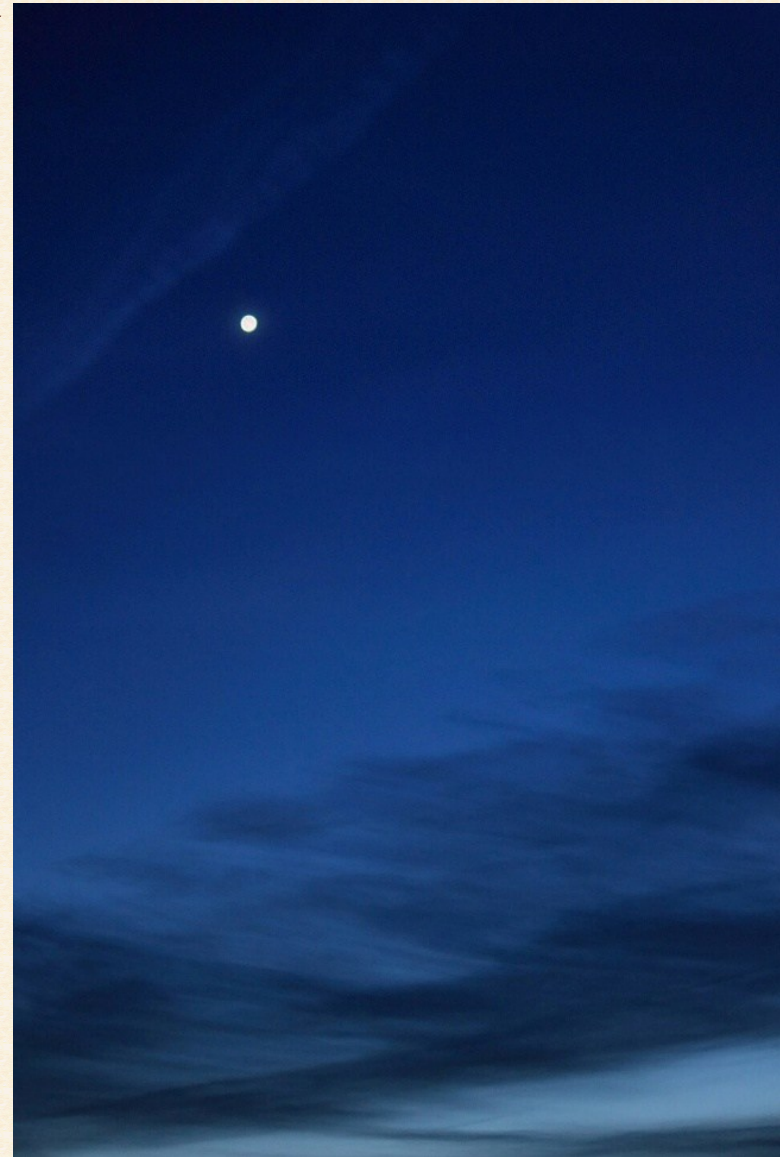
All hail Eärendil · for Elf-folk and Mortal-kind
sent once to intercede, seeking for grace,
help against hell-powers, from the holy Valar,
Lords of the West. Launched from Middle-Earth
into darkness and dread, driven by storm,
till you attained to Tirion, told them your errand
from the people oppressed. With their prayers you were freighted,
their tears and their need, in that time of evil.
Now, a messenger once more, to Men and Elven-kin,
you heralded a new hope. On high in the star-region
the vision of Vingilot, by Varda made glorious,
outshone all the stars, the ship of Gil-Estel.
And still even yet, through all the years innumerable,
your brow hallowed · with the bright rays
of the Jewel of Fëanor, as on journeys beyond the world
you come and go, then, carrying the tidings
that the Children in their need · are never forsaken
by the Powers of Good, appears in the twilight
the Silmaril, the signal, the symbol of rescue
to Men in Middle-Earth · whenever Morgoth's legacy
of strife and deceit grows · strong again in Arda;
that when evil seems over-strong · in our age of the world,
our hope may rekindle, beholding in your beacon,
still lovely and living, the light of the Two Trees.

All hail Eärendil · most excellent of stars.



³ This poem was first published in *Mallorn, Journal of the Tolkien Society*, 14, p. 32 and previously reprinted in Issue 2 of *Forgotten Ground Regained*. It is reprinted here to enable readers to enjoy it in context with other alliterative poems set in Arda.

4



Photograph by Rüdiger Stehn

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse



Crossing Forest River⁵

Dawn Felagund

River Running, you were most tame!
Welling waters merely mild.
Alas, Forest River's not the same!
Frothing foam and headtall piled,
Cackling beneath an icy hame
And gnashing like a churltrum child!
"Skinchanger! It is time that you became
A salmon wet and wiggly wild—
Slip 'neath these fearsome waters riled."
"Oh ho! You dread the company
Of Woodland King Thranduil?
Burglar! Forth! Topple a tree!
A tree to build a boastsome boat
Of tender lithesome fresh-felled wood,
And across this river shall we float—
Unless you fear the king's maltemptuous mood?"
"Nay, no, but still I volunteer my vote
That the wizard do as he should
And wisp! Whiz! Wing us all afloat!
Till dry on the other side we stood."
The nearby beasts dared not intrude
On an argument none would win,
Till night glowered down in darkled mood.
Alas, we did decide to swim.
Swim! Splash! Scull! Smash! Kick away!
Eyes on the disappearing shore!



⁵ This poem imagines Bilbo, Gandalf, and Beorn traveling together as described near

While grumpsome whales rose to waylay
And dirks of ice gamboled to gore
Three bold, brave bumblerers on their way!
Ears louding with leviathan roar,
Then in its toothly jaws a play
Like cat with mouse upon the floor!
Then! Suddenfast! Dry land restored!
Spat out to snivel and shiver
Staggerfall out of epic lore—
Three sogged saps beside a river.



"Shadow
over Erebor"
by Yifan Jia

the end of *The Hobbit*. It is in the meter of the Middle English poem *Pearl*, by the same author as *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.



Star-Moment
Rio Wulfmare

Great Elentári · is gazing there.
Swart quietude · quelled by sunsets
now sweeps Eastward. The sway in leaf;
Sirion's currents; the songs of larks
and linked phrases—low through Doriath—
and laughter, all, look to dreamward:
noon's umbellifers, the night-shy lands,
now lay resting.

In star-shimmer, steeped in gloaming—
mauve endlessly—there move lithely
mallow-coloured moths · through Menegroth's shade,
through hemlock heaths. Hands raised upwards—
rising silently · and wreathed lightly
in cosmic gleam—cup a moonbeam:
gentle nightstuff · in gentle hands.
—now dance lightly.



The Dream of an Elf
Artwork by Rio Wulfmare

The Making of Angrist⁶

Zdenka

Telchar

Blow, my bellows, blustering wind!
Flame of my forge, burn fierce and bright.
Lend me, Mahal, might and wisdom,
strengthen my arm · to strike with force.

A matchless blade · must I fashion—
friendship seeks it, friendship grants it—
hewing in twain · hell-wrought iron,
a knife so sharp · no sheath holds it.

Curufin

Well-made the work · and worth its price,
its cutting edge · keen as sorrow,
eager to bite · the black iron
and Morgoth's crown · cleave asunder.

Hard be my heart · as hammered steel,
sharp my spirit · as sheathless blade,
until my hand · holds in its grasp
threefold fire, our father's light.



⁶ The meter of these lines is *fornyrðislag*, an alliterative verse form used in the *Poetic Edda*, characterized by four-line (eight half-line) stanzas in alliterative verse.

The Choices of Lady Éowyn Zdenka

Long have I waited, lingering silent,
my stride shortened · to steps that faltered,
in bitter silence · biting back words,
sought by a craven · with crooked mind.

In grief I saw · greatness wither,
the House of Eorl · dishonored, failing.
Death and danger · to dear ones came;
deedless I sat, sunk in mourning.

Shall I always, till old age claim me,
be left behind, the hearth keeping?
Left behind and · love denied me,
the love I sought · and life with glory?

Where will wants not, a way opens;⁷
in Rider's garb · I go to battle.
With helm and hauberk, swift horse and sword,
I stand arrayed—stay me who dares.

Gladly I greet · the grim swordplay;
pain and danger · daunt not my heart.
Here is my choice: a hero's deed,
a hero's death · if doom calls me.

Faithful-faithless, I follow unsought;
Éomund's daughter⁸ · with Éomund's son,
Théodwyn's daughter · with Théodwyn's brother
rides to Mundburg—red flare the beacons.

The night deepens, darkness falls round us,
men like phantoms · fade in shadow.
Let hooves thunder · and horns resound,
though silence take · all songs hereafter.



Artwork by KuraiGeijutsu

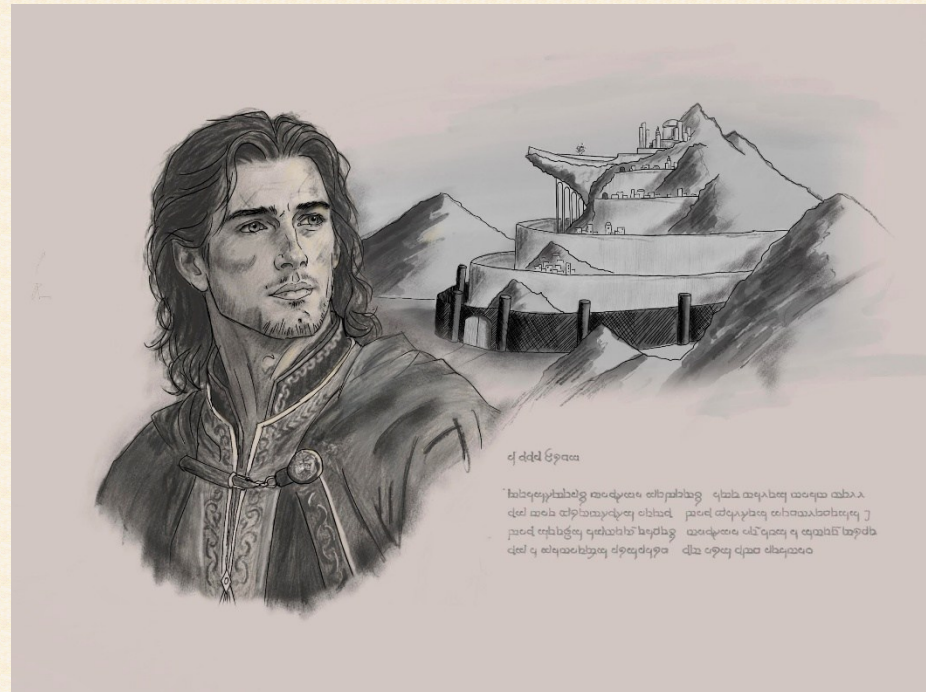
⁷ “Where will wants not, a way opens” - a proverb quoted by Éowyn in *The Return of the King*. This poem is also in *fornyrðislag* (alliterative verse in 4-line stanzas).

⁸ Éomund's daughter, Théodwyn's daughter - Éowyn; Éomund's son - Éomer; Théodwyn's brother - Théoden; Mundburg - the Rohirric name for Minas Tirith.

A Good King

Matthew Dickerson

Stories often speak of stalwart heroes:
men of the sword, merciless slayers,
fearless in battle, both fierce and bold.
Far and wide they won their reward,
and their fame spread like fire in a forest.
War and revenge these warriors sowed,
till blood flowed red like the River Running.
Bards may cry out: *þæt wæs god cyning*,
as hated villains seem to be vanquished,
but a wergild's weight will never wane.
Like incoming tide, it increases to war,
and peacetime fades, proves to be fleeting.
Treasured, though fewer, are tales that tell
of the virtuous hero who values gentleness —
who seeks after peace, though he pays a steep price
of a father's disdain or his own death.
Such was Faramir who should receive fame.
Of this steward's son the best tales sang.
No throne he claimed, nor crown for his head,
yet still “a good king” he would have been called.



Peter Dickerson: *That Which They Defend*

Ēarendil the Seafarer⁹ Himring

The winter had been hard, with bitter northern winds and lean weeks, starvation barely avoided. Yet for Elwing, it was a bright time, even in the dark days of long snowstorms in which the sun was almost forgotten, for Ēarendil was home and his company kept her warm, more than the dwindling fire on the hearth.

But when the winter had passed and they had at last replenished their stores with a goodly haul of fish in calmer waters, she found him by the sea's brim, looking over Vingilot for winter damage, and already there gleamed a familiar restlessness in his eyes.

Then Elwing seized his elbow and said:

*Flowers in fields · fresh now with spring,
blossom on bough · brighter in town,
now the cuckoo calls · clear in the woods,
at last on land · life quickens,
gladness renewed · in Nimbrethil!
Delay your departure, dearest love!*

Ēarendil turned to her regretfully and answered:

*Loud the cuckoo · calls from the bough,
a warning to us · that winter is over
and loss of life · on land threatens.
Time for travel, though toilsome it seems.*

'Elwing, each year, our Enemy encroaches more on whatever land is still left to Elves and Men. Soon his minions will be on the move again. I must go seeking aid, before He reaches the Havens at last, now the sea paths are clearing, and I can hope not to sail straight into ice and gale.'

'You do not deceive me,' said Elwing, 'I can see that the sea longing has you and you welcome all that toil. How eager you are to



start out again on your journeys! But I am the one who must stay and the wait on land will be a long one again.'

Ēarendil admitted:

*I crave to depart · on the paths of Ulmo,
eager in my heart · to hear the wave-toss,
where the gannet cries, the gull and the curlew,
much I as I miss you · when miles out to sea.*

'Well, then', said Elwing, 'take care you return to me or I swear I will follow, even if I have to walk over the waves to fetch you, no matter who stands in my way.' 'I always will,' promised Ēarendil.

And they embraced, the two of them, by the seashore.



*Artwork by
Silmalope*

⁹ The verse passages in this ficlet are inspired by the Old English alliterative poem "The Seafarer".



The Death of Bëor the Old¹⁰
Zdenka



Artwork by Lefuet

¹⁰ An alliterative poem written to accompany Paul Deane's presentation "Love, Grief, and Alliterative Verse in Tolkien's Legendarium" at *Mereth Aderthad* 2025. The verse form is called *fornyrðislag* and is one of the meters used in the Poetic Edda.

Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

Faithful Bëor, his beard grown white,
Came to Finrod, king among Elves;
'Lord, your liegeman · must leave you soon,
Your kingly halls · hold me no more.'

Frowning, Finrod · his friend answered,
'Where would you go, my good Bëor?
What do you lack? Let me mend it.
I cannot yet · yield your friendship.'

Gravely, Bëor · gave his reply:
'Not of my will · would I leave you.
The time passes · and tarries not;
My days dwindle · and death draws near.'

Finrod, stricken · by fierce sorrow,
Gripped Bëor's hand · and held it fast.
'Why speak of death? What wound harms you,
What secret pain · from sword or spear?

'Much knowledge lies · in Nargothrond,
Songs of healing · and swift comfort.
Does some illness · eat up your strength?
Your king will find · a cure for it.'

But Bëor said, 'No blade harmed me,
Nor does illness · eat up my strength.
Only old age, all-devouring,
Will bring me down · to death's power.'

Frantic, Finrod · refused to hear.
'How can this be? The beasts die thus;
Those who have speech · spend years freely.
No danger comes · from days passing.'

'So it may be,' Bëor answered,
'For Elven-folk, fair and shining.

For your kindred, years pass lightly
In endless youth, ageless beauty.'

'Not so for Men · of mortal kind;
Age brings ending · without return.
So it has been · since Sun's rising,
For time passes · and tarries not.'

'How can this be? Bëor my friend,
Since first meeting · our minds were one.
Is there no way · to ward off death?'
So said the king, sorrow-laden.

Bowing his head, Bëor answered,
'My lord Finrod, the Friend of Men,
Nóm, the master · of much wisdom,
No lord, no king · can keep back death.

'Then do not grieve · the Gift of Men.
Bid me farewell, while words remain.'
Finrod could not · refrain from tears;
Bursts of weeping · blinded his eyes.

'Is this a gift? · Grievous it seems
To lose dear friends · in little time.
Say not farewell! Wait a little,
Till I can bear · this bitter loss.'

With voice more faint, his friend answered:
'My fate calls me, I cannot stay.
No time remains · in Middle-earth.
Farewell, my lord, at life's ending.'

Finrod called him · in keen distress:
'Bëor! Bëor! I beg you, wait!
Vain were his words, and vain his tears;
'Twixt breath and breath, Bëor was gone.

Farewell to Bëor

Nate Beeton

Among the banished · Bëor won fame;
oath he offered · to Eärwen's son,
loyalty unlooked for. After lifetime spent
in sword-service, swift came his ending—
when the grieving king, forgetful of words,
hid that friend's face · under fallow earth.

Green it grew in the springtime.

To Aeluin's shores · came Andreth in youth.
She recalled it clearly: crags and hillside
evening-gilded, and on alder-perch
summer's guardian · singing through gloom.
Then emerged above her, mirrored in water,
stars to witness · to a stranger's pledge.

In that empty land it echoed.

Alone sang Beren, bidding farewell
to joy's memory, at journey's end
death expecting, to dance never again
with the nightingale · of Neldoreth.

Fate ever laughs at foresight.



Foes in their thousands · fazed Thingol less
than Luthien's lot, when love drove her
to die a mortal. At their daughter's parting,
not even Melian · could imagine them ever
meeting her again · in this middle-earth.

Solace they sought together.

The lone spirit · lingers onward,
often dwelling · on days gone by,
on the old companions · age has scattered
throughout this earth. Yet the elder-born
may hold to this hope, that their high father
shall not condemn · his dear children
to part for ever: his pledge to all
is a meet ending · in this middle-earth.

But parting is no less painful.

There is one more tale · I wish to utter.
Lost for many leagues, a lone traveller
in a cheerless land, I chanced upon a stranger.
Fate's work indeed, for we fell to talking
as though acquainted, as cousins reminded
of some treasured memory. Time escaped us;
in the midst of winter · this mortal passed away.
Out of woe and worry · and waking life
wanders that spirit, westward seeking.

The Star Enlaced

Gilraen in Imladris

Nate Beeton

Of chants, somewhere, chimes far away,
the wind whispers · to my waiting ears.
Silence soon swallows · the soft-spoken words,
but my heart hears them: homesick thoughts.

Ridges rise about, wreathed in forest:
under barren mountains · grow beeches and oaks.
I cannot remember · the month proper,
but they flame like amber, like autumn ablaze.

By a stream I stop, still in its flowing,
upon daggers of stone · dashed to pieces
ere it gathers again · into grey water,
fragile, flawless, free in its running.

Pebbles are pounded, polished by that current,
like glasswork glinting · under golden light.
Water wears away · all wounds in time,
but whose heart can wait · a hundred years?

Birds break off songs – a beat of quiet.
Their sudden silence · unsettles me much.
As I behold overhead · a hawk's plumage,
it wheels, screaming, into the western sky.

Night's arrival · is announced by hymns.
At my high window, hope beside me,
I speak the names · of the seven stars,
of many memories · by the mariner's light.



Painting by
Thomas
Moran (1837-
1926)



Maienregen by Adolf
Stäbli (1842–1901)

Rain in the Wood

Lisa Cooper

Gray-garbed sky gasps, glimmering;
with waxed moon a westerly wind
billows. Bucks leap as bullets
shot southward through strewn
branches, wet wood (wrung out),
and through moist moss—menacing.
Forest-dwellers, dreaming, doze
silently among silver streams,
softly singing through shrapnel
leaves and a labyrinth of lacy vines.
The halcyon haze lifts high,
revealing rapturous rain-logged company:
a cicada choir ringing, clamorous,
greeted gilded morn: golden, glorious.

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

The Archeology of Doggerland and Old Beleriand Alike Savannah Horrell

The dredgers drag along the floor,
siphon silt to spew upon the lee
to reinforce the eastern shore
from ice eroding far to the north.

Before the sand is stamped down
meritorious men arrive.
They sift among sediment
to find immortal handmedowns.

A hairpin hoard in Helevorn
six iron, three silver, one gold
two distinct techniques displayed
(A young technician tries one on).

From further out, once-Himring, a humerus is found.
These deep hypoxic trenches hide many helpful things.
It's hustled off for half-life dating
and misplaced along the way

The amber floats from Angband
carved by a balrog's little claw
of alien geometries,
a useless, baffling thing.
Marked: "Artifact, unknown".

What strongholds once stood here or there,
toppled with the shuddering earth!
But they find fragments of worked stone
and whisper over sips of tea.

The dredgers are sent searching,
south and out, at sonar's whims
They've seen success upon the shoreline
Now they plumb the sea.

The bone harpoons from Balar
prove easiest to explain.
Though they must have been symbolic;
the size is rather strange.



A diver goes down to document
an anomaly in the deep;
they drag up half a dugout
which disintegrates in air.

In Sirion stand structures
(or what of them remains),
the posts striated by scorchmarks
below the stratum of the years.

Amid the wreckage: potsherds,
more metal, cracked mussels,
fishhooks, lithic flakes,
a single sword unrusted,
a necklace that had a name.

The archeology is an afterthought
to the battering of the beach,
and when the shore is reinforced
the project too must cease.

The middle men of merit
(and the women too)
shake hands, shelve tools,
file findings, and retreat.

They take the iron, amber,
the rotting birch and bone.
They leave the sand of ages past
to sit there on the strand.

Grains that once were granite
join Lindon's loess dunes.
They reminisce of old shared friends
and cataclysms crossed.

What fires they have forged through!
What drownings they have dreamed!
They mingle beneath breaking waves
and Middle-Earth still sleeps.



Artwork by Kristina Pavlovic (CC by SA 3.0)

Marching Orders

Cliff Jones Jr.

My captain says “March!” My company does.
Our maker commands · that our minds be subdued.
But who is my maker? And how was I formed?
Morgoth, they say, transmuted the Elves.
He skillfully twisted · and scarred us to strength.
My forefathers then · were fearful and weak.
But Elves were made also. The Other awoke them.
If One made us all, then why are some wrong?
That sickly scent! That sour stench!
How I hate · those haughty twits!

But do I hate them? I doubt my own heart.
Strange how I seem · to struggle inside.
Was Morgoth the one · who made me this way?
I'll twist myself further · to tweak and refine.
Till all that remains · is actually mine.

My maker's just me. I'll march for myself.

¹¹ This poem was written for a Middle Earth-centered roleplaying campaign. It purports to be a fragment of an old, garbled folk tale about the Second Age origin of the future Witch-King of Angmar, in which a competent but rebellious

From “The Tale of the Sad King”¹¹

(Eriadorian, late Second Age, author unknown)

Quincy R. Lehr

The Sad King sailed · from the sunset lands,
the Western winds · whipping the masts
as the far shore fell · into the foaming distance.
An old empire · in an echoing forest,
tall men talked · of terrible wars
and the crews cut down · the core of the lands,
with empty ranges · of eroded acres
taxed for tribute. The Sad King trembled
in his high household · on a hill past the river,
a subject himself, a simple collector
of plunder. Perplexed, he pondered his crown,
his vexed vassals, revolting against him,
as age's aches · began to argue
with certain persuasion. He ceased denying
the cries of the commons · and carried his sword
to battle and bloodshed, abandoning oaths
to distant dynasts. He drove the empire
to harried havens, till hurried armies
marched among · the mustered defenders
and the Sad King sagged · and forsook his body,
and his men melted · into marsh and woodland,
his promise a report · of preparation,
a tale of return, a troubling whisper
to men who minded · the many strongholds,
the vain victors · who prevailed for a time
till the King reclaims · his kingdom of sadness.

Numenorean administrator is remembered as a putative defender of the indigenous people of Eriador.



Tolkien Dreams

Math Jones

Stories told, Tolkien dreams;
Hollyhocks in splendour, high-stemmed clarion.
Lúthien and Beren, lying under roses.



A Selcouth Tree¹²

Colin Mackenzie

Heich abune the · unhamelt grun
'mang the mony · mithril brenches
leemin, gowden · grew the flooers
bricht an bonny · bleezin like the
carry's caunle · in cloodless hairst,
an unco sicht · in April's lift
at brocht fremmit · fowk as pilgrims
ower muir an hill · tae marle lang at
the ferlie gleed · wi glentin een.

¹² This poem is in modern Scots. The glossary to the right explains words that may not be self-explanatory to speakers of standard English. It describes the tree that



Glossary

selcouth - strange, rare, unusual
heich - high
abune - above
grun - ground
unhamelt - foreign
'mang - among
mony - many
brenches - branches
leemin - gleaming, shining
gowden - golden
flooers - flowers
bricht - bright
bonny - beautiful
bleezin - blazing
carry - sky
caunle - candle
cloodless - cloudless

hairst - harvest
unco - extraordinary, unusual, remarkable
sicht - sight
lift - sky
brocht - brought
femmit - foreign, unfamiliar
fowk - folk, people
ower - over
muir - moor
tae marle - to marvel
lang - long
ferlie - wonderful, remarkable
gleed - a glowing fire
glentin - gleaming, glinting, shining
wi - with
een - eyes

grew from Galadriel's gift to Samwise, the only Mallorn west of the Misty Mountains.

Slaying the Dragon¹³
Susan Edwards (Tuilinde)



Esgaroth is Burning by David Demaret

¹³ This poem was first published in Mallorn, the journal of the Tolkien Society, issue 49, p. 42

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

What first I feared had finally come to pass!
Their graceless grandeur, their greed and foolishness,
ignorance, thoughtlessness, arrogance and pride
had drawn down the dragon's ire, and doom was come upon us.

~~~~~

Our place, our prosperity and precarious peace  
we had held here hidden in our hands;  
with quiet commerce cautiously constructing  
a life and living on the lake through long years.  
Not troubling the terror, nor travelling to the north;  
but finding firm friends in the Elf kingdoms,  
winning trade in wine both west and south.  
Then the Dwarves came with confusion and controversy.  
Ragged refugees, claiming royal rights.  
Hopes were heard, and were hurriedly believed —  
rich and poor saw a bold brightness brandished.  
False was the future they unfolded before us!  
The briefest thought had told me, that burning bane  
could not be conned and cornered, or craftily killed,  
by so few, so simply, and so soon!  
“Doom and disaster, danger and devastation!”  
Perforce I spoke these words of woe,  
pleading for patience, and proper thought.  
But all-unmoved, a mockery they made of me,  
in excitement bound to their unreal dreams.  
New songs they sang, sated their thirst, and spoke  
of fame and fortune, gold and glory!  
Thorin – a new and caring kind of Dwarven king!!

~~~~~

The year's end approached, and our ending also!
Lo, in the North, a light was lit in the darkness!
Bereaved of his gold by the bold burglar —
Arisen from rest, his revenge seeking,
roaring in rage, he rowed the dark skies,
as a flaming dart of final doom.
Red the ripples on river and lake,
as Smaug, in swift spite swooped down
and with furious fire fought against us.
Urgent, the trumpet sang out the alarm!
At once our axes bit and cut

until crashing, the causeway crumpled and fell.
But broad wings beating bore him on
daring the danger of dark, quenching depths.
Fear of our fiery foe found many unmanned,
scattering and scrambling to escape all scathe.
Sturdily my mighty men still stood unmoved,
terror not tearing their trusty hearts.
Archers all, 'gainst Smaug their anger stirred
till hard hands high their shafts directed
straight and strong, none straying from the target.
Vainly we loosed until the last, yet naught availed.
Hard as adamant his hauberk of jewels,
and our shafts shriveled in his white-hot breathing.
Through all the town the thatch he tore and burned,
as with brimful buckets brave souls struggled
to quickly quench the flaming roofs.
His thrashing tail smashed homes and Hall;
his brute breath burned the broken ruins.
The while we fought, wives and widows wept;
and bundled into boats with babes in arms,
hoping against hope this horror would be halted.
Almost my soul and strength did quail
as still unhurt he hunted them across the waves.
Wrathful beyond reason he raged over us again,
careless and reckless, in heedless confidence.
Then to my shoulder the thrush flew, fluttering.
“Wait!” he whispered, “Watch for his weakness!”
“A hole there is in his ancient armour —
beside the breast, behold — beneath the leg!”
Bending my bow I begged, “Black arrow,
trusty heirloom, fly true to the final target!
Straight from the string smite this evil Smaug!”
So deafening was the dreadful, dying cry,
the awful anguish echoing across the lake,
his scream splintered stone, split trees tumbled.
Full on the flames of his fiery pyre
he crashed ... and was quickly quenched.
The dark depths swallowed him in steam ...
and sudden silence.

The Paths of the Dead¹⁴
Susan Edwards (Tuilinde)



Photograph by Abigail Simpson von Ahsen

¹⁴ This poem was first published in *Mallorn*, the journal of the Tolkien Society, issue 51, p. 34

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

Tall stand the stones stark is their warning —
Deep darkness, dread, and doom they promise.
Only one has entered this silent realm
of the oathbreaking King and his cursèd kin,
where terror brought trembling to the foolhardy trespasser.
Still buried in blackness no barrow hides his bones,
for down the long years none else dared the darkness!
But at last, a great leader. the heir who was longed for
entered the darkness the anger daring.
Desperate the danger which drove on the Dúnadan,
Ships from the South sailing swiftly to war.
Wise were the words which were brought to him then,
“If thou art in haste take the Paths of the Dead.”
Fear filled the faces of friends and of allies;
The parting was painful from bold battle friends.
Wondering the words which Théoden spoke then:
“These are the paths where all others may perish,
alone you may dare them if it be your doom.”
“True Heir of Isildur, the son of Elendil,
This road I will take as my right and my task.
Through dark ways, doubtless, now I will dare them.
Thou, King of Rohan, ride to endless renown,
fare forward, fearless, fulfilling our friendship!”
Now great-hearted Gimli in the grim, grey morning
first felt what fear was when the fell name he heard:
“Will the living pass, will we not all perish?”
“Nay, the road was foreseen in the words of the Seer;
Our need points the way — the oathbreakers will know me.
Oaths of allegiance taken at Erech’s Stone
They failed, then broke, fleeing to the barren hills.
Though war has been waged for long years uncounted,
once again ’ere the end they will be summoned.”
The silver-starred Dúnedain depart from the Deep.
Onward they swiftly passed with Elf and with Dwarf,
with Elrond’s tall sons Elladan and Elrohir.
They came to Dunharrow, the camp before Dimholt,
their errand most urgent in the early evening.

Éowyn of Rohan with eager greeting
bade them be rested brought them refreshment,
but horror filled, heard the way of their haste.
She stared, stricken silent, in fear of the Sleepless Dead.
“The Dead do not suffer the living to pass.
Remain here and rest now, then ride with the Rohirrim!”
“Long years led me here, and lead me to go now,
I must adventure this road appointed!”
Light was the sky but the sun not yet risen
when folk hid in fear till these doomed ones were gone.
Desperate, the White Lady came to the leave-taking,
grieving the loss of those saddled and ready,
Yet longing to join them whatever their fate.
“Great deeds I desire, danger and high renown
With those who go with thee, those others, who love thee!”
“Daring is not enough, our duty we cannot choose.
Your deeds must be done defending these humble homes,
Mine ’neath the Dwimorberg, on the Paths of the Dead.”
Between standing stones stark before the mountain,
He led his liegemen, his kin and his friends,
To the stone at the door the tall finger of doom,
Right at the root in a wall of the rock.

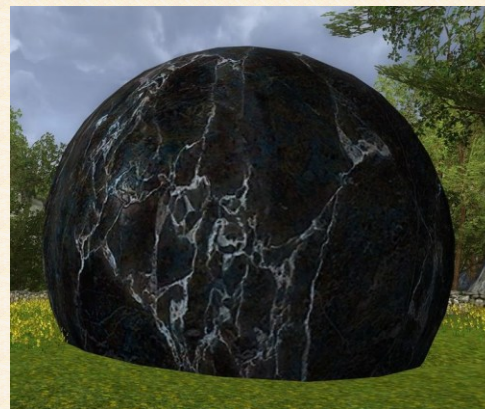


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The Song of Shadows¹⁵

Paul D. Deane



Photograph by Zachariou Fotini

¹⁵ This poem was first published on the [Imladris Poetry Page](#), a website formerly associated with the Tolkien-themed, text-based RPG, [Elendor MUSH](#). It is part of a larger cycle about imagined events in the East of Middle Earth, near the waters of Cuivienen, where the Avarin elves remained. Other poems in this cycle include [The Song of Marwen and Fithurin](#), [The Song of Woe](#), [The Song of Returning](#), and [The Redemption of Daeron](#). This poem carefully avoids answering a question Tolkien fans are likely to ask: whether the “Master of Men” described in the poem is the Witch King, and the armor he commissioned from Cordil that in which he rode to the battle of Pelennor Fields. I invented the stanza form (split alliterative lines followed by a short bob and wheel) as a poetic form characteristic of the elves of the Uttermost East of Middle Earth.

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

Dim in dusk, dark fields and forests lay
Open, exposed to lengthening light.
Golden beams glinted on heads and helms
Silently slipping from forest fastness
Into open twilight
-- reaching the road --
-- on the verge of night. –

They were awaited: one in sable silk
Bowed gravely in greeting, held out his hand,
Wishing welcome to His Lordship's lands.
The riders reined in, their heavy helms
Revealing elvish eyes:
-- Avari, unyielding --
-- Wary, yet wise. –

Hunched on the heights, a castle crowned the crag:
In fading light it loomed stark and strong.
The cobblestones clattered; flaming torches flared
Shielding corners in shadows that dipped and danced.
They entered the hall:
-- bright gold, crystal --
-- a trophy-lined wall. –

The master of his men sat in state
Tall as a tower, gaunt, with gleaming hair.
Briefly they bowed, then stood silent, still
Like statues of stone in a tyrant's tomb.
The tall lord smiled
-- as a hunter might --
-- to something free and wild. –

'Welcome,' he said, 'And where is the smith,'
'Whose unbreakable armor is famed near and far?'
One stirred and stepped forward; softly spoke:
'The smith stands before you, for Cordil has come,'
'And would learn from your lips what price you would pay.'
And his face was cold
-- his voice polite --

-- and utterly controlled. --

'Have you skill sufficient,' said that master of men,
'Armor to make unbreakable by man?'
'No price may be paid for the perfect piece,'
'But gifts I may give, exchange priceless for perfect.'
Thus the grim lord
-- offered for armor --
-- a choice from his hoard. --

'If the metal is mithril,' the Avar answered,
'My skill could shape it strong and sure.'
'But armor unbreakable? Only Powers could prove it,
'Or battering of battle, though the smith should strive'
'Armor to make unbreakable by man.'
'But what, great lord,'
-- might you have to offer --
-- from the depths of your hoard? --

~~~~~  
Deep they descended to a hidden hall  
Locked with locks, secured with seals.  
The narrow gate gaped, they walked within  
Dazzled by dance of flickering flames  
On diamond and mithril  
-- serried arms and armor --  
-- jewels and precious metal. –

Their bright brands glanced on a gleaming coronet  
Which flashed in the flame like a subterranean star:  
And its rose-red ruby like a captive king  
Lay enfolded in flowers of molded mithril.  
The Avar held his breath  
-- at treasure long-lost --  
-- in ancient years of death. --

He looked at the lord matching eye to eye  
And slowly smiled as if to challenge with charm.

## Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

'If the mail I make can break the blows  
Of your strongest soldier, O Master of Men,  
Would you call this coronet an equal exchange?'  
And so they agreed  
-- one lustful for power, --  
-- the other, from need. --

~~~~~  
The high-roofed hall given to guests
Echoed with anger and whiplash of words.
Her face aflame - her eyes ablaze -
Fëhaglin the Fair his wedded wife
Spoke for them all
-- as they huddled close-clustered --
-- in that alien hall. --

'Make that murderer's armor? His promise to pay
'Is as constant as cobwebs and as safe as a storm!'
'And what can he offer but ill-gotten gains,'
'The pillage and plunder of countless coasts?'
Then from her lips a wild cry burst
-- 'Such utter folly --
-- 'This has been from the first!' -

'That man has Mirloth!' - So Cordil cried -
'That my father forged and my mother wore!'
'That price will I pay, and risk what I must
'To ransom their relic from this house of dust!'
Fëhaglin sighed: 'And also strive,
-- 'Gaining the treasure, --
-- 'to reach home alive.' --

Enshrouded in shadows that dipped and danced
They softly spoke in their Silvan speech
Of cares, contingencies, methods, means,
Secrets, circumstances, purposes, plans:
Lest fear at night
-- should catch them aground --

-- lacking wings for flight. --

~~~~~  
The trumpet's tantara announced an arrival  
Whom the grim lord greeted to his kingly court.  
And courtiers crowded to meet the man  
Sent to speak for the Fiery Land.  
Among the rest  
-- the Quendi came --  
-- to greet their host's guest. --

He saw them and smiled, benignly bowed,  
Wishing them well with velvet voice.  
Annatar, he noted, his lord and liege,  
Was friend to their folk since the Elder Age.  
His thin lips smiled  
-- as a cat's might that stalked --  
-- A bird in the wild. -

Their talk soon turned by delicate degrees  
To the mail to be made for the land's own lord.  
That grim lord laughed and with braggart's boast  
Said that they should be finest friends  
Since both in their worth  
-- worked to make him --  
-- the strongest on earth.--

Their words wound on to meaningless matters  
And soon they stopped when others arrived.  
His evil eyes, though, caught Cordil's face  
And scanned and studied each feature and fault  
As if there he read  
-- with gruesome pleasure --  
-- ancient tales of dread. --

~~~~~  
The seasons spun with ponderous pace
From Summer to Spring, and the fiery forge

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

Roared red-hot in a hollow hall
Where metal's might was shaped by skill,
Where anvil sang
-- where bellows hissed --
-- and heavy hammers rang. --

And Fëhaglin, furtive, with soft-paced steps
Lurked where the lord was wont to walk,
In sunlight strolling, head to head,
Closely consulting Annatar's ambassador.
And her Elven ears
-- heard what they said --
-- as she listened near. --

'If our friendship is firm, we stand established,
'strong and sure. My lord would ally
'his crown to your cause, securing your strength
'Should rivals arise. As sign and seal
'Will he give you a ring
-- 'potent with power.' --
-- 'And one more thing --' --

The ambassador added, with whispering words:
'My lord by your leave, a matter to mark:
'Lord Sauron has stated, and so it is certain:
'That elf once escaped my Potentate's prisons;
'His features remind him
-- 'Of unfinished business --
-- 'He would put behind him.' --

The grim lord grinned, his sharp teeth shining.
'I need him now, nor would it be wise
'To give a guest into hostile hands.'
'Yet robbers are rife; when he leaves my lands
'Would any think it strange
-- 'Were he caught by ambush --
-- 'Covertly arranged?' --

~~~~~  
Argent the armor shone in the sun;  
The grim lord grinned at its dazzling display.  
A strong man stood with mighty mace;  
Let fly such force the mace head burst.  
The blows fell thick;  
-- it still shone silver --  
-- without scratch or nick. --

'Such magnificent mail,' said that master of men,  
'Is well worth winning; the price I pay  
'A pittance so paltry it beggars the brain.'  
'Come! The crown is yours; then let us make mirth  
'With as splendid a feast  
-- as ever was served --  
-- in West or in East. --

High that hall, and wide-spread its walls  
Yet filled overflowing: all manner of men  
Were gathered together with bounty before them,  
Washing the wine down from flowing flagons.  
Above all the rest  
-- the Quendi sat --  
-- their grim host's guest. --

Cordil cracked jokes, laughing loud,  
But his stare often strayed to the distant doors.  
Fëhaglin fidgeted, her hasty hands  
Flickering, fluttering with hummingbird's hovering.  
Nearby, gleaming bright  
-- Mirloth lay, glistening --  
-- with roseate light --

At length it was late; the brands burning low  
Spat and sputtered with flickering flames.  
Some now slept, but many more  
Muttered, murmured, drunk and dazed.  
Then, her voice strong

## Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

-- Fëhaglin offered --  
-- to sing them a song. --

Silence struck, and in that instant  
Cordil called from his flute a soothing song  
That softly sounded through the eerie air  
Like a spirit singing of light and life  
Undying  
-- over mortal lands --  
-- which it blew past crying. --

Fëhaglin followed with a song like the sea  
Soothing yet surging as wild as the waves,  
Echoing endlessly, rhythmically rocking,  
Roaring, resounding, repeating, returning,  
Foaming floods whose constant dashings,  
-- wash all away --  
-- with lullaby crashings. --

Heavy heads hung, dull eyes drooped,  
Then one by one each dim face fell.  
And last like a leaf the tall lord's gaze  
Dropped faint and frail to face the floor.  
Some snoring mutters  
-- then all was still --  
-- as the last torch sputtered. --

They stood with stealth, gently lifted the jewel,  
And softly slipped from the hushing hall.  
In silent slumber a kingdom slept  
Unwarned of absence. They fled for freedom  
Leading in quiet line  
-- those of their folk --  
-- who had helped with the wine. --

~~~~~  
A stair fell steep from the castle crag,
Its base abutting a quiet cove

Whose quay held craft both strong and swift.
Straight down the stair the Quendi came
Then checked in fear.
-- Annatar's ambassador softly smiled, --
-- 'What brings such nightbirds here?' --

The castle-crowned crag lay quiet, cold
With neither light nor lamp. But a mass of men
Twoscore in sum were placed to bar their path.
'The lord would not like to hear of your haste,'
'To borrow wings and fly.'
-- 'Why, what a reaction!' --
-- 'You'd simply die!' --

The ambassador eyed them with sinister smile.
'But need he know?' he suavely suggested.
'We can mend the matter to our own advantage.'
'Consider, Cordil! My Potentate will pay you
'What you truly deserve.'
-- 'Not trifles like he --
-- 'Whom you would no more serve.' --

But savage and sudden Cordil cried out
A wild cry of war last heard long ago
When Fithurin's fighters, defiant, despairing,
Sallied in strength from besieged Amon-Gil
And charged to their doom:
-- seeking others' escape --
-- and they, the tomb. --

The elves above from the steps of the stairs
Drew aim in the dark with Elvish eyes
And let fly a flock of feathered fangs.
And Cordil came forth, defiant, determined
And slashed his sword
-- with leaping lunge --
-- at that Mordain lord. --

Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

But he stepped aside, and with mighty mace
Swiftly swung to cripple or kill.
Eluding, evading, they danced a dance
As light as lovers, as deadly as death.
But with lightning speed
-- the sword did the kissing, --
-- And Cordil the deed. --

That servant of Sauron slid from his sword
Lifeless and limp to the sand by the shore.
Then Fëhaglin found him, her spear stained with blood:
The elves were alone but for Death and the dead.
So they swiftly embarked
-- the ambassador's boat --
-- and were lost in the dark. --

~~~~~  
In a far-off forest, in a hidden hall  
Fëhaglin faced him with unwilling eyes.  
In his hands Cordil held the coronet,  
His head tilting forward, his gaze to the ground,  
His grey eyes glimmering  
-- with sudden sheen, --  
-- with silver shimmering. --

'I will not wear it. It is bought with blood.'  
Her words then wavered; by will they went on:  
'Five of our folk died to deliver it;'  
'And how many men shall pay your price,'  
'And fall at his hand  
-- Because you have made --  
-- Armor unbreakable by man?' --

'There is more to be mended,' he softly sighed.  
'For dark years are dawning when Sauron will seek  
'A world bowed to his will, and our forest fastness  
'Lies exposed in the East, no haven from hunters.'  
'Unless we would do as he bid,

-- We must enter a haven --  
-- Forever hid. --

'I have had dark dreams,' she suddenly said,  
'But in shadows there shone a vision unveiled,'  
'A city encircled by mighty mountains  
'Whose white walls stood secret but strong  
'In a high but lonely place.'  
-- Could we build such a city --  
-- It would shelter our race! --

Her head held high, she held out her hand;  
His hand met hers; they stood face to face.  
'Let us dream this dream, and dare to defy  
'The Servant of Shadows!' - so he softly said.  
Their eyes were wild  
-- like eagles untamed --  
-- And they suddenly smiled. -



Image from  
Andrew  
Lang's *Blue  
Fairy Book*,  
1930

The Wight  
Chris Bolland

Hark! And hear of  
He who journeyed far  
Through winter pale and water cold.

A fiend who fought with  
The Fey-Master and  
Grasped His gilded mail.

Oft in the early hours  
As oars rake the rime-cold waves  
The ghost-grey sky invokes the day.

Ever longing for some lavish  
Lord to raise him up  
And firm his feet as on the stone,

A ring-giver, upright,  
And regal, upon  
Whose helm to lay hand and head.

For King, and Kin, who  
Keep their oaths.  
For heeding heroes in the halls.

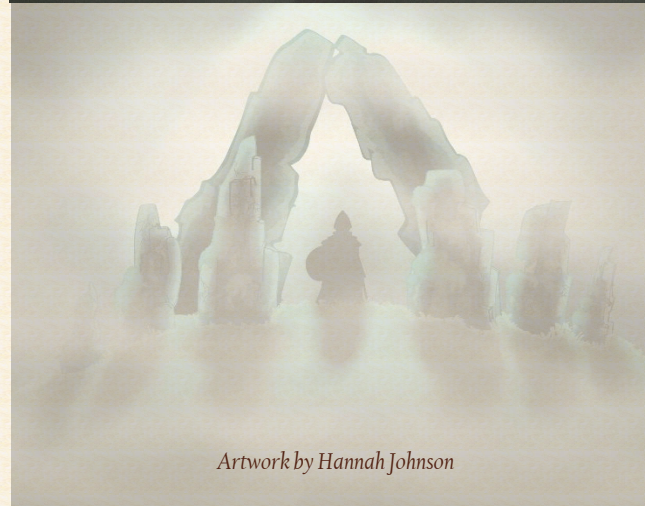
But storm-tossed strivings  
Still his hope  
For light and hearty laughter.

My keen eyes crane from  
Canted decks  
All hard and haggard with regrets.

The dim eternal dawn,  
A damned mockery of  
Sunlight shining on still seas.

Hail and hoar-frost  
Hammer me,  
The ragged raider, weary and lost.

The bloodied blade  
Bites no more,  
And my limbs have lost their might.



Artwork by Hannah Johnson

Wrath and rage are  
Wrested from me,  
The one-pathed wight to tread.

No man now walks  
Near, to whom  
I may speak in my sorrow.

Alone and adrift  
I sail along and without  
Companions sight the craggy cliffs,

Wyrd and wrought with  
wyrn-shapes gape,  
that Ægir's daughters age.

Bitter the bellowing gale  
Buffets my face  
as up above the whale-road I ascend.

I struggle upward on the stairs,  
Slimed by countless seasons' course,  
And wheels of heaven's wicking lights.

Daring to draw from hallowed  
Depths, for glory  
From the treasure trove.

Till 'mid the mists  
The Mound arose,  
Bathed in moss, beyond all years.

Beneath the barrow,  
In bones it dwells,  
The Draugr, dead with dreadful eyes

Sealed deep, so sagas  
speak, he waits  
And chants the charms of sunless days:

*Cold be hand and heart and bone,  
and cold be sleep under the stone:  
ne'er more to wake on stony bed,  
till Sunlight fails and Moon is dead.*

## *Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse*

To the doors of the dead  
I draw near,  
Fearing the fey-fire's ghastly light,

Bold for the bronze  
Blood-biters within,  
And gold and glory deep inside.

Yet scorned by the skull-pickers'  
Screech and lo-  
A one-eyed wight I seem to see

Robed round and  
Wrinkled like a crone;  
At glance is gone from off the stone.

*Nearer now!* the  
Norns intone  
And mount the mound: the seat of bones.

Suddenly at the summit  
I stand and view  
Mired and mist-cloaked about me ranged,

A ring of silent standing  
Stones. Shadows  
Hulking on the heathered heath.

Watchers; waiting,  
Withered and cracked,  
And gazing like eyes from gaping gaps.

Uncloaked under their  
Umbral gaze,  
Down I lie and dream-walk deep.

'Neath storm-worn stone  
I sink, and rest,  
My body fettered by the frost.

Darkness deepened, and  
Despair. Past roots  
like hands and hanging hair.

All round the rotten  
Rankness swirled  
And coldness clasped my cruel heart.

Then dread. Deeper than the  
Dead. Aged, and old,  
Beyond the count of bygone years.

Naught but dust of nameless men  
Neglected and accursed.  
Empty echoes molder in the crypt.

Like all the august  
Ages past, they are gone  
As winter winds upon the grass.

Struck, and sagging  
Still I kneel,  
Deserted by dearest final hope.

Then the sword-spirit,  
Seated on his throne  
Declared that I must be prepared:

His bright brow  
Burned above the eye  
And whistling – whispering – he spoke:

“Who is he that  
Harrows me?  
That grasps for hoarded gold?

A fool, that friendless  
Fiend who seeks  
Renown in rot.”

## Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

“Truly,” said I, turning chin  
And trembling,  
“I came to clasp my hands on gold,  
On armor  
Old, and spearheads cold,  
Which were in ancient days foretold.  
Thought I in thunder  
The thread-spinners gave  
The gift of glory to the stronger hand.  
Yet as all have  
Aged and passed away,  
No hope, and nothing now is left.”

“Yet which weapon can  
Win or wound the fate-spinners?  
Your own have cut you, year on year.”

Then the Draugr, dreadful, in  
Dying doom,  
Rose, and raised his rusted sword.  
Fey fast upon me  
Fell, with hammer blows,  
Shattered he my faithful shield.  
Strike on strike he  
Stabbed and cut,  
Till lifeblood flowed, and fingers slowed.  
I bowed, beaten and  
Bested by the barrow-ward.  
And ready for the rending stroke.  
Panic, in a prickling  
Pierced, then fled.  
I knelt at rest, finally free.

“Stop thy sword,  
Oh spirit-ward,  
And harken to my harrowing:  
Once, a wonderful  
One I served,  
A Lord with laughing eyes.  
But when battle-fire  
Burned, and drove  
The youthful jarl to war  
The fields aflame!  
And foes at the gates!  
And oh for the oath-breaker,  
Who doubting, darted  
before the dawn,  
and left my lord to die.  
Hacking they hew  
Him with axes,  
Ever before my eyes.  
Alas! Lost I  
Linger here,  
A shade ‘twixt breath and bone.  
Cursed am I, unclad in the  
Cold. A ghost,  
To wander weary all my years.”

In grievous grief,  
I grabbed the ward.  
I grasped the gleaming grave-lord’s mail.  
And lo! Where once a  
Withered corpse had stood,  
A lordling hale, with hair of gold,

## *Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse*

That shone o'er shining  
Shoulders wide,  
That sent all shadows flying far.

His gilded helm glimmered in the  
Gloom, and laughter  
Burned in his bright eye.

“Arise, ye aching,  
Aged one, and stand,  
Nimble like a new-strung bow.

Your lost life of  
Lingering before the dawn  
Has passed and parted from you now.

Arise now, rise ye,  
Rider unbroken!  
Reclaim thy name, and rise!

Break now the barrow  
Bonds. Rise!  
And swear your sword once more!”

I rose, and raising his  
Ringing voice, he laughed,  
Like hunting horns and battle yells.

The dour door-stone  
Down was cast, and  
Up and outward I was drawn.

The barrow's bleakness had  
Burned away,  
As flying fog before the sun.

The sullen and silent  
Stoney ring,  
Stood now kind, before its King.

And away from that  
Awful place we walked

The Ring-giver, and his Rider  
Hale and hearty,  
Happy as of old,  
And seaward, saw the newborn sun.

### **Middling Earth** Joseph Mathias

West over the waters · that whelmed the shores  
of Atalantë · in ancient days,  
where Valinor stood once · in vast Aman,  
now lies a newer, less noble land,  
midwest of Middle Earth. Michigan we call it.  
Our soil sends up · second-growth forests,  
lush leaf-kingdoms · less enchanted  
than Elf-haunts of old. Outside Detroit  
in the Thousand Suburbs · thickly sprawling,  
nice engineers · have a knack for turning  
the mass of mankind · into moving cogs,  
shaping them and shoving them · into the machine's embrace.  
They're not half so handy · as the hardy Dwarves,  
nor homely as Halflings. But they're hard workers.

I-96 · almost gets you  
to Grand Haven, a good beach town.  
No fair-haired Shipwright · will ferry you off  
to Lands Undying, but if you linger there  
all afternoon, evening will treat you  
to a lovely sunset.

“Look about you  
if you would seek (so says our motto)  
a nice peninsula.” It's not the Shire,  
let alone Beleriand. But long winters,  
horrible highways, huge mosquitoes,  
and no mountains — these are not too high  
a price to pay · for a place that's got  
few rattlesnakes · and is free of Orcs.

## Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

### Links to Other Recommended Tolkien Fan Poems

(for all known Tolkien fan poems in alliterative verse,  
check the [Fan Fiction Page](#))

Under the author's real name

- [Dear Tolkien Society](#) (Lancelot Schaubert)
- [Response to Dear Tolkien Society](#) (Geoffrey B. Elliot)
- [Lament for Baldor the Brave](#) (Gill Page)
- [The Redemption of Daeron](#) (Paul D. Deane)
- [Tree and Leaf](#) (Malcolm Guite)

Under a pseudonym

- [A Message for My Master](#) (Hazelnut Shipping Co.)
- [Narn Hathaldir ah Aerlin](#) (Aris Katsaris)
- [Wruxled in White](#) (Lindariel)

### Announcements

- [Call for fanwork: Building Middle Earth](#), on the Silmarillion Writers' Guild

### Publications Noted

*Articles, Reviews, Discussions on Blogs, other Web Resources*

- Jacob Allee, [Why Should Christians Read Beowulf?](#)
- [Adam Bolivar](#), interview about [Told by Firelight in Timbered Halls](#), in *Eternal Haunted Summer*
- Juan Barquin, [Green Knight Review: David Lowery's Adaptation Fails to Capture the Greatness of its Source Material](#)
- Robert Charbonneau, [On the Poet as Maker](#)
- Paul D. Deane, [An Introduction to Alliterative Verse for Readers and Writers of Speculative Fiction](#), in *Interstellar Flight Magazine* (May 15, 2026)

- Paul D. Deane, [Tolkien's Generation and Alliterative Verse](#), paper presentation at Westmoot, Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 24-26, 2026.
- Colin Gorrie, [How to Read Beowulf \(and actually enjoy it\)](#)
- Michael Helsem, [An Issue of Moment](#) [On alliterative meter in modern English poems]
- Timothy Green & others discuss "[How Poetry Actually Moves](#)". From -38:13 to -30:52, they discuss alliterative meter & Timothy Green reads one of his recent alliterative poems. *Forgotten Ground Regained* is alluded to.
- Klaus Johann Myrvol, [The constitutive features of the dróttkvætt metre](#). *Approaches to Nordic and Germanic poetry* (2016): 229-256.
- Eric S. Rayburn, [Riddle-Poems and How to Make Them](#)
- Skaldic Project – [Kennings](#) (glossary of Norse Kennings)
- Tamarah Rockwood, [The Whale Road: On the kenning, the oldest naming-game we still play](#)
- Michael Smith, [William of Palerne and the Alliterative Revival](#)
- James Matthew Wilson, [The Christian Humanism of A.M. Juster](#) [Review of *Wonder and Wrath*]
- Dennis Wise, [A Schema for Artorius: History, John Heath-Stubbs, and the Last Modernist Epic](#). *Journal of the International Arthurian Society* 12(1):134-156, 2024.

### Poem and Book Links Added

- Nico Solheim Davidson (ed.), [C. Ryan Moniz](#) (translator), [Northumbrian Rune Poems](#). [Reviewed on the Thunder Witch of the Woods blog](#).

## Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

### Poem and Book Links Added (ctd.)

- [Paul D. Deane](#)
  - [The Poet Interrogates ChatGPT 5.1](#) [tail-stave meter], in Indolent Books' "Second Coming" series, no. 503, 6/6/2026.
  - [Cædmon Hears a Voice in the Night \(It is Claude Sonnet 4.6\)](#) [strict Old English alliterative verse], in Indolent Books' "Second Coming" series, no. 533, 7/6/2026.
- George Campbell Hay
  - "[The Sun over Athens](#)". (Originally in *Saltire Review* IV/11 (Summer, 1957), 31-33. In [George Campbell Hay \(Deòrsa Mac Iain Dheòrsa\) - Collected Poems and Songs](#), Edinburgh University Press, 2002, pp. 257-259
  - "[What Song is Ours](#)". In [George Campbell Hay \(Deòrsa Mac Iain Dheòrsa\) - Collected Poems and Songs](#), Edinburgh University Press, 2002, p. 11.
- [Kathryn Ann Hill](#) on *Forgotten Ground Regained*
  - [Rebuke Me Not](#) (Psalm 6)
  - [God is My Shield](#) (Psalm 7)
- [A.M. Juster](#), [The Ruin](#), in *First Things*
- J.Y.T. Kennedy, [The King in Red](#), in Colleen Anderson (ed.) *Alice Unbound: Beyond Wonderland*, Exile Editions 2018. Reprinted on *Forgotten Ground Regained*.
- Susan L. Leary [alliterative free verse]
  - [Pseudo Myth](#), in *The Inflectionist Review*
  - "Dear Hero, Dear Self" in [A Buffet Table Fit for Queens](#)
- Carter Revard, [Some Riddles in Alliterative Verse](#), in *Florilegium* 18(2), 2001. Includes riddles not published elsewhere: "The Poet's Cottage", "Refrigerator" & "Detergent".
- Abigail Robejsek, [Rorate Caeli](#) in *Amethyst Magazine* [alliterative free verse]
- Lancelot Schaubert, [Concrete in Watercolor](#). A collection of poems about New York City. Three sections: the first two

contain free verse and metrical poems. The third contains twenty poems in alliterative verse

- Timothy Witchazel, [The Saving of the City](#) [Siege of Vienna]

### Nominations and Awards

- Congratulations to FGR author [Carla Galdo](#), winner of the [2026 Frost Farm Poetry Prize](#) for her unpublished metrical (non-alliterative) poem, "The Absences are Different", and to FGR author [Steven Searcy](#), who got an honorable mention for his metrical (non-alliterative) poem "Χορός".
- [Adam Bolivar](#)'s 2025 collection, [Told by Firelight in Timbered Halls](#) has been nominated for the Science Fiction Poetry Association's [2026 Elgin Award](#).
- [Michael Hessel-Mial](#)'s poem, [Knot Loosener Memorial Disputation with Gas Giant](#) has been nominated for the Science Fiction Poetry Association's [2026 Rhysling Award](#).
- [Dennis W. Wise](#)'s [Speculative Poetry and the Modern Alliterative Revival: A Critical Anthology](#) recently [made the 2026 finalist list](#) for the Mythopoeic Society's "Mythopoeic Scholarship Award for Myth and Fantasy Studies".

### Links to Online Performances and Translations

- [Paul](#) and [Deborah Deane](#), [dramatic performance](#) of [The Song of Marwen and Fithurin](#), at Westmoot 2026.
- Elder Scrolls (Skyrim) [Adonato's Book](#) and [King Olaf's Verse](#)
- [Math Jones](#) on YouTube: [Free Speech](#) and [Another Valley](#)
- [Jack Laurel](#), [Weyland's Revenge](#)
- Arum Natzorkhang, [A Hymn to the Rains](#) (Vedic verse)
- Richard Jeffrey Newman, [The Teller of Tales: Stories from the Shahnameh](#) (loose imitation of alliterative verse)
- The Prancing Pony Podcast #84, [To the Day's Rising](#) (Tolkien's alliterative verse recited)
- Anja Woosnam, [Deor translation](#)

## Summer 2026: Alliterative Verse in Arda

### *Poems Posted on Blogs & Social Media*

#### *Posted under the Author's Real Name*

- Jacob Allee on X, [The Valorum](#)
- Matthew Bacon on Instagram, [Alliterative Accentuation](#)
- Matt Becker on Bluesky, "[Hark, I hear you ...](#)"
- Elizabeth G. Biggs, [The Lay of Lycāon, & the Gaerur-Dūr](#)

#### *Posted under the Author's Real Name (ctd.)*

- Alexander Birch
  - [A Prayer in Alliterative Verse, or "Shrive and Dawn"](#)
  - [Visions of a Friend, Parts One, Two, and Three](#)
  - [Cædmon's Chronicle](#) [also includes audio version]
  - [An Exercise in Alliteration](#)
  - [2 Timothy 1:1-13 in alliterative verse](#)
  - [Profane Not Thy Citadel](#)
- Gwern Branwen, [Apollonian #1: The Counted & the Crowned](#) [Generated by [human/AI collaboration](#)]
- Bruce Byfield on X, "[Arise, arise, ye alliterative writers...](#)"
- Tim Chamberlain on the blog Shinobazu Pond, [Dark into Light](#) (a free-verse imitation of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse)
- William Derby, [The Lay of Fer'rall's Restoration, I-II, III, IV, V](#)
- Chris Scott Edwards, [The Astronomer's Dream](#)
- Anthony Etherin, [My Unusual Pets](#) (+ 2 alliterative sonnets)
- Margaret Fleming, [Morning Mixture](#)
- Van Fletcher, [Epic of Lókka Fág Guínnas, Parts 1-2, Parts 3-4, and Parts 5-7](#)
- Patrick Gillespie, [My Heart's Song](#) on the Poemshape blog
- Coleman Glenn on X, [Palm Sunday](#) [alliterative sonnet]
- Timothy Green on Facebook, [Forecast](#) and on Spotify, [Containment](#) (audio: 24:13 to 25:38 on [this podcast](#))
- Timothy Hamilton on Facebook, "[Born to brave...](#)"

- Andy Hawes, [The Saga of the White Ravens](#)
- Michael Helsem, [experimental poems](#) on Bluesky
- Tom Hillman and Joe Hoffman, [The Saga of Wigend's Chicken Run](#)
- Dennis Johnstone, [Build Me No Castle](#)
- C.M. Joserlin, [Gore's Saga](#)
- R.A.R. Knight

#### *On his blog [Fyr Review](#):*

- [On Furthest Bourn](#), [On the Desolate Mountain](#), [Sator Ananas](#), [The Swan](#)

#### *On X: [The Expanding Verse](#)*

- J.W. Laurel, [An Alliterative Iliad](#), parts [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#) separately and [together](#)
- Siodhna McGowan, [Kintsugi](#) (alliterative free verse)
- D.C. Petterson, [The Runic Edda](#)
- Ben Quant
  - [Poem 397 – Alliterative Allies, Tricky Traitors](#)
  - [Poem 415 -- Completed](#)
  - [Poem 465 – An Avian Revival](#)
  - [Poem 482 -- Pétanque](#)
  - [Poem 637 – Today's Poem](#)
  - [Poem 674 – Twilight Driving](#)
  - [Poem 680 – Season's End](#)
  - [Poem 685 – Ironing Shirts](#)
  - [Poem 801 – Four Years](#)
  - [Poem 871 -- Evensong](#)
  - [Poem 880 – Cliffhanger](#)
- Steven Searcy on X, [Vernal](#) (alliterative free verse)
- Joe Terlisner, [Winter Wind](#)
- Judi van Gorder, [Bondage Broken](#)
- Steven Williams, [The Book of Judges, Anglo-Saxon Style](#)

## Forgotten Ground Regained: A Journal of Alliterative Verse

### Posted under Pseudonyms on Blogs and Social Media

- alieneye on Tumblr: [Nahootsoi](#)
- Amashelle, [An Honorable Death](#)
- Aondeug, [Feicim Beatha](#)
- Doc Brown, [On Alki](#)
- Chris, [The Fall of Discord](#)
- [Don Quesote](#), [Winter's Saga Backgrounds](#)
- Exmeanswithout, [The Doorway](#), on Tumblr
- Knightwithahundredkings, "[Worthy Gawain...](#)" on Tumblr
- MagnusPharao on X: "[Queen, belt out a banger ...](#)"
- pranicroom on X, "[Trustworthy Tyr ...](#)"
- Lady Adriana Michaels (SCA), [Ealdgyth's Lament](#)
- Lady Isabelle de Narbonne (SCA), [Anglo-Saxon Riddle](#)
- losselen (zambra), [The Flowers of Finduilas](#) [story with embedded alliterative verse]
- Meseem, [Mockery](#), [manifold](#)
- Oregonian, [The Seasons at the Castle](#) [Autumn at the Castle]
- Poetry, [Five Poems by Ferdinand von Aegir \(and one by Hubert von Vestra\)](#) [A Fallen Hero Rises]
- Sesquiotic, [Wolf-boy versus Grinder \(the Bow Valley Beowulf\)](#), on the Strong Language blog
- SkittyTail, [An Affair that is Always \(Arthurian Style Experiment\)](#)
- Spellis, [The Woe-Wanderer](#) (loosely alliterative)
- [Thaliarchus](#)
  - [Deep-Step and Twice-Mortal](#) (terza rima with alliterative verse dialogues, on [itch.io](#))
  - [The Mountain, After](#) (blank verse with alliterative verse dialogues, on [itch.io](#))
  - drafts on X: "[And do gaunt lost ones ...](#)"
  - on Bluesky: "[Grin, on your gradcams ...](#)"
- The Red Thread, [The King in the Circular Court](#)
- Thoughts on Tolkien on X, [An Elegy for Our Age](#)
- totalserene560 on Tumblr, "[There once was a boy...](#)"
- Wingeater and Silby on Bluesky, [Alliterative Haiku](#)
- Zorbo\_Jorks on Silmarillion Writers' Guild: [The Deaths of Túrin Turambar, Niënor Niniel, and Brandir the Lame](#). It was written for Mereth Aderthad 2025.



[Araniart](#) - [Elves leave Middle-earth](#)

### Call for Submissions

The Fall 2026 issue of *Forgotten Ground Regained* is open for submissions. I am especially interested in alliterative poetry on the theme, “Speculative Visions” – that is, in alliterative poems that can be classified as science fiction, fantasy, or horror. Submissions should be sent to Paul D. Deane at the following email address: [pdeane@alliteration.net](mailto:pdeane@alliteration.net) by Sept 1, 2026.

### Form and Content

- **Submissions must make skillful, systematic use of alliteration in ways that use alliteration to reinforce the rhythm and connect important ideas.** Overall, I prefer poems that have a stronger impact on readers when they are read aloud. I therefore encourage authors to include links to audio or video versions of their poems in their submissions.
- **Submissions must be in modern English**, but authors should feel free to submit poems that take advantage of the diction, rhythms, and syntax of particular language varieties and communities. I do not discriminate against Scots, Appalachian English, Black English Vernacular, Indian English, or any other variety of English, though I do ask that authors be prepared to supply notes to explain any terms or expressions that outsiders to their communities may not readily understand.
- **I will not publish metrical poetry or free verse that does not make systematic, structural use of alliteration.** I would love to see people experimenting with modern English versions of Old and Middle English alliterative verse, with Old Norse forms like *ljóðahattr* and *dróttkvætt* or modern Icelandic *rimur*, or with new alliterative forms designed to highlight modern English rhythms and speech patterns. While my first preference is what traditional scholarship calls alliterative-accentual verse, I am also open to alliterative free verse or to alliterative versions of traditional forms, such as the ballad, as long as the alliteration is clearly a structural rather than a decorative feature of the form. Note that I love both the lyrical and the narrative turns in poetry, so longer narratives

will be given careful consideration.

- I am open to contemporary poetry & projects that would normally be considered to fall outside the literary mainstream, such as speculative poetry, SCA Bardic Arts projects, and fan fiction.

### Editorial Policies

- I accept simultaneous submissions but require authors to notify me in a timely fashion if a work is accepted elsewhere. I reserve the right to withdraw acceptance if a work has been accepted or published elsewhere without my knowledge.
- I am not able to offer payment for publication. However, authors retain all rights (except, of course, for granting me non-exclusive serial and web rights to publish their work on [alliteration.net](http://alliteration.net)).
- There is no hard upper length limit, though poems more than five to six pages in length are likely to be published separately on the website, with links provided inside the issue, rather than being included directly in the pdf magazine.
- I will consider reprints but am far more likely to link to them (if published online) or to publish them directly on the site than I am to publish them in one of the quarterly issues.
- As editor, I have final say on any and all issues of copyediting, formatting, punctuation, layout, illustration, and the like. I will endeavor to take an author's wishes into account, but in any cases where the author and I cannot reach agreement, they have the choice either to accept my decisions or to withdraw their work from publication in this journal.
- It should not be necessary to state this, but in the age of generative AI, it is best to be explicit. **I expect submissions to be entirely the author's work, with one exception:** I do allow work in which text generated by AI is used as a foil or chorus, in dialogue or counterpoint to sections entirely written by the author. However, if a work has benefited in any way from reference to generative AI, I expect the author to provide logs of all interactions, both prompts and AI responses, so that I can judge whether a poem is the author's authentic creation.