

A Forgotten Ground Regained reprint

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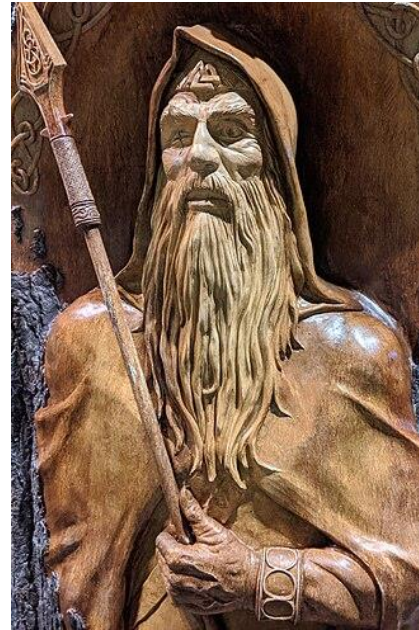
Listen, He Whispers

Why is the thought,
Winging from the edge
Of the known-till-now;
Not a kind one,
But shudders through,
Shakes you awake,
Lands with an ice-flake,
Lends you worry.

A thought that falls,
And flings you from sleep,
From a dream of comfort,
With a dread hand,
So the world unfurls
Unfriendly concerns:
Fear in a heartbeat,
Hurt night-cares.

Mood-heavy, mired,
And much in doubt,
I and others,
Under clouds,
Gape, gap-toothed,
At a grinning giant:
High, heaven-blotting,
Behemoth of rock.

To measure immensity,
Marvellous otherwise,
Here, is horror.
How can the mind
Of anyone cope,
Caught, overwhelmed,
By hugeness: human might
Hobbled by disparity.



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Were I a thunderer,
Thor's hammer
Nestled in my hand,
Nudging the sky,
Driving with the might
My mother gave,
Through the earth,
Thrumming girdle,

I might make
This mooncalf shake,
Disperse this fear,
Despair on the run!
With mood so great
That the meanest put-upon,
Will strive for the impossible,
Stop the imposition.

Were I a lover,
Lord my mentor,
I might seek
To send a friend
To woo the daughter,
Win and bed her,
Befriend the fiend
With a fateful wedding;

Or cute as a kid,
Be kept a secret
By its doting wife,
Dumb and hidden,
Till stealthy sleep
Slays the husband,
And glad with gold
I go my ways.

Or were I a lover,
Lady my mentor,
Brisingamen bearing
Brightened fiercely,
Fire of the earth
And fire of the sea,
Sun and moon
Sauntering behind,

I might make
This mean one quake,
Drawn by dream
And drowned in need,
Their stone-heart open
From opaque sterility
Into weeping welcome,
Their wounding mend.

Such tales told
In tribes of old,
Held now still
To help the child
Through terrors of doubt;
Tears in the night,
My hands reach out,
Raised in need...

And here my friend,
Honed by travelling,
Step by step,
Steep-ways battling,
Pauses beside me,
Pats on my back,
Brings me thought,
Brings me remembrance,

Settles the brim
That brackets his face,
Kicks at a pebble,
Picks up a stone –
“Bellowing Sand,
They say is the name
Of the first of the giants:
Fell at the start

“To be made, for you,
A middling way.
This broken scree
At the brim of the sea,
The finite vault
That envelopes the sky,
All these come
From the corpse of a giant

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"I slew, slaughtered,
Sliced and divided,
For a boundary put around
Of bony mountain
And splattered ocean,
Sparing you from this:
The enormity of truth,
Annihilation of memory.

"Only to be looked upon
One eyed,
And here is a breach,
A break, in the wall
I'd caused to be made
To keep out
The overbearing arch
Of the eaters' reach."

Sits on a cliff-edge,
Settles his birds,
His wolves on his knee,
Waits for an audience.
"Listen," he whispers,
Leaning on the wind,
"Words must wait
For wisdom's reckoning."

Broad on the air,
The bellowing roar
Of the too-great-to-grasp
Grapples with attendance:
Need must bring knowledge
If noticed at the root,
And the world in its rawness
Wishes to be heard!

"Ask me then, Odhin.
Easily I'll tell you
The bitty answers."
Boastful giant
Calls for a wager,
Claiming a prize:
"I'll take your head
If I top you for knowledge!"

"Since you know
So much, tell me
Why, the sun?
Why, the moon?
What reason the stars?
What right has the fire?
What meaning the ice,
Moaning into the void?"

A quiet anger,
An even engagement,
Felt in the sand,
Fierce in the grain:
"The secret you told,
To your son, lying,
Is it this, Odhin,
Else unknown?"

Sits on the cliff-edge.
Sailing beneath him
Is a sheaf in a shield
On a ship all ablaze.
"Listen," he whispers,
Leaning on the wind,
"Words must wait
For wisdom's reckoning."