

The Seafarer

	Mæg ic be me sylfum soðgied wrecan, siþas secgan, hu ic geswincdagum earfoðhwile oft þrowade, 4a bitre breostceare gebiden hæbbe, gecunnad in ceole cearselda fela, atol yþa gewealc, þær mec oft bigeat nearo nihtwaco æt nacan stefnan, 8a þonne he be clifum cnossað. Calde geþrunge wæron mine fet, forste gebunden caldum clommum, þær þa ceare seofedun hat ymb heortan; hungor innan slat 12a merewerges mod. Ðæt se mon ne wat þe him on foldan fægrost limpeð, hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sæ winter wunade wræccan lastum, 16a winemægum bidroren, bihongen hrimgicelum; hægl scurum fleag. þær ic ne gehyrde butan hlimman sæ,	I can make a true song about me myself, tell my travels, how I often endured days of struggle, troublesome times, [how I] have suffered grim sorrow at heart, have known in the ship many worries [abodes of care], the terrible tossing of the waves, where the anxious night watch often took me at the ship's prow, when it tossed near the cliffs. Fettered by cold were my feet, bound by frost in cold clasps, where then cares seethed hot about my heart -- a hunger tears from within the sea-weary soul. This the man does not know for whom on land it turns out most favourably, how I, wretched and sorrowful, on the ice-cold sea dwelt for a winter in the paths of exile, bereft of friendly kinsmen, hung about with icicles; hail flew in showers. There I heard nothing but the roaring sea,
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	iscaldne wæg.	the ice-cold wave.
	Hwilum ylfete song	At times the swan's song
20a	dyde ic me to gomene,	I took to myself as pleasure,
	ganotes hleoþor	the gannet's noise
	ond huilpan sweg	and the voice of the curlew
	fore hleahtor wera,	instead of the laughter of men,
	mæw singende	the singing gull
	fore medodrince.	instead of the drinking of mead.
	Stormas þær stanclifu beotan,	Storms there beat the stony cliffs,
	þær him stearn oncwæð,	where the tern spoke,
24a	isigfeþera;	icy-feathered;
	ful oft þæt earn bigeal,	always the eagle cried at it,
	urigfeþra;	dewy-feathered;
	nænig hleomæga	no cheerful kinsmen
	feasceaftig ferð	can comfort
	frefran meahte.	the poor soul.
	Forþon him gelyfeð lyt,	Indeed he credits it little,
	se þe ah lifes wyn	the one who has the joys of life,
28a	gebiden in burgum,	dwells in the city,
	bealosipa hwon,	far from terrible journey,
	wlonc ond wingal,	proud and wanton with wine,
	hu ic werig oft	how I, weary, often
	in brimlade	have had to endure
	bidan sceolde.	in the sea-paths.
	Nap nihtscua,	The shadows of night darkened,
	norþan sniwde,	it snowed from the north,
32a	hrim hrusan bond,	frost bound the ground,
	hægl feol on eorþan,	hail fell on the earth,
	corna caldast.	coldest of grains.
	Forþon cnysað nu	Indeed, now they are troubled,
	heortan geþohtas	the thoughts of my heart,
	þæt ic hean streamas,	that I myself should strive with
	sealtyþa gelac	the high streams,
	sylf cunnige --	the tossing of salt waves --
36a	monað modes lust	the wish of my heart urges
	mæla gehwylce	all the time
	ferð to feran,	my spirit to go forth,
	þæt ic feor heonan	that I, far from here,

	elþeodigra eard gesece -- Forþon nis þæs modwlonc mon ofer eorþan,	should seek the homeland of a foreign people -- Indeed there is not so proud-spirited a man in the world,
40a	ne his gifena þæs god, ne in geoguþe to þæs hwæt, ne in his dædum to þæs deor, ne him his dryhten to þæs hold, þæt he a his sæfore sorge næbbe, to hwon hine Dryhten gedon wille.	nor so generous of gifts, nor so bold in his youth, nor so brave in his deeds, nor so dear to his lord, that he never in his seafaring has a worry, as to what his Lord will do to him.
44a	Ne biþ him to hearpan hyge ne to hringþege ne to wife wyn ne to worulde hyht ne ymbe owiht elles nefne ymb yða gewearc; ac a hafað longunge se þe on lagu fundað.	Not for him is the sound of the harp nor the giving of rings nor pleasure in woman nor worldly glory -- nor anything at all unless the tossing of waves; but he always has a longing, he who strives on the waves.
48a	Bearwas blostmum nimað, byrig fægriað, wongas wlitigað, woruld onetteð: ealle þa gemoniað modes fusne sefan to siþe þam þe swa þenceð	Groves take on blossoms, the cities grow fair, the fields are comely, the world seems new: all these things urge on the eager of spirit, the mind to travel, in one who so thinks
52a	on flodwegas feor gewitan. Swylce geac monað geomran reorde; singeð sumeres weard, sorge beodeð bitter in breosthord. Þæt se beorn ne wat,	to travel far on the paths of the sea. So the cuckoo warns with a sad voice; the guardian of summer sings, bodes a sorrow grievous in the soul.
56a	sefteadig secg, hwæt þa sume dreogað	This the man does not know, the warrior lucky in worldly things what some endure then,

	þe þa wræclastas widost lecgað.	those who tread most widely the paths of exile.
	Forþon nu min hyge hweorfeð ofer hreþerlocan, min modsefa mid mereflode,	And now my spirit twists out of my breast, my spirit out in the waterways,
60a	ofer hwæles eþel hweorfeð wide, eorþan sceatas -- cymeð eft to me gifre ond grædig; gielleð anfloga, hweteð on hwælweg hreþer unwearnum	over the whale's path it soars widely through all the corners of the world -- it comes back to me eager and unsated; the lone-flier screams, urges onto the whale-road the unresisting heart
64a	ofer holma gelagu. Forþon me hatran sind Dryhtnes dreamas þonne þis deade lif læne on londe. Ic gelyfe no þæt him eorðwelan ece stondað.	across the waves of the sea. Indeed hotter for me are the joys of the Lord than this dead life fleeting on the land. I do not believe that the riches of the world will stand forever.
68a	Simle þreora sum þinga gehwylce ær his tiddege to tweon weorþeð: adl oþþe ylde oþþe ecghete fægum fromweardum feorh oðþringeð.	Always and invariably, one of three things will turn to uncertainty before his fated hour: disease, or old age, or the sword's hatred will tear out the life from those doomed to die.
72a	Forþon biþ eorla gehwam æftercwependra lof lifgendra lastworda betst, þæt he gewyrce, ær he on weg scyle, fremum on foldan wið feonda niþ,	And so it is for each man the praise of the living, of those who speak afterwards, that is the best epitaph, that he should work before he must be gone bravery in the world against the enmity of devils,

76a	deorum dædum deofle togeanes, þæt hine ælda bearn æfter hergen, ond his lof siþþan lifge mid englum awa to ealdre, ecan lifes blæd,		daring deeds against the fiend, so that the sons of men will praise him afterwards, and his fame afterwards will live with the angels for ever and ever, the glory of eternal life,
80a	dream mid dugeþum. Dagas sind gewitene, ealle onmedlan eorþan rices; nearon nu cyningas ne caseras ne goldgiefan swylce iu wæron,		joy with the Hosts. The days are gone of all the glory of the kingdoms of the earth; there are not now kings, nor Cæsars, nor givers of gold as once there were,
84a	þonne hi mæst mid him mærþa gefremedon ond on dryhtlicestum dome lifdon. Gedroren is þeos duguð eal, dreamas sind gewitene; wuniað þa wacran ond þæs woruld healdap,		when they, the greatest, among themselves performed valorous deeds, and with a most lordly majesty lived. All that old guard is gone and the revels are over -- the weaker ones now dwell and hold the world, enjoy it through their sweat.
88a	brucað þurh bisgo. Blæd is gehnæged, eorþan indryhto ealdað ond searað, swa nu monna gehwylc geond middangeard. Yldo him on fareþ, onsyn blacað,		The glory is fled, the nobility of the world ages and grows sere, as now does every man throughout the world. Age comes upon him, his face grows pale,
92a	gomelfeax gnornað, wat his iuwine, æþelinga bearn eorþan forgiefene. Ne mæg him þonne se flæschoma þonne him þæt feorg losað		the graybeard laments; he knows that his old friends, the sons of princes, have been given to the earth. His body fails then, as life leaves him --

	ne swete forswelgan	he cannot taste sweetness
	ne sar gefelan	nor feel pain,
96a	ne hond onhreran	nor move his hand
	ne mid hyge þencan.	nor think with his head.
	Þeah þe græf wille	Though he would strew
	golde stregan	the grave with gold,
	broþor his geborenum,	a brother for his kinsman,
	byrgan be deadum	bury with the dead
	maþmum mislicum,	a mass of treasure,
	þæt hine mid wille,	it just won't work --
100a	ne mæg þære sawle	nor can the soul
	þe biþ synna ful	which is full of sin
	gold to geoce	preserve the gold
	for Godes egsan,	before the fear of God,
	þonne he hit ær hydeð	though he hid it before
	þenden he her leofað.	while he was yet alive.
	Micel biþ se Meotudes egsa,	Great is the fear of the Lord,
	forþon hi seo molde oncyrræð;	before which the world stands still;
104a	se gestapelade	He established
	stiþe grundas,	the firm foundations,
	eorþan sceatas	the corners of the world
	ond uprodor.	and the high heavens.
	Dol biþ se þe him his Dryhten ne ondrædeþ:	A fool is the one who does not fear his Lord
	cymeð him se deað unþinged.	-- death comes to him unprepared.
	Eadig bið se þe eaþmod leofaþ;	Blessed is he who lives humbly
	cymeð him seo ar of heofonum.	-- to him comes forgiveness from heaven.
108a	Meotod him þæt mod gestapelað,	God set that spirit within him,
	forþon he in his meahte gelyfeð.	because he believed in His might.
	Stieran mon sceal strongum mode,	Man must control his passions
	ond þæt on stapelum healdan,	and keep everything in balance,
	ond gewis werum,	keep faith with men,
	wisum clæne.	and be pure in wisdom.
	Scyle monna gehwylc	Each of men must
	mid gemete healdan	be even-handed
112a	wiþ leofne ond wið laþne	with their friends and their foes.
	* * * bealo.	?
	þeah þe he hine wille	? though he does not wish him
	fyres fulne	? in the foulness of flames

oþþe on bæle
forbærnedne
his geworhtne wine,
Wyrð biþ swiþre,
116a Meotud meahtigra,
þonne ænges monnes gehygd.
Uton we hycgan
hwær we ham agen,
ond þonne geþencan
hu we þider cumen;
ond we þonne eac tilien
þæt we to moten
120a in þa ecan
eadignesse
þær is lif gelong
in lufan Dryhtnes,
hyht in heofonum.
Ðæs sy þam Halgan þonc
þæt he usic geweorþade,
wuldres Ealdor
124a ece Dryhten,
in ealle tid. Amen.

? or on a pyre
? to be burned
? his contrived friend,
Fate is greater
and God is mightier
than any man's thought.
Let us ponder
where we have our homes
and then think
how we should get thither --
and then we should all strive
that we might go there
to the eternal
blessedness
that is a belonging life
in the love of the Lord,
joy in the heavens.
Let there be thanks to God
that he adored us,
the Father of Glory,
the Eternal Lord,
for all time. Amen.