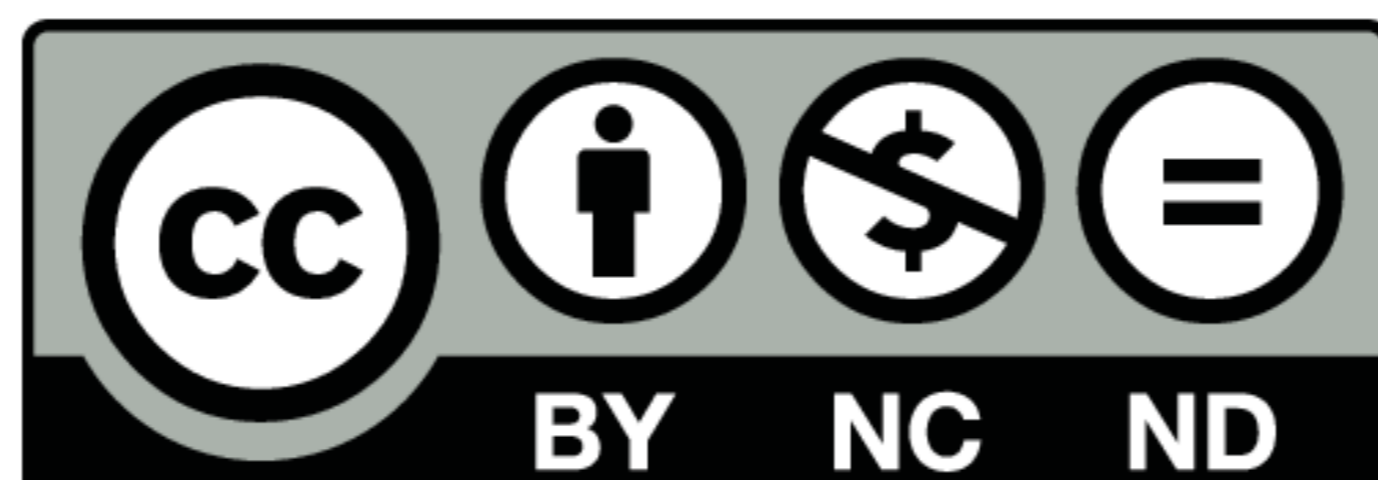




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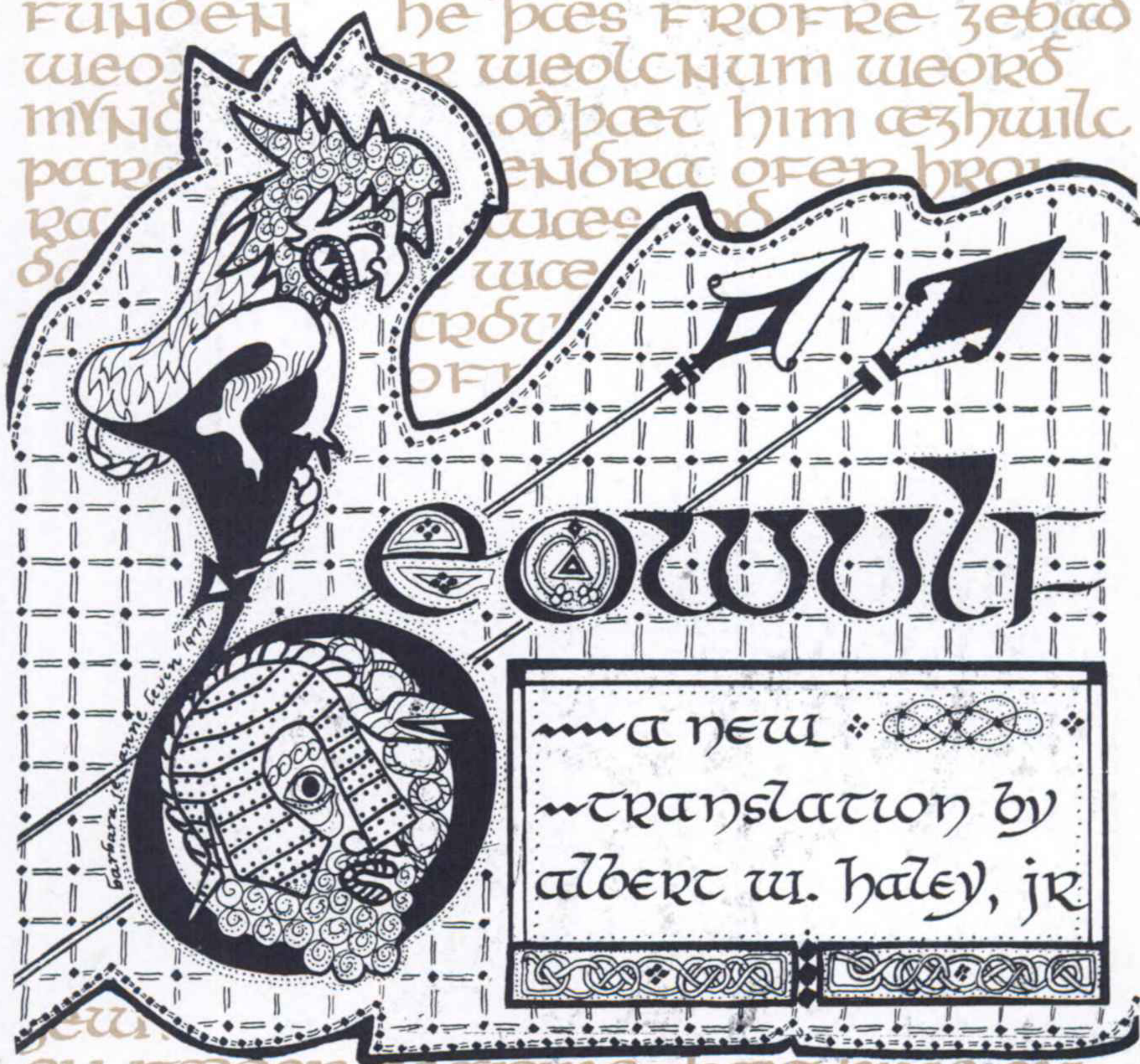
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hwaet we zardena in zear
 dazum þeodcyninza þrym ze
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 fremedom *~~~~~* oft scyld scefinz
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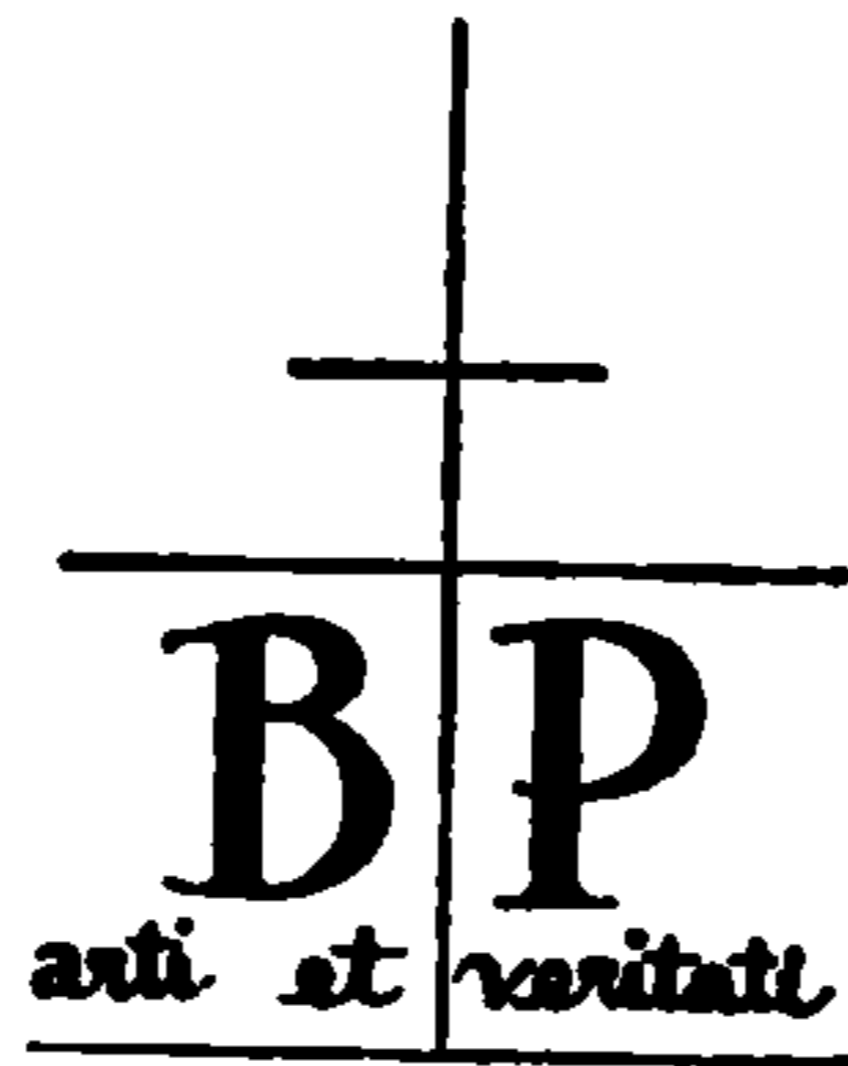


a new *✦* *~~~~~* *✦*
 translation by
 albert w. haley, jr
~~~~~

on fæder dearme þæt hine on
 ylde eft zewunizen wil ze *◆◆◆*
 sipas þonne wiz cume leode ze
 læsten lofdædum sceal in mæzþa
 zehwære man zepemon *~~~~~*

BEOWULF

Translated by
ALBERT W. HALEY, JR.



Boston
BRANDEN PRESS
Publishers

This One



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BEOWULF

BEOWULF

Listen to me! We have heard of the glory,
in former years, of the Spear-Danes, of the
rulers of that people, how
those aethelings did valorous deeds!

- 5 Often Scyld Sceffing wrested mead-seats from
troops of foemen and many tribes, and
frightened their nobles—after being
found wretched, once, he lived to see comfort
for that, and prospered under the heavens,
10 thriving with honors, till over the whales'—road
every one of the neighboring peoples
had to obey him and pay him tribute—
he was a worthy king—to whom then, an
offspring, young in the courtyards, was born,
15 whom God sent as a comfort to
the people, for He had seen the dire
distress they had suffered once before,
leaderless for a long, long time. Then
the Lord of life—Heaven's Ruler!—granted him
20 worldly honor: Beowulf, Scyld's heir—
not the Beowulf of this story—
was famous (His renown spread widely!)
in the land of the Danes! So with splendid
gifts from his father's possessions must a
25 young man do works of merit, in order that
in his old age his dear companions
will always remain with him, when war comes
his people be true—by praiseworthy deeds
a man shall prosper in every nation!
- 30 But then, at the fated hour, Scyld, sated
with exploits, went to go into God's
own keeping. They brought him down to the sea-shore—
his dear companions!—as he himself
had bidden, when, lord of the Scyldings, he still

35 ruled with his words—that country's loved prince
long had held sway! But there in the harbor
the ring-prowed ship stood—that aetheling's vessel—
ice-bound and ready to put out;
and they laid the dear prince and ring-giver in
40 that craft's bosom, the famous man by the mast,
while many treasures and trappings were there,
having been brought from far away—I have
never heard of a ship adorned
more comely with weapons of war and armor,
45 with swords and corselets, on his breast lay
many treasures which were to go with him
far off into the flood's possession—
not at all did they furnish him, then,
with lesser gifts—with the people's treasures!—
50 than they did, who, when he was an infant,
had sent him forth in his natal state,
alone on the waves! But now his folk placed
a banner of gold high over his head,
and, letting the ocean bear him, gave him
55 up to the sea—their spirit was sorrowful,
their heart saddened. Men—hall-counsellors,
heroes under the heavens—cannot say
truthfully who received that cargo.

Then in the strongholds, Beowulf—not
60 the one of this story, he of the Scyldings—
that dear king of his people, was known
a long, long time among nations (His father
gone elsewhere, that ruler away from his home!)
until to that Beowulf the noble
65 Healfdene later was born,
who ruled, while he lived, aged and fierce
in war, the joyous Scyldings. Four offspring
in number were born into the world
to that prince of armies: Heorogar
70 and Hrothgar and the seemly Halgar.
(The fourth, as I heard, was Onela's consort,
the war-Scylfing's dearly-loved bed-companion.)

Then Hrothgar was given success in war
 and glory in battle, so that his kinsmen
 75 eagerly served him, till the young troops
 increased, a great band of warriors. And
 it entered into his mind that he should
 order men to put up a hall-building,
 a greater mead-hall than the children
 80 of men had ever heard of, and
 divide therein among young and old all
 that God had bestowed upon him, with the
 exception of public land and men's persons.
 I heard of labor decreed from afar, then,
 85 for many peoples throughout this midyard
 of earth, that they adorn that folk-dwelling.
 And in due time it came to pass
 that it was hastily prepared
 among men—that greatest of hall-buildings!—and then
 90 he who had widely pressed the might of
 his word devised for that hall the name
 of Heorot . . . and did not go back on
 his promise, but gave out armlets and gems
 at the feast! Lofty, and broad between gables,
 95 the hall rose high—awaiting the fierce flames,
 loathsome fire! (The time was not near
 at hand, yet, when between son- and father-
 in-law, sword-hatred, following murderous
 anger, was to arise!) But living in
 100 darkness, a powerful demon grievously
 suffered agony, every day hearing
 revelry loud in the hall; there was
 the sound of the harp, the scop's clear singing—
 he who was able to recount
 105 the first creation of men far back
 in time spoke, declaring that the Almighty
 created this world, a place of shining
 splendor, to where the water surrounds it,
 in triumph placed the brightness of sun and
 110 moon as light for the dwellers on land,

and adorned the regions of earth with branches
and leaves. He shaped life also for all
of the kinds which, living, move about. Thus
the warriors happily lived amid joys,
115 till a certain being, a fiend from hell,
began to do evil. The savage spirit
was named Grendel, a famed march-stepper
who held the moors, the fen and the fastness;
the miserable wretch had lived for awhile
120 in the region of a species of sea-monsters,
after the Creator had
condemned him among the offspring of Cain.
(The Lord eternal avenged that murder,
because that one had slain Abel: Cain was not
125 happy over that feud, but for his
offense the Creator banished him far
from mankind. All evil issue sprang from him,
ogres and elves and sea-monsters, giants
also, who strove with God a long time—
130 for which He yielded them full requital!)

But now, when night came, Grendel went
to study that lofty building, and see how
the Ring-Danes had placed themselves in it, after
the beer-feast. He found therein that, the banquet
135 over, that band of men was sleeping—
they knew no sorrow, no human misery!
Grim and greedy, the creature of evil
soon was ready, and savage and cruel
seized from their pallets thirty retainers,
140 after which, exultant in booty,
he went from there to go towards his dwelling,
to find, with that fill of carnage, his home.

And then, at dawn, at the break of day, Grendle's
prowess in war was plain to men—then,
145 after the revelry, weeping arose,
a great morning-clamor, and the famous
prince, a noble long worthy, sat
in sadness and suffered—strong in his might,

knew sorrow for his retainers when all
150 had studied the track of the hated foe,
the accursed spirit: that struggle was
too hard, too loathsome, too lasting! And there
was respite no longer, for after one night
he committed murders again—greater ones!—
155 and did not shrink from the feuding and
the transgression, but was too fixed upon it.
The man was easily found, then, who elsewhere
sought a more distant resting-place,
a bed among the outer chambers,
160 as soon as was shown to him—declared
by a plain sign, truly!—that “hall-thane’s” hatred!
Thereafter, he who had escaped
that enemy kept himself farther away
and more secure. So Grendel prevailed
165 and fought against justice, alone against all,
until that best of houses stood empty.
That was a long time: for the space of
twelve winters the friendly lord of the Scyldings
suffered misery, every kind
170 of woe, many sorrows! It therefore became
well known to heroes—to the children
of men sadly through songs—that Grendel
strove some time against Hrothgar, waging
hostilities with crime and hatred
175 for many seasons, relentless warfare:
he did not want peace with any one of
the men of the Danish army, to do
away with that life-bane and make lawful
requit by a money-fine—not
180 one of the counsellors there had cause
to hope for glorious repayment
at that murderer’s hands, for that monster,
that dark death-shadow, kept harassing
old and young heroes; he lurked and ambushed,
185 and guarded, in the continual night,
the misty swamp-lands—men do not know

where hell-demons roam in their wanderings! Thus
 that enemy of mankind, that repulsive,
 solitary walker, often
 190 committed many acts of crime
 and cruel humiliation, dwelling
 in Heorot, that richly adorned
 hall, through the dark nights (Although he was not
 allowed to approach the gift-throne, that priceless
 195 seat, because of the Lord, not knowing
 His love)—which was a great misery, then,
 and grief at heart, to the guardian of
 the Scyldings. Often many a mighty
 one, sitting in secret council, considered
 200 what worthy advice would be the best for
 strong-minded men to follow against
 those sudden, fearsome onslaughts. At times
 those thanes vowed sacrifices at heathen
 temples, bidding with words that that demon—
 205 slayer, the Devil, grant them relief
 from this, the people's distress—such was
 their custom, the hope of those heathen: mindful
 of Hell in their hearts, they did not know
 the Ruler, that Judge of men's deeds, they did
 210 not know the Lord God—in truth, they did not
 know how to praise Heaven's Guardian,
 the King of Glory! Ill will it be for
 the one who must, because of fierce hatred,
 hurl his soul into the fire's embrace
 215 without hoping for help, for anything changing!
 It will be well with him, though, who, after
 the day of his death, may go to the Lord
 and pray for shelter in the Father's
 bosom! So Healfdene's son, then,
 220 brooded continually over the care
 of the hour; that prudent hero was
 unable to brush his sorrow aside,
 for the strife was too hard, too loathsome, too long,
 that had come upon his people—dire,

225 cruel distress, the worst of night-evils!
 But then, from far away in his homeland,
 Hygelac's war-attendant—one
 who was worthy among those Geats!—heard
 of these things, of Grendel's transgressions. The Geat
 230 was the strongest in prowess—noble and
 powerful—of all men during
 that day of this life, and bade that a sea-worthy
 wave-farer be made ready for him,
 declaring that, over the swans'-road, he
 235 would seek the war-king—Hrothgar the famous
 prince—since he was in need of brave men.
 Prudent retainers among the Geats
 did not reproach their hero at all
 about that venture, though he was dear
 240 to them—they encouraged that stout-hearted man,
 and observed the omens. And now from among
 the Geatish people that worthy hero
 had chosen champions, the most valiant
 of those he could find, and, one of fifteen,
 245 he sought the wooden, sea-going vessel—
 a man who knew the sea, that warrior
 led the way to the land's edge. Time passed,
 the buoyant craft was now on the waves,
 the boat beneath the cliff, and the heroes
 250 readily stepped onto the prow
 as the currents eddied, sea against sand;
 the warriors stowed in the boat's bosom gleaming
 war-gear, armor skillfully
 adorned, and then those heroes, men on
 255 that longed-for voyage, pushed that well-timbered
 vessel off, and, driven before
 the wind, the foamy-necked, buoyant craft
 fared most like a bird on the wave-filled sea,
 till after due time on the following day
 260 the curve-prowed ship had journeyed so far
 that the seamen descried land—sea-cliffs shimmering,
 steep hills, broad headlands; the floodway was crossed, then

the voyage over. From there, the Weder-folk
quickly went up to the beach and secured
265 the wooden vessel (Their corselets—their war-dress!—
rattled—and the men thanked God that their
wave-crossing had been easy for them.

Then, from the heights, the Scyldings' watchman,
whose office it was to guard the sea-cliffs,
270 observed bright bucklers and fine, ready war-gear
carried along the gangway, and his
curiosity goaded him in
the thoughts of his mind as to who those men were;
astride his steed, then, he, Hrothgar's thane, went
275 down to the beach, where he forcefully shook
his great, wooden-shafted javelin with
his hands and enquired with these formal words:
"What sort of arms-possessors protected
by corselets are you, who have arrived
280 like this, by guiding the tall ship over
the sea-way, across the waves to these shores?
Hear me! For years I have been the coast-guard,
and have kept watch by the sea to the end that
no foe by means of a ship-borne army
285 could ravage the land of the Danes—and never
have shield-possessors ventured to come here
more openly than you!—nor were you
wholly assured of our warriors' leave,
my countrymen's consent! I have never
290 beheld a mightier earl on the earth
than is one of you, a hero in armor:
that is no mere retainer decked out
with weapons, unless his figure—his peerless
bearing!—belies him! Now I must know
295 your nation, before you journey far from
here, further into the land of the Danes,
as spies. You dwellers in distant parts,
you seafarers, hear my only purpose, now—
haste is best in your saying where you
300 have come from!" To him the chieftain replied, that

troop's leader unlocking a treasury
 of words: "We are men of the Geatish people,
 and Hygelac's hearth-companions. My father
 was known among nations: that noble prince was
 305 called Ecgtheow, and lived through a great
 many winters, before he went on his way,
 an aged man, from his dwelling—every
 councillor afar throughout
 the earth remembers him well! We have come
 310 with friendly intent, now, to seek your ruler,
 Healfdene's son, your people's
 protector; be good to us in counsel,
 because we have a great message for
 the famous lord of the Danes—there need not
 315 be anything secret about it, I would
 suppose: you know (if it is as we
 have indeed heard say), that among the Scyldings
 some enemy—I do not know which,
 a furtive oppressor—reveals, through the dark
 320 nights in a horrible way, unspeakable
 hatred, damage, and slaughter! Out of
 a boundless feeling, I can give Hrothgar
 counsel about this—how, wise and good, he
 can overcome the fiend, if change
 325 and relief from dire distress is ever
 to come again to your prince, the surges
 of care grow cooler—or else forever
 after he will suffer a time
 of trouble and distress for as long as
 330 that best of houses stands there on that
 high place!" And, where he sat on his horse,
 the sentry, a fearless officer,
 spoke out: "A sharp shield-warrior—he
 who thinks clearly—must know how to decide
 335 between one or the other: words and works—and
 from what I now hear, this is a company
 friendly towards the lord of the Scyldings!
 • Press onward, bearing your weapons and armor,

and I will guide you; moreover, I will
340 command my youthful thanes to worthily
guard your buoyant vessel, that freshly-tarred
craft on the sand, against every foe,
till that wooden ship with its curved prow carries that
dear man over the sea-streams back to
345 the coast of the Weders, with everyone valiant
in conduct to whom it is given to
survive unscathed the storm of battle!”

That troop left, then, to go on, while the buoyant
craft remained still—that broad-bosomed vessel
350 lay on its rope, was securely anchored.
Above the helmets’ cheek-guards figures
of the boar shone, gold-adorned, gleaming,
and hardened by fire—warlike in purpose,
they stood watch over those ferocious
355 men’s lives. They hurried, marching as one,
till they could perceive that timbered banquet-hall,
splendid and ornamented with gold—
it was the most famous of buildings under
the skies among dwellers of earth, that hall,
360 in which mighty Hrothgar lived: its radiance
beamed over many countries! Then, bold
in battle, the sentry pointed out to
that troop the shining court of proud ones,
so that the Weders could go directly
365 to it. The warrior wheeled his mount, and then
spoke this word: “It is time for me to
depart. May the Father Almighty by
His favor keep you safe in all
of your ventures. I will go to the sea,
370 to stand guard against any hostile army.”

The street was paved with stones, the path showed
the way to the men together. The war-corselet
glittered, hard and linked by hand, and
the bright rings of iron sang in the armor,
375 as, marching, the men at length arrived at
the hall in their fearsome war-mail. Tired

from the sea, they placed their great shields, their
 wondrously mighty bucklers, against the wall of that
 building, and sank to the bench, then: their corselets
 380 rang out, those heroes' armor; spears stood
 together, the seamen's war-gear, with shafts
 of ash-wood tipped with gray at the top —
 that iron-clad company was well furnished
 with weapons! Then a proud hero, there, questioned
 385 the warriors concerning their lineage:
 "Where have you brought those gold-adorned shields from,
 those corselets of gray and those helmets' face-guards,
 that stack of war-shafts? I am Hrothgar's
 herald and officer, and I never
 390 have seen so many men from afar more
 high-spirited! I am satisfied, that,
 owing to bravery—not at all due to
 exile, but out of greatness of heart!—
 you have sought Hrothgar." Then he who was famed
 395 for his courage answered the herald—the valiant
 prince of the Weders, mighty beneath
 his helmet, spoke this word in his turn: "We are
 Hygelac's table-companions; my name
 is Beowulf, and I wish to declare
 400 my mission to Healfdene's son,
 that glorious prince your lord, if he will
 allow us to hail so worthy a man."
 And Wulfgar spoke (He was one of the Wendlas;
 his character was well-known to many,
 405 his courage and wisdom.): "As you request,
 I will ask the friend of the Danes, the lord
 of the Scyldings—that bestower of rings,
 that glorious ruler!—about your venture,
 and quickly make known to you such reply as
 410 that worthy man decided to give me."
 And then he hastily returned
 to where Hrothgar, old and gray-haired, sat with
 his company of retainers—Wulfgar,
 famed for his fearlessness, went till he stood

415 directly before the lord of the Danes
(Wulfgar well knew the custom of
that body of tried retainers!), and spoke
to his friendly ruler: "Geatish folk
have arrived here, having come from afar
420 across the expanse of the sea. Those warriors
call their leader Beowulf, and
they ask, my prince, that they be allowed
to trade words with you—do not refuse them your speech,
kind Hrothgar! In their war-gear they
425 seem worthy of the esteem of earls—
mighty indeed is the prince who led
those warriors here!" Hrothgar spoke, then,
the Scyldings' lord: "I knew him when he
was a boy; his noble father was called
430 Ecgtheow; Hrethel of the Geats
gave him his only daughter in marriage—
and Ecgtheow's hardy offspring has now
come here in search of a proven friend!
What is more, seafarers, they who carried
435 gifts for the Geats' pleasure, there, said
that, famous in war, he has the great strength
of thirty men in the grip of his hand!
I dare to hope this: that God most holy
has in His mercy sent him to us
440 West-Danes, against Grendel's ravaging! I shall
offer that worthy Geat costly
items for his daring—make haste, now,
bid them come in to see our band
of kinsmen gathered together, tell them
445 also with words that they are welcome
among the Danish people!" And then
the widely-known hero hurriedly strode
to the door and announced this word from within:
"My triumphant prince, the East-Dane's leader,
450 bids me say to you that he knows your
noble lineage, and that, bold
in your purpose, here, you are welcome to him

from over the waves of the sea. You now
may enter, in your war-gear and
455 beneath your face-masked helmets, to see
Hrothgar; let your war-shields and wooden
slaughter-shafts await here the outcome
of words." The mighty Beowulf then
arose, with many a man—a splendid
460 company of thanes!—around him;
some remained there, guarding the war-gear
as that strong one commanded them.
The others, with Wulfgar guiding them, hastened
465 together, under Heorot's roof,
where their chieftain, Beowulf, hardy under
his helmet, strode till he stood in the midst,
and then spoke—his armor glittered on him,
the chain-mail linked by a smith's skills: "Hail
470 to you, Hrothgar! I am Hygelac's kinsman
and young retainer, and have, in my youth,
set about many glorious deeds.
This matter of Grendel was clearly known
to me in my country: seafarers say
475 that this hall, this best of buildings, stands empty
and useless to every warrior once
the evening light becomes hidden under
the heavens' glory. For this, my people,
those best, wise nobles, urged me, Prince Hrothgar,
480 that I seek you, because they knew
the might of my prowess: they themselves
looked on when I came from battle blood-stained
from foes, where I had fettered five,
destroyed a family of giants, and slain,
485 in the waves, sea-monsters by night—I suffered
great distress in avenging the Weders'
affliction by crushing their enemies (who had
asked for trouble!); And now, with Grendel,
with that monster, with that demon,
490 I alone will resolve the dispute—
now, Bright-Danes' leader, guardian of

the Scyldings, I wish to ask you one favor;
 that, now that I have journeyed thus far,
 you not refuse me, protector of heroes,
 dear friend of nations, that I—and my band
 495 of earls, this hardy company—may
 cleanse Heorot alone! I have also
 heard, that, in his rashness, the fierce
 foe does not care for weapons—therefore,
 in order that Hygelac, my lord, may think
 500 kindly of me in his heart, I spurn this:
 that I bear sword or broad shield—the yellow
 linden-wood buckler!—to battle; for I
 shall grapple against the fiend with my grip,
 struggling for life, foe against foe;
 505 and he whom death takes, there, must resign
 himself to the judgment of God. I expect that,
 should Grendel prevail, he will fearlessly
 devour us Geatish folk, us chosen
 warriors of the Hrethmen, in the
 510 war-hall, as he did often to others—
 if death should take me, you will not need
 to cover my head, for Grendel will have me,
 glistening with blood; he will carry my gory
 corpse away with the thought of devouring
 515 it, that lone one will ruthlessly dine,
 and stain his retreat in the marsh with my gore—
 and you will no longer need to care
 about the disposal of my body!
 If combat should take me, send back this best
 520 of battle-raiments, which guards my breast—this
 finest of corselets!—to Hygelac. It is
 a legacy of Hrethel, the work
 of Welend. Fate always goes as it must.”
 Then Hrothgar spoke, the Scyldings’ protector:
 525 “Because of acts of merit done, my friend
 Beowulf—and from kindness!—you have
 sought us: your father brought about
 the greatest of feuds by fighting; he was

Heatholafe's slayer-by-hand
 530 among the Wilfings, and the Weder
 people would not shelter him, then,
 because of their dread of war. So from there
 he sought out the South-Dane folk, the Honor-
 Scyldings, over the tossing waves. (I was
 535 ruling the Danish people already,
 possessing, while I was young, the far-spread
 kingdom, the treasury-city of heroes:
 Heorogar was dead, then—my older
 brother, lifeless, Healfdene's
 540 offspring! He was better than I!)
 I thereupon settled that feud with money:
 I sent old treasures over the water's
 back to Wylfings; and your father
 swore oaths to me. But it is a care
 545 to me in my heart to tell anyone
 among men about the harm and sudden
 violence Grendel out of his hatred
 has done me in Heorot; my hall-troop,
 that band of warriors, is wasted,
 550 for fate has swept them away into Grendel's
 horror! (God could easily put
 an end to that maddened ravager's acts!)
 Many times, drunken with beer, my warriors
 boasted over their ale-tankards that they
 555 would wait with the terrors of swords in the beer-hall
 for Grendel's attack. But then in the time
 of the morning this mead-hall, this retainers'
 building, would be spattered with gore,
 when day gleamed, every board in the benches
 560 be dripping with blood—this hall, with the blood
 of battle—and I would have fewer faithful
 ones among that dear troop of tried
 retainers, since death had taken them off.
 But sit at the banquet, now, and make known
 565 to the men your thoughts about the glory
 of victory, as your breast urges." And then

a bench was cleared in the banquet hall
for all of the men of the Geats together;
and strong in spirit they went to sit there,
570 proud in their might. A retainer did
his duty, he who bore in his hands
the ornate ale-flagon, and poured forth
the bright, sweet drink, while from time to time
the scop sang clear-voiced in Heorot—
575 the joy of heroes was there for that body—
noble and not at all few in number!—

of Danes and Weders! Then Unferth, Ecglaf's
offspring, who sat at the feet of the Scyldings'
lord, spoke, unbinding hidden anger
580 (Beowulf's, that courageous seafarer's,
venture was a great vexation
to Unferth, because he would not allow
that any one else could ever achieve
more glory on this midyard of earth
585 beneath the heavens than he himself):
“Are you that Beowulf, he who contended
with Breca, engaging in a dispute
about swimming in the broad sea—where you both,
in your pride, tested the waves, and because of
590 your foolish boasting risked your lives in
deep water? Nobody, neither friend
nor foe, could dissuade you two from that perilous
venture; and then the both of you swam
in the sound—the two of you there embraced,
595 with your arms, the ocean currents, traversed
the paths of the sea, moved quickly with your
hands, glided over the ocean—the flood
was raging with waves, with winter's whelmings!
You both toiled seven nights in the waters'
600 power; he overcame you in swimming,
for he had the greater strength; and then
in the time of the morning the ocean carried
him up to the Heatho-Raemas, from where,
dear to his people he sought his own home—

605 the land of the Brondingas, his fair stronghold,
 where he had countrymen, castle, and
 a ring-treasury—Beanstan's offspring fulfilled
 his every boast to you faithfully! I
 expect worse things of you, therefore—though you
 610 have everywhere prevailed in the storm
 of battle, grim combat!—if you dare
 await Grendel's hour—the length of a night!—
 near by!” Then Beowulf spoke, the offspring
 of Ecgtheow: “Well, now, Unferth my friend,
 615 drunken with beer you have given voice to
 a great many things about Breca, as you
 talked about his voyage! But I
 claim that, in fact, I have had more strength
 in swimming—more bitter strife in the waves!—
 620 than any other man! Young men that
 we were, we two resolved, then, and boasted—
 the both of us were as yet in the time
 of our youth!—that we would venture our lives
 out on the ocean—and afterwards did just
 625 that! As the pair of us swam in the sound,
 each held a naked sword firmly in hand
 (Both of us meant to defend ourselves
 against whales!). He was not able at all
 to swim away from me, far in the waves
 630 of the sea—any faster over the ocean!—
 nor did I wish to leave him. We both
 were together, then, in the flood, for the space
 of five nights, until the waters drove us
 asunder: the sea surged—the coldest of storms!—
 635 the night grew dark; and the north wind, battle-grim,
 turned against us—rough were the waves!
 Then the wrath of the fish in the sea was aroused;
 but there my coat of mail, hard and hand-linked,
 afforded me help against those loathed ones:
 640 that woven battle-garment lay
 adorned with gold on my breast! An angry,
 dangerous enemy drew me down to

the bottom; he held me firmly, fierce
 in his grip—but it was granted to me
 645 that I should strike that monster with
 the point of my war-sword—the storm of battle
 carried the mighty sea-beast away
 through my hand! Thus, loathsome attackers pressed
 me often and hard. I served them with
 650 my cherished sword, as was fitting—they did
 not have their fill of delight at all,
 those doers of evil, that they should devour
 me as they sat round the banquet close
 to the floor of the sea, for in the morning,
 655 wounded with weapons—put to sleep by
 the sword!—those creatures lay up along
 the leavings of waves, the sandy shore, so that
 never again did those monsters hinder
 seafarers in their passage on the high
 660 water-way! Light from the east came, God's bright
 beacon, and the seas subsided,
 so that I could see headlands and windy
 cliffs—fate often protects the hero
 not doomed to die, if his courage is strong—
 665 in any event, it happened to me that
 I slew nine sea-monsters with my sword! I have
 heard of no harder struggle by night
 under the vault of heaven, nor of
 someone more hard-pressed in the sea-streams—
 670 yet I escaped with my life the clutches
 of those enemies, weary as
 I was from that adventure. And then
 the ocean—the flood, because of the current,
 the surging waters—bore me to Finland.
 675 I have heard nothing said about you
 of such contests, of such terrors of weapons;
 Breca has never yet, in the play of
 battle—neither one of you two!—
 done such a daring deed with bright swords—
 680 I do not boast much about this!—while you

became your brothers' slayer—your own
 close kin!—for which you shall suffer damnation
 in Hell, however your wits be about you!
 I tell you truthfully, son of Ecglaf,
 685 that Grendel would never have done so many
 terrors—that horrible fiend, to your prince,
 humiliation in Heorot!—if
 your heart and soul were as fierce in battle
 as you yourself claim; but Grendel has found
 690 out that he need not fear very much
 the enmity and the terrible storming
 of swords of your people, the Victory-Scyldings:
 he takes forced toll and shows mercy to no one
 among the Danish people, for he
 695 carries on as he pleases—he kills
 and destroys, and expects no fight from the Spear-Danes!
 But soon, now, I will show him the strength
 and bravery of the Geats in war,
 and then the man who is able will daringly
 700 go to his mead, when over the children
 of men, another day's morning-light—
 the sun, clothed in radiance—shines from the south!”
 And then that treasure-giver, gray-haired
 and famed in war, rejoiced: that Bright-Danes'
 705 leader firmly expected help,
 that people's guardian heard in Beowulf
 steadfast intent! There was the laughter
 of heroes; that noise was a cheerful uproar,
 their words were joyous. Mindful of that
 710 which is proper, Wealtheow, Hrothgar's
 queen, went forth, and, gold-adorned, greeted
 the men in that hall; the noble woman
 gave the cup first to that guardian of
 the East-Danes' homeland, and bade him, loved
 715 by his people, be blithe at the beer-drinking, there—
 joyfully he partook of the banquet
 and hall-cup, victorious king that he was!
 The lady of the Helmingas then

went round and passed out the precious vessels
720 to tried retainers and young ones on every
hand, till the moment came, when, a ring-adorned
queen noble in spirit, she bore
the meadcup to Beowulf; she greeted
the Geats' prince, and with words of wisdom
725 thanked God that that which was her longing
had happened, so that she could rely
on help against those crimes from some hero!
A warrior fierce in battle, he
received the cup from Wealtheow,
730 and spoke, then—ready for combat, Beowulf,
Ecgtheow's offspring, declared: "When I
set out on the ocean, and sat in the sea-worthy
vessel with my band of men, I
resolved that I would carry out
735 completely the will of your people, or would
fall in the carnage, fast in the grip
of the fiend—I shall do noble deeds
of valor, or have lived, in this meadhall,
to see my last day!" Which word—the Geat's
740 boasting speech—pleased that lady well, and
adorned with gold, the noble folk-queen
went to sit beside her lord.

And then again, as before, brave words
were spoken in the hall—the company
745 joyous, the noise of that victorious
people—till, presently, Healfdene's
son wished to seek his evening's rest;
he knew that Beowulf had meant
to do battle against that monster in that
750 high hall, from the time when they could see
the light of the sun, till the darkening night
over all—the shadowy, helmet-like shapes—
came gliding, black beneath the heavens.

The troop all arose. One hero, Hrothgar,
755 spoke to the other, Beowulf, then,
wished him good luck and power over

the winehall, and gave voice to this word:
“Never before, for as long as I could raise
hand and buckler, have I entrusted
760 this splendid hall of the Danes to any
man, except, now, for you—have, now,
and hold this best of houses, be mindful
of fame, show mighty valor, keep watch
against fierce ones! There will be no lack
765 of costly things for you, should you come through
this courageous deed with your life!” Then Hrothgar,
the prince of the Scyldings, went out of the hall
with his band of heroes; the warrior-chieftain
wished to seek Wealtheow, his queen,
770 as bed-companion. The King of Glory,
as men have heard, had placed a guard
for that hall against Grendel—Beowulf
was performing a special task for the lord
of the Danes, having offered to take the watch
775 against that giant! Truly, the prince
of the Geats firmly trusted his own
brave might and God’s favor! Then he took off
his iron shirt of armor, his helmet
off of his head, and, handing his ornate
780 sword, that choicest of blades, to his
attendant, bade that he guard the war-gear.
And then that worthy one, Beowulf of
the Geats, spoke several words of boasting
before he lay down on his bed: “I believe
785 myself no poorer in battle-prowess,
in works of war, than Grendel himself;
so I will not put him to sleep—take life
away from him!—with the sword, although
I could do just that: though he may be famous
790 in violent deeds, he does not know
of such skills, with which he could strike against me
and hew my shield; so the two of us shall
forego the use of the sword by night—if
he dares seek war without weapons!—and then

795 the all-wise God, the Lord most holy,
 may bestow fame on whichever side
 as seems fitting to Him!" And then that one bold
 in battle laid himself down, and the pillow
 took that earl's features, while around him
 800 many a quick sea-warrior bent
 to his couch in that hall. Not one of them thought,
 that, far from there, he would ever again
 seek his beloved homeland, people,
 or noble town, where he was brought up,
 805 for the men had learned that murderous death
 had taken far too many, before them,
 among the Danish folk, in that winehall.
 However, the Lord Himself gave the men
 of the Weders a weft of good fortune: success
 810 in battle, help and support, so that they
 all overcame their enemy through
 the strength of one man, his bodily might—
 the truth is well known that God Almighty
 has always ruled mankind! But then
 815 that walker in darkness came gliding through
 the murky night—and those marksmen, who should
 have been guarding that gabled building, were slumbering—
 all, that is, except one: it was known
 among men, that, when the Lord did not will it,
 820 that demon-enemy could not drag
 them down to the shades, whereas Beowulf,
 watching with anger for the foe,
 awaited, enraged, the outcome of battle!
 Then, from the moor, beneath the cover
 825 of darkness, Grendel came striding; bearing
 God's anger, the evil ravager meant
 to snare someone of the race of men in
 that lofty hall. He advanced beneath
 the skies to the place where he knew the most surely
 830 that winehall, bright with gold plates—that hall
 of men in which gold was given!—to be. This was
 not the first time that he had visited

Hrothgar's home—yet never, in
the days of this life, before or since, did he,
835 Grendel, find harder luck or hall-heroes!
Bereft of joys, the creature came, then,
making his way to that building. Firm with
fire-forged bonds, the door sprang open
at once, when he touched it with his hands:
840 intent upon evil—enraged as he was!—
the fiend flung open the “mouth” of that building,
whereupon he trod quickly onto
the bright floor—he strode in wrath, and out of
his eyes shone a hideous gleam, which was most
845 of all like a flame! He saw many men in
that building: a band of kinsmen sleeping
together, a troop of young warriors—and
his spirit exulted! The fearsome monster
thought that, before day came, he would part
850 the life from the body of every one of them,
now that the hope of gorging himself
to the full had arisen within him. It was not
fated at all, though, that that monster
was to devour more of mankind
855 after this night! For the powerful kinsman
of Hygelac watched to see how that wicked
transgressor would go about his sudden
attacks! And the fierce foe gave no thought to
delaying things, but as his first exploit
860 he quickly seized a sleeping warrior,
rent him in an instant, bit the
bone-joints, swilled the blood from his veins,
and swallowed the huge chunks of flesh—and soon
had eaten that lifeless one completely,
865 even the feet and the hands! Then, forward
and nearer, Grendel advanced, and seized
with his hands that strong-hearted man on his bed—
the fiend reached towards him with his hand—
and Beowulf met him with hostile intent
870 at once, and sat up, supporting himself

on his arm! And the herdsman of crimes soon found
 that never, throughout the regions of this earth's
 midyard, had he met with a mightier
 hand-grip in any other man; and
 875 the foe became frightened in his heart
 and his mind, but could leave there none the sooner,
 his soul within him was anxious to get
 away, he wanted to flee to the darkness
 and seek the concourse of devils—his way
 880 of life here was not like anything he had
 ever gone through before in all
 of the days of his life! And then that good one,
 the kinsman of Hygelac, remembered
 his speech of the evening, stood upright, and firmly
 885 laid hold of Grendel, crushing his fingers—
 the giant was trying to make his escape,
 but the earl stepped ahead of him: if he were able
 to do so, there, that widely-known creature
 meant to fly somewhere further away
 890 and flee from there to his refuge in
 the marshes—but knew that the strength of his fingers
 was in the grip of a furious foe!
 (That was a grievous journey, which that
 malicious enemy had made
 895 to Heorot!) The splendid hall
 reverberated, and to all
 of the Danes, to those castle-dwellers, to each
 of those valiant ones, to those earls, that was
 a cup of terror! Both of the savage
 900 occupants of that house were enraged,
 the building resounded, and it was a
 great wonder that that winehall withstood
 those bold in battle—that, a fair earthly
 dwelling, it did not fall to the ground!
 905 However, that hall was firmly made fast
 within and without with bands of iron
 from the skilled forging of smiths—though there,
 as I have heard say, many a gold-adorned

mead-bench started up from the floor,
910 where those ferocious ones were battling.
(Never before had wisemen among
the Scyldings thought this: that any man
could ever in any way burst that building,
splendid and antler-adorned, apart—
915 destroy it with cunning—unless the fire's
embrace should swallow it in heat.) Then a
noise mounted upwards, new in full measure:
a terrible fear came over the North-Danes,
to every one of those who, on top
920 of the wall, heard weeping—God's enemy singing
a grisly lay, a song without victory,
Hell's own captive lamenting his pain!
Beowulf, who of men was the strongest
in vigor during that day of this life,
925 was holding him fast! For Beowulf—that
protector of nobles!—would not by any
means let that murderous visitant get
away alive! (The Geat did not
believe that Grendel's life's days were useful
930 to any of the nations!) And then one
warrior of Beowulf after
another drew his ancient heirloom,
his sword; he wanted to protect
the life of his lord, of his glorious prince,
935 if he could do so. As they took part
in that strife, though—bold-minded warriors!—
and meant to hew Grendel to pieces from every
side—to seek out his life!—they did not
know this: that none of the best of irons
940 on earth, none of those war-swords, could harm
that outlaw, for he had rendered weapons
of victory useless—every sort of
edge!—by a spell! His leave-taking on
that day of this life, however, was to be
945 wretched, and the alien spirit
journey afar into the power

of fiends. Then he who formerly had
committed many sins with mischief
at heart against mankind—Grendel
950 was in a feud against God!—found this: that
his body would not help him, for Hygelac's
proud-hearted kinsman had him by
the hand! (While living, each of those two
was loathsome to the other!) The horrible
955 monster felt bodily pain: an enormous
wound appeared on his shoulder, thews
sprang apart, and body-joints burst—and glory
in battle was given by fate to Beowulf!
Mortally wounded, Grendel had to
960 flee from there under the fen-slopes, and seek
his joyless dwelling! He knew all the more
that the end of his life, the numbering of
his days, had come—whereas, after that fight
to the death, gladness arose in all
965 of the Danes! For he, who, wise and great-hearted,
had come from afar before, had now cleansed
Hrothgar's hall, had saved it from
attack, and exulted in that night's work, those
heroic deeds! The prince of the Geatish
970 men had fulfilled his boast to the East-Danes,
as well as making amends for all
of their grief, their sorrow wrought by malice,
which they had suffered before, and had had
to endure from harsh need, no small distress—
975 that was a clear sign, when Beowulf, bold
in battle, laid down the hand, the arm,
and the shoulder—Grendel's grip was there, all
together!—beneath the broad roof! And then,
in the morning, there was, as I heard, many
980 a warrior around that gift-hall;
folk-chieftains travelled from far and near over
wide-stretching ways to behold the wonder,
that loathsome one's footprints. His parting from life
did not seem grievous to any of

985 those men, who gazed at the track of that
 inglorious one, how weary of heart—
 defeated in battle, near death, and put
 to flight!—he had borne the signs of a fading
 life away from there to the lake
 990 of the water-monsters. There the bloody
 water was seething— the terrible surf
 of the waves, all mingled with steaming gore,
 boiled with the blood of battle; fated
 to die, he had hidden; and then, deprived
 995 of joys, he gave up his life, his heathen
 soul, in that fen-refuge; there Hell
 received him. Now old retainers—many
 a young one as well—turned back from there
 in their joyous journey, to ride, in high spirits,
 1000 their mounts away from that lake, warriors
 on white horses. Then Beowulf's glorious
 deed was recounted: many said often
 that, south or north, between the seas over
 the wide earth, no other man beneath
 1005 the sky's expanse was any better
 among shield-possessors, more worthy of
 a kingdom. However, they did not blame
 their friendly lord, the gracious Hrothgar,
 one bit, because he was a good king.
 1010 At times, now, war-famed, they let their fallow
 mounts gallop, speeding in contest where
 the earth roads seemed to those riders to be
 fair, to be plainly in good repair.
 At times the king's thane, a man filled with glorious
 1015 words and mindful of stories—he who
 recalled so much from a great many sagas
 of old—found other words, truthfully joined:
 upon which, the hero began to relate
 with knowledge Beowulf's exploit, and tell
 1020 an apt tale skillfully, varying
 the words. He recited everything
 that he had heard said about Sigemund's deeds of

valor, many of which were unknown:
 his—Wael's son's—struggle, his ventures abroad—
 1025 of the things which the children of men knew nothing
 at all—of the ill will and the misdeeds!—
 except Fitela with him, whenever he wished
 to speak of such things, uncle to nephew—
 his sister's son—for the two men were ever
 1030 comrades-in-need in every strife.
 (They had slain with swords a great many of
 the race of giants!) No little glory
 sprang up for Sigemund after the day
 of his death, for, hardy in warfare, he
 1035 had killed the serpent, the guardian of
 a hoard of treasure: an aetheling's offspring,
 Sigemund had, in a daring exploit,
 ventured alone beneath the gray rock,
 Fitela not being with him; yet it was
 1040 granted him that that sword pierced the rarely-marked
 serpent, so that, a lordly iron,
 the weapon stuck fast in the rock-face—and
 the dragon died in torment! The awesome
 Sigemund had bravely brought it
 1045 about that he could enjoy that ring-hoard
 according to his own pleasure—Wael's offspring
 loaded the sea-going craft, he bore
 the bright treasures into the vessel's bosom!
 The serpent melted in its own heat.
 1050 Now, Sigemund was the most renowned
 of heroes afar throughout the nations,
 a warriors' protector through valorous
 deeds—for which he had prospered—after
 Heremod's war-making lessened, his strength
 1055 and his courage. When with the Jutes, he was
 betrayed from that time forward into
 the power of fiends—was quickly despatched!
 The surging of cares had oppressed him too long,
 to his people, to all of the nobles, he had
 1060 become a great sorrow; often, indeed,

many a wise man in earlier times
had bemoaned the strong-willed one's going away—
had hoped for relief from harm through him, that
that offspring of a chieftain should prosper,
1065 receive the rank of his father, protect
the people, the treasury and stronghold,
the realm of heroes, the Scyldings' home.
There Beowulf, Hygelac's kinsman, became
the dearer to all—to mankind, to his friends;
1070 whereas evil had entered Heremod.

At times, now, contesting their steeds, that party
measured the pale gravel road. By then
the morning light had advanced and made haste,
and many a retainer, bold in
1075 purpose, came to that lofty hall
to behold the strange wonder; indeed, the king
himself, that ring-hoards' guardian, stepped,
in his fame—well-known for his virtues!—away
from his lady's chamber with a great troop,
1080 and with him his consort measured the path
to the mead-hall with a bevy of maidens.

Then Hrothgar spoke—he went to the hall
and stood on the steps; he saw the high roof
gleaming with gold, saw Grendel's hand:
1085 “For this sight may thanks be given at once
to the Almighty! I have gone through
much that was hateful—griefs at the hands
of Grendel!—but God, the King of Glory,
can ever work wonder after wonder!
1090 It was not long ago that I did
not think that I would ever live
to see relief from any of my
troubles, when this best of houses stood
blood-stained—gory from swords!—a far-reaching
1095 woe to each of my councillors,
to those who did not expect that they
would ever be able to defend
this people's stronghold from enemies,

from demons and evil spirits. But now,
 1100 through the might of the Lord, a hero has done
 the deed which we all could not contrive
 to do, by our cunning, before. Hear me!
 Truly, the woman who bore such a son
 among mankind may declare, if she is
 1105 still living, that the Ancient of Days
 was gracious to her in child-bearing! Now,
 Beowulf, best of heroes, I will
 love you in my heart as my son!
 Keep this new kinship well from now on, there
 1110 will be no lack for you of such
 of this world's goods over which I hold sway! Very
 often have I appointed reward
 for less—an honoring with gifts
 for a lowlier hero, weaker in conflict,
 1115 while you yourself have brought it about
 with deeds that your fame will live forever
 and ever! May the Lord Almighty
 reward you with riches, as He has done
 up to now!" Then Beowulf spoke, Ecgtheow's
 1120 offspring: "With much good will, we brought
 about that good work—that combat!—daringly
 trying that fearsome one's might! I wish
 the more that you could have seen the demon
 himself, in his trappings and wearied to death.
 1125 I meant to fetter him quickly with powerful
 grips on that bed of slaughter, so that,
 due to my hand-grasp, he would have to
 lie fighting for his life, there—unless
 his body should flee! Since the Lord was not willing,
 1130 I was unable to hinder his going,
 I did not clasp him—my mortal enemy!—
 firmly enough for that, the fiend
 was far too powerful in his striding!
 However, by way of saving his life,
 1135 he let his hand, his arm, and his shoulder—
 his mark!—remain behind; but the wretched

hero did not gain any solace
 that way, the loathsome despoiler will not
 live any the longer, oppressed by his crimes,
 1140 for pain has tightly embraced him in
 a hard grip with evil fetters; and there
 that man stained with guilt must await the great judgment,
 to see how the glorious Creator
 will deal with him." And then Unferth, the offspring
 1145 of Ecglaf, was a quieter man
 with respect to boastful speech about works
 of war, since, through one earl's prowess, those nobles
 were staring at that hand—at that enemy's
 fingers!—against the high roof: each at
 1150 the tip—each one of those rigid nails!—
 was most of all like steel, a heathen
 warrior's hand-spur, horrible, monstrous!
 Everyone said that nothing, however
 hard—no weapon of iron, good from of
 1155 old!—would maim the monster, so as
 to weaken that bloody battle-hand! It was
 bidden at once, then, that Heorot be
 adorned within by hands—and many
 there were, both men and women, who made
 1160 that winehall, that guesthall, ready! The hangings
 along the walls glittered, interwoven
 with gold—many wondrous sights to all men
 who gaze on such things! All of that splendid
 building was heavily damaged, though fast
 1165 within with bands of iron, and
 the hinges were sprung apart; the roof
 alone came through completely unharmed,
 when, guilty of crimes, the monster turned
 in flight, despairing for his life.
 1170 That is not easy to flee from—try it
 who will!—for, forced by that need, each of
 the soul-bearers, of men's offsprings—each of
 the dwellers on earth!—must seek the place
 prepared where his body, fast on its bed

1175 of death, will slumber after the banquet.
 And then it was the moment and hour
 when Healfdene's son should go to
 the hall—the king himself would partake
 of the feast! And I have never heard
 1180 that folk in a greater company bore
 themselves better around their treasure-giver!
 Famous, then, they sat at the bench
 and rejoiced in that plenty; fittingly,
 their bold-minded kinsmen, Hrothgar and Hrothulf
 1185 drank many a meadcupful in that lofty
 dwelling—Heorot, then, was filled
 within with friends, the People-Scyldings
 were not devising treachery at
 all at that time! And then, as reward
 1190 for the victory, Healfdene's offspring
 presented Beowulf with a golden
 banner—an ornate battle-standard—
 a helmet, a coat of mail—and a famous
 and costly sword, which many saw borne
 1195 before that hero! And Beowulf drank
 a tankardful as he stood on the floor,
 he did not need to be ashamed
 of that costly gift in front of those marksmen!
 (I have not heard of many men giving
 1200 four gold-adorned treasures to another
 man at the ale-bench, in a more friendly
 fashion!) Without, around the crown
 of the helmet, a rim wound with wives caressed
 that head-guard, so that the leavings of files—
 1205 swords hardened in the storm of battle—
 could not injure him badly, when,
 a shield-bearing warrior, he should go forth
 against his foes. Then Hrothgar, that nobles'
 defender, bade that eight horses with gold-covered
 1210 cheek-plates be led onto the floor
 within that great room; on one of the steeds
 was a skilfully ornamented saddle,

studded with gems—it was the high king's
 own war-seat, when, Healfdene's son,
 1215 he wished to bring about sword-play. (That widely-
 known one's war-making never failed in
 the front when the slain were falling!) And then
 the prince of the friends of Ing, the Danes,
 gave into Beowulf's keeping both
 1220 of these two, horses and weapons, bidding
 him use them well. Thus that famous prince,
 that guardian of the treasures of heroes,
 rewarded those storms of battle nobly
 with horses and riches, so that no man—
 1225 he who desires so speak the truth with
 justice—will ever deride them! Further,
 that lord of earls gave a treasure—an heirloom—
 to each of those at the mead-bench who
 had made that journey over the sea
 1230 with Beowulf, and ordered that gold
 be paid for the one whom Grendel had, in
 his sin, slain earlier—as he would
 have more of them, had not God the All-Wise—
 and that man's valor!—defended them
 1235 against fate—the Lord ruled all of mankind,
 as He still does now; and so, understanding—
 forethought of mind—is best in every
 way: he who long enjoys this world, here,
 during these days of struggle, must live through
 1240 much that he loves and much that he loathes!
 But song, now, and music were mingled together,
 there, in the presence of Healfdene's
 battle-leader; the harp, the glee-wood,
 was plucked, and a tale told often, whenever
 1245 Hrothgar's minstrel was to give voice
 to hall-regalement along the meadbench
 about the sons of Finn, when the sudden
 onslaught befell them, and the Half-Danes'
 hero, Hnaef of the Scyldings, was to
 1250 fall on the Frisian battlefield: "Truly,

Hildeburh did not need to praise the
 good faith of the Jutes: guiltless herself,
 she was, in the shield-play, deprived of her dear ones,
 a son and a brother; wounded by
 1255 the spear, they fell as was fated—a mourning
 lady was she: Hoc's daughter, not
 at all without reason did she lament
 the decree of fate when morning came
 and she could behold, beneath the sky,
 1260 the slaughter of kinsmen, where before
 she had had the greatest of worldly joy!
 The battle had borne off all of Finn's thanes,
 save ony a few—he thus could not fight
 to a finish, at that place of meeting,
 1265 the fight against Hengest at all, nor drive out
 those sad survivors of the thanes
 of Prince Hnaef by warfare; so the Frisians
 offered them terms, by which they could clear
 all of another floor for them—
 1270 a hall and high seat—and that they would be
 allowed to have control over half
 with the sons of the Jutes, while at the giving
 of treasures, Folcwalda's offspring, Finn,
 would honor the Danes every day—would treat Hengest's
 1275 company well with arm-rings, fully
 as much as, with gold-plated treasures, he—Finn—
 would comfort the Frisian folk in the beer-hall.
 On both sides, then, they agreed upon a
 firm treaty of peace. To Hengest, Finn—
 1280 his valor unquestioned!—declared, with oaths,
 that he then would rule those sad survivors
 with kindness, according to the advice
 of his councillors—provided that no
 man there, by words or deeds, should break
 1285 the agreement, nor ever complain about it
 through malice, though they were following
 their ring-giver's slayer, now that that
 necessity had thus been imposed

upon them, deprived of their prince as they were;
 1290 if, on the other hand, any one
 of the Frisians should speak daringly, calling
 that murderous hatred to mind, then the edge
 of the sword would have to settle the matter.
 But now the funeral pyre was made ready,
 1295 and fine gold brought from the hoard; the best
 of the warriors of the Army-Scyldings—
 Hnaef!—was prepared for the flames: the blood-stained
 corselet was easily seen on the pile,
 the boar-figure all of gold—the boar-image
 1300 hard as iron—as well as many
 an aetheling, done away with by wounds.
 (Some few had fallen in that slaughter!)
 Close by Hnaef's pyre, then, Hildburh bade her
 own son be given over to
 1305 the flames, those bone-vessels, bodies, be burned—
 he be placed on the pyre by his uncle's—her brother Hnaef's—
 shoulder! The lady mourned, lamenting
 in dirges, the warrior was lifted,
 that greatest of death-fires writhed towards the clouds
 1310 and roared in front of the barrow—heads melted,
 wound-gapes burst, and the blood gushed forth from
 the body's loathsome slashes. The blaze,
 most greedy of spirits, swallowed all those
 from either people, whom battle had taken
 1315 off, there—their glory had passed away.
 Bereft of friends, then, the warriors went
 to visit their dwellings—to see the land
 of Frisia, their homes and high town. Yet in utter
 misery, Hengest remained with Finn
 1320 that slaughter-stained winter; he—Hengest—bore
 his homeland in mind, though unable to drive
 that ship with its curved prow over the sea—
 the ocean seethed in the storm and strove
 with the wind, while winter fettered the waves
 1325 with its bonds of ice, till another spring
 arrived at the dwellings of men. (Just as it

does even now, for the gloriously
 bright weathers always observe the seasons!)
 Then winter was over, earth's bosom was fair,
 1330 and that exile—that guest—was eager to leave
 that dwelling: but he was thinking more
 of revenge for harm done than of the sea-path,
 of whether he could carry through to
 the finish a hostile meeting in battle
 1335 (for secretly he was bearing in mind
 the sons of the Jutes). He therefore did not
 refuse the way of the world, when on
 his lap the son of Hunlaf placed
 a flame-of-battle—the finest of blades,
 1340 its edges were known among the Jutes!
 In this way, cruel death by the sword
 befell the bold-spirited Finn in his turn—
 at his own home, when Guthlaf and Oslaf
 protested that fierce attack and their sorrow
 1345 after that ocean voyage: they blamed
 Finn for their share of woes, their restless
 spirit could not be contained in their breast—
 and the hall was reddened, then, with the life-blood
 of foes, Finn slain as well—that king
 1350 with his troop—and his consort taken. The Scyldings'
 archers brought all of the household goods
 of the king of that land to the ship, whatever
 they could find in Finn's home of jewels
 and curious gems; and brought that noble
 1355 lady over the path of the sea
 to the Danes, leading her back to her people."
 The lay was sung, the gleeman's story.
 Then merriment arose in its turn,
 bench-revelry sounded loudly, and cupbearers
 1360 poured forth wine from wondrous vessels.
 Then Wealthew came forth to make
 her way beneath her tiara of gold
 to where the two worthy ones were sitting,
 Hrothgar and Hrothulf, uncle and nephew;

1365 peace was between them, as yet, each true to
 the other. There also, at the feet
 of the Scyldings' lord, sat Unferth the spokesman;
 all of them trusted his mind, that he had
 great heart, though he may not have been kind
 1370 to his own kin at sword-play. But now
 the queen of the Scyldings spoke: "Accept
 this full cup, my noble master, my giver
 of treasure! Gold-friend of heroes, be joyful
 and speak to the Geats with words of kindness,
 1375 as one should do! Be gracious towards
 the Geats—and mindful of gifts you now have
 from near and far: I am told that you wish
 to have that warrior as a son;
 this splendid ring-hall, Heorot, has been
 1380 purged—make use while you can of many
 a mead-gift, and leave to your own kinsmen
 people and realm when you must go forth
 to behold fate's judgment. I know my gracious
 Hrothulf—that he will rule the young warriors
 1385 honorably, if, friend of the Scyldings,
 you leave this world earlier than he;
 I expect that he will repay our offspring
 with good, if he remembers at all
 the kindnesses which both of us did
 1390 for his pleasure and honor before, when he was
 still a child." Then she walked to the bench
 where her sons, Hrothric and Hrothmund, were, and
 the offspring of heroes, young men together;
 there beside those two brothers sat
 1395 that worthy one, Beowulf of the Geats—
 to him was borne the full goblet, friendship
 offered with words, and twisted gold
 bestowed with good will: two armlets, a corselet,
 and rings, and the greatest of neck-adornments
 1400 of which I have ever heard upon earth—
 I have never heard beneath the sky of
 a better hoard-gem of heroes, since Hama

bore to the shining stronghold that Brosings'
 neck-ring—jewel and costly setting!—
 1405 fled Eormanric's crafty hatreds,
 and chose eternal counsel. Hygelac
 of the Geats, Swerting's grandson,
 had that ring on his final venture,
 when he protected that treasure beneath
 1410 his banner, defended that spoil of war; fate
 bore him away when he in his pride
 sought woes in that feud with the Frisians: a mighty
 prince, he wore that adornment—those precious
 stones!—across the cup of the waves—
 1415 and perished beneath his buckler, his—that king's—
 body, the mail-shirt and neck-ring as well,
 then coming into the power of
 the Franks—less worthy warriors plundered
 the carrion after that cutting down
 1420 in battle, the men of the Geats remained
 on that place of corpses. The hall resounded
 with noise of approval, then Wealtheow
 spoke out; in front of that host, she said,
 “Enjoy with good luck this precious circlet,
 1425 dear Beowulf, young man that you are,
 and use this corselet from the people's
 treasures, and thrive well—make yourself known
 by your prowess, and be kind to these boys
 in counsel—for which I have a reward
 1430 for you in mind! You have brought about that
 for which all men, far or near, will praise you
 forever, even as widely as
 the sea surrounds the home of the winds,
 the lofty headlands. O prince, be happy
 1435 as long as you live! I wish you well
 of your treasures! Joyful as you are,
 be kindly, will you, in deeds to my son!
 Here every earl is true to the others,
 mild in spirit and loyal to
 1440 his lord; the thanes are as one, the people

all ready—flushed with drink, the men do
 my bidding!” Then she went to the throne.
 The finest of feasts was there, in that hall,
 heroes were drinking their wine—not knowing
 1445 fate—dire destiny!— as it had come
 to pass for many of the earls.
 And when evening had come, and Hrothgar had gone
 to his chambers, that mighty one to his rest, a great
 number of noblemen guarded that hall,
 1450 as they had often done in the past;
 they cleared the benches away from the floor,
 which was overspread, then, with beds and bolsters
 (One of those beer-drinkers, ready for death
 and doomed to die, lay down to that hall-rest!)
 1455 and placed, by their heads, their battle-shields,
 those bright, wooden bucklers; there on the bench
 above each nobleman was easily
 seen the helmet that towered in battle,
 the ring-mail corselet, and the great, wooden
 1460 spear-shaft: it was the men’s way that they were
 ever prepared for warfare, whether
 at home or abroad with the army—in either
 event, at just such times when distress
 beset their lord—that troop of retainers
 1465 was worthy! Then they sank to their sleep.
 And one sorely paid for his evening’s rest,
 as had very often befallen them, while
 Grendel was guarding that gold-hall, and doing
 evil, until the end came, death
 1470 after crime. It then became clear, known widely
 to men, that an avenger yet lived
 after that loathed one—a long time after
 that grievous struggle: Grendel’s mother,
 woman—a monster-lady!—was brooding
 1475 over her misery, she who had had to
 dwell in those terror-filled waters, those icy
 currents, after Cain had become
 the slayer-by-sword of his only brother,

that kinsman on his father's side; Cain
 1480 left, then, outlawed and marked for that murder,
 to flee from the joy of life among men,
 and guard waste-places. From him sprang many
 fated spirits; Grendel was one
 of these, a hateful, savage foe, who
 1485 had found at Heorot a watchful
 Beowulf awaiting the combat;
 the fiend laid hold of him there, but he
 remembered his mighty power, the lavish
 gift which God had granted him, and he
 1490 trusted the Lord for favor, comfort,
 and help—by which he overcame
 that foe, defeated that demon from hell,
 who then, an enemy of mankind,
 departed, wretched and deprived
 1495 of joy, to see the place of his death.
 And his mother, greedy and sad in spirit
 as yet, wanted to go on a mournful
 journey to avenge the death
 of her son! She came, then, to Heorot, where
 1500 the Ring-Danes were sleeping throughout that hall—
 and then, for those earls, there was at once
 a return to the old ways, when Grendel's mother
 made her way in, though the terror was less,
 by just so much as the prowess of women,
 1505 the battle-terror of females, is, as
 compared with that of the male-weaponed sex,
 whenever the bound sword, forged by the hammer,
 the blood-stained blade with strong edges, cleaves
 the boar-image on the helmet opposite.
 1510 Then in the hall the hard-edge was drawn,
 the sword above the benches, many
 a broad shield lifted firmly in hand
 (One gave no thought to his helmet or his
 great shirt of mail, when that terror seized him!)—
 1515 she was in haste, and wished to be out
 of there to protect her life, as soon as

she was discovered: quickly and firmly,
she had seized one of those aethelings, and then
she went to the moor. He was, to Hrothgar,
1520 the most beloved of heroes holding
the rank of a thane between the seas—
a mighty shield-warrior, he whom she
had killed on his bed, a glorious prince!
(Beowulf was not there, for another
1525 lodging had been appointed for the
illustrious Geat earlier, after
the giving of treasure.) There was an outcry
in Heorot, she had borne away,
beneath its dripping gore, the famed hand—
1530 care was renewed, it had come to pass
in the dwellings! That exchange was not worthy,
that they should have to pay on both sides with
the lives of their friends! Then, aged and wise,
the king, that gray-haired warrior, was
1535 disturbed in his mind when he knew his chief
retainer was lifeless, that dearest one dead;
and Beowulf, that hero of victories,
was called hastily to the king's chambers.
At break of day, then, the Geat—a noble
1540 earl, the glorious champion
himself—went with his comrades to where
the prudent Hrothgar was waiting to see
if the Almighty would ever, after
these sorrowful tidings, bring about
1545 a change for the better. Along the floor, then,
that man noteworthy in war strode with his
hand-picked troop—the hall-wood resounding—
until he addressed that wise one—the lord
of Ing's Friends, the Danes—with words, and asked, if
1550 according to his wishes, the night had been
pleasant for him. Then Hrothgar spoke,
the Scyldings' protector: "Do not ask
about happiness! Grief is renewed for the Danish
people! Aeschere, the older

1555 brother of Yrmenlafe, is dead—
 my advisor and my counsellor,
 my shoulder-companion when we guarded
 our heads in battle as foot-troops were clashing
 and smiting the boar-figures! Such should an earl be—
 1560 an aetheling long good!— as Aeschere was!
 His slayer-by-hand in Heorot was
 a wandering, murderous ghoul! I do not know
 where that dreadful one, glorying in that
 carrion, went on her journey back,
 1565 the while she rejoiced in that feast! She avenged
 that feud, then, in which last night you killed Grendel
 violently with strong grips, because
 he had for too long diminished and
 destroyed my people! He fell in the fight,
 1570 having forfeited his life: but another
 mighty, evil ravager
 has come, now, wishing to avenge
 her offspring—and, in avenging that feud, has gone
 far, as it may seem to many
 1575 a thane who weeps in his breast—a grievous
 sorrow at heart!—for Aeschere,
 that giver of treasure! The hand lies dead, now,
 that treated you well in every good thing! I have
 heard the land-dwellers, there—my people,
 1580 counsellors in the hall—say this: that
 they have observed two such, huge, border-marsh
 stalkers—strange spirits!—guarding the moor.
 One of the pair, as far as my people
 were able to tell the most surely, was of
 1585 a woman's likeness; the other wretched
 one trod the paths of an exile in
 the form of a man, although he was larger
 than any other man; in the old days
 earth-dwellers named him Grendel; they knew of
 1590 no father of his, or whether, of
 the furtive spirits, any had been
 born to him earlier. Those two guard

a hidden region of wolf-slopes, windy
 bluffs, with a dangerous fen-path where
 1595 the mountain-torrent falls down under
 the murky mists of the headlands, a current
 under the earth. It is not far off, as
 measured by miles, that that mere lies;
 frost-covered groves hang above it—a wood
 1600 firm-rooted overshadows the water—
 and there every night may be witnessed a fearful
 wonder: fire on the flood! Of the children
 of men, the man who is old and wise does not
live who knows that lake-floor! Although
 1605 the heath-prancer, harried by hounds—the strong-horned
 hart—having fled from afar may seek
 the woods, he will sooner give up his life—
 his very life on the bank!—before he will
 enter to hide his head—no pleasant
 1610 place, that! From there the surging water
 arises black to the clouds while the wind
 stirs up the loathsome storms, till the air
 becomes dismal and the heavens weep.
 Now help once more is dependent on you
 1615 alone; you do not yet know that region,
 that dangerous place, where you may find that
 so greatly guilty person—seek if
 you dare! I will reward you with wealth for
 that feud, with ancient treasure, as
 1620 I did earlier—with twisted gold,
 if you come away safe!” Then Beowulf, Ecgtheow’s
 son, spoke: “Do not sorrow, wise ruler,
 for it is better for each man that he
 avenge his friend, rather than mourn much. Every
 1625 one of us must await the end
 of life in the world; let him who may
 win glory before death—this is best
 for the lifeless warrior afterwards!
 Arise, defender of the realm, let
 1630 us go at once to observe the track

of Grendel's dam! I promise you this:
that she will never escape to the darkness:
not to the bosom of earth, nor to
the mountain-forest, nor to the sea-floor,
1635 go where she will! Have patience, today,
towards each of your woes, as I expect
you to!" And that aged one leaped up, then, and
thanked God, the Lord Almighty, for what
Beowulf had said. Then a horse,
1640 a steed with a plaited mane, was bridled
for Hrothgar. The wise prince rode in splendor,
a foot-troop of shield-possessors strode
beside him. Footprints were widely plain
along the paths of the forest, the track
1645 over the fields, where she had gone straight
across the murky moor, as she carried
that finest of young retainers, lifeless—
the finest of those who with Hrothgar had
watched over that house! Those aethelings' offspring
1650 passed over steep stone slopes, then, narrow
paths—trails narrow and lonely, an unknown
tract!—steep headlands, and many abodes
of water-monsters! Then, with a few
of his wise men, Hrothgar rode ahead
1655 to spy out the land, till suddenly he
found mountain-trees leaning over gray stone,
a joyless wood; beneath lay water,
gory and roiled. And for all of the Danes,
for the friends of the Scyldings, that suffering was grievous:
1660 at heart, then—for many a hero, an aching
for every one of those earls!—when they came
upon Aeschere's head on that mere-cliff! The flood boiled
with blood—that folk gazed upon it!—with steaming
gore! Again and again, the horn sang
1665 its eager war-song, that band on foot all
sat down—and saw then, about the water,
many of the serpent-kind, strange
sea-dragons exploring the sound—and, lying

as well, on the bluff-slopes, water-monsters
 1670 like those who in the morning-time often
 carry out a voyage disastrous
 to ships on the sail-road!—serpents and savage
 beasts! The monsters fell away, fierce
 and enraged—they had heard the sound, the war-horn
 1675 singing! Then, with his bow, the prince
 of the Geats parted one of those monsters
 from life, from the strife with the waters, so that
 the hard war-arrow stuck in his vitals;
 he was the weaker at swimming in
 1680 the mere, for death took him; and, at once,
 that rare wave-roamer was sorely pressed, in
 the waves, with boar-spears fiercely barbed—
 attacked with force, and drawn onto the bluff,
 where the men stared at the horrible creature.
 1685 Then Beowulf, not fearing at all
 for his life, adorned himself in his armor;
 his war-corselet, that which—hand-linked and broad
 and cunningly ornamented, would have
 to explore the sound—knew how to defend
 1690 his body, so that the hostile grip
 could not injure his breast, the wily grasp
 of an angry foe his—Beowulf’s—life;
 while the shining helmet, that which protected
 his head, would have to stir up the lake-floor
 1695 and seek the surging water, was
 adorned with treasure—encircled with splendid
 chains, as, in days of old, the weapon-smith
 wrought it, wondrously shaped it and set it
 about with boar-figures, so that, thereafter,
 1700 no brand or battle-sword could pierce it.
 And not the least of mighty aids, then,
 was that which Unferth, Hrothgar’s spokesman,
 lent Beowulf in his need: the hilted
 sword’s name was Hrunting, and it was one
 1705 of the foremost of ancient treasures; the blade
 was of iron, adorned with poisonous twig-shapes,

and hardened in that battle-sweat, blood—
 never in war had that weapon failed any
 man among those who had grasped it with their
 1710 hands, whoever had dared set forth on
 dangerous ventures to the place
 of battle with hostile ones! This was not
 the first time when that sword would do
 a valorous deed! Yet the son of Ecglaf,
 1715 Unferth, mighty in strength, was giving
 no thought to what he had spoken before,
 while drunken with wine, when he lent that weapon,
 now, to the better swordsman—Unferth
 himself did not dare to risk his life
 1720 beneath the wave-tumult, to go through with
 brave acts: there on the bank he lost
 his glory, fame for his courage; but this
 was not how it was with the other, once
 he had readied himself for battle. Beowulf
 1725 spoke, then, Ecgtheow's offspring: "Famed son
 of Healfdene, recall, now—now, that,
 wise prince—gold-friend of heroes!—I am
 prepared for this venture—what we two said
 before: that if, for your good, I should lose
 1730 my life, you would always stand in the place
 of a father to me when I am gone.
 If battle takes me, be guardian to
 my young retainers, my close companions;
 further, beloved Hrothgar, send those
 1735 treasures which you bestowed upon me
 to Hygelac, for the ruler of
 the Geats may then perceive in that gold—
 the son of Hrethel see, when he gazes
 upon that wealth—that I found a ring-giver
 1740 worthy in manly virtues, and
 enjoyed his bounty while I might. And
 let Unferth have my ancient heirloom,
 this ornate, wave-patterned sword—that widely-known
 man this hard-edge; I will gain fame

1745 for myself with Hrunting, or death will take me
away!" After these words, the prince
of the Weder-Geats hastened with zeal—
in no wise would he await a reply, and
the lake-surge received that warrior; but
1750 it was the better part of a day
before he could perceive the lake-floor.
And then at once she, who, fiercely ravenous—
savage and greedy!—had guarded the
expanse of the waters for fifty years,
1755 discovered this: that one of the race
of men from above was exploring the home
of the monsters. She clutched at him, then, and seized
that warrior with her horrible claws; yet
none the more did she injure that hale
1760 body within—without and around
the ring-armor sheltered it, so that she could
not pierce that battle-dress, that locked coat of
mail, with her loathsome fingers. Then, when
she came to the bottom, the sea-wolf carried
1765 that prince of rings to her dwelling, so that,
no matter how daring he was, he could not
wield weapons. (And very many strange creatures
assailed him in the water, many
a sea-beast tried to break through that corselet
1770 with battle-tusks—those monsters pursued him!)
And then the earl perceived that he was
in some unfriendly hall, where no water
harmed him in any way—the flood's sudden
onslaught could not reach him because
1775 of that roofed hall; then he saw a fire-light,
a brilliant beam shining brightly—and that
worthy one then saw the accursed
she-monster of the lake-depths, the mighty
mere-hag; and he gave a great thrust
1780 to his war-sword, his hand did not withhold
the blow, so that on her head that ring-adorned
sword sang its greedy war-song. But then

that visitor found that that flashing blade
 of battle would not slash, would not injure
 1785 her life; rather, the edge failed that prince
 in his need! (The weapon had gone through many
 hand-to-hand clashes in days gone by,
 had sheared through the helmet often, as well as
 the doomed one's war-corselet.) This was the first
 1790 time, then, for that dear treasure, that its
 glory had failed—still Hygelac's kinsman
 was firm—not at all slack in his courage,
 and mindful of glorious deeds: the angry
 warrior threw that sword with curved markings—
 1795 bound as it was with adornments!—aside, so
 that, strong and steel-edged, it lay on the earth.
 He trusted his own strength, now, the might
 in his hand-grip. So a man must do, when
 he wants to gain lasting praise in battle,
 1800 he must not care at all for his life! Then—
 not at all shrinking from combat!—the War-Geats'
 prince seized Grendel's mother by the
 shoulder, and, stern in the struggle—swollen
 with rage as he was, then!—he flung his deadly
 1805 enemy, so that she fell on the floor.
 But quickly she gave him repayment in turn,
 with angry grips, and grasped at him; weary
 of heart, then, that strongest of warriors, of
 foot-troops, stumbled, so that he fell;
 1810 and then she sat on her "guest" in that hall,
 and drew her dagger, broad and bright-edged:
 she wished to avenge her child, her only
 offspring! But the breast-net of woven
 rings lay on Beowulf's shoulder, and so
 1815 protected his life, withstanding the entry
 of point and of edge—Ecgtheow's son,
 the champion of the Geats, would then
 have perished under the vast earth, had not
 his battle-corselet—that hard war-net!—
 1820 afforded him help—and God the most holy

brought about victory in battle:
 the all-wise Lord, the Ruler of
 the heavens, rightly and easily
 decided the matter, once Beowulf had
 1825 stood up again—when he saw, among
 the armor, a blade blest with victories,
 an ancient, giant-made sword, strong
 of its edges, the glory of warriors; it was
 the finest of weapons—though it was greater
 1830 than any other man could bear
 to the war-play, a worthy and splendid blade,
 the work of giants. And Beowulf seized
 the chained hilt, then, and the Scyldings' hero,
 savage and slaughter-fierce, drew that ring-sword,
 1835 and—despairing of life!—struck angrily,
 so that the blade bit her hard on the neck,
 and broke the bone-joints; the sword ran all
 the way through that doomed flesh-dwelling: she fell
 to the floor, the sword was sweaty with blood—
 1840 and that man rejoiced in that work! (The radiance
 beamed—light shone forth within—just as
 the candle of the sky shines brightly
 from heaven!) Then he gazed round that hall;
 he went along the wall, then, and angry
 1845 and resolute—Hygelac's thane!—he held
 that weapon hard by the hilt—the sword
 was not useless to that warrior, for
 he wanted to repay Grendel at once
 for many war-storms, for those which he
 1850 had brought against the West-Danes, more often
 by far than on that one time when he had
 slain Hrothgar's hearth-companions in
 their slumber—while they were sleeping, Grendel
 devoured fifteen men of the Danish
 1855 people, and bore another such number
 outside—hideous booty! But the
 fierce champion, Beowulf, had given
 him his reward for that, so that now,

he—Beowulf—beheld the war-weary
 1860 Grendel, lying at rest and lifeless.
 (The battle at Heorot had thus harmed
 him earlier!) His body now bounded
 away, when he suffered that blow after death—
 a hard sword-stroke!—and then Beowulf cut the fiend's
 1865 head off! But now the wise men, those who
 with Hrothgar were gazing upon that mere,
 saw this: that the mingling of the waves
 was all churned up, the lake shining with blood!
 And those gray-haired ones spoke together
 1870 about that worthy man, that they did
 not hope for the return of that prince,
 that, victorious, he might come to seek
 their famed ruler; and so, many agreed
 that the she-wolf of the lake had killed Beowulf.
 1875 Then the day's ninth hour came. The active
 Scyldings left that headland, the gold-friend
 of heroes went away from there
 to his home; but, sick at heart, the visitors
 sat down and stared at the mere: they hoped,
 1880 but did not expect, that they might see
 their friendly lord himself. But then,
 because of that battle-sweat, blood, that sword,
 that war-blade, began to waste away
 in dripping battle-icicles! It was
 1885 a wonder of wonders that that sword
 all melted—most of all like ice
 when the Father loosens the fetter of frost
 and unwinds the bonds of the floods—He Who
 has power over seasons and times,
 1890 He is the one true God! And Beowulf,
 Prince of the Weder-Geats, did not
 take more of the costly items in that
 dwelling-place—though he saw many there!—
 than Grendel's head and that hilt besides,
 1895 adorned with jewels. (That sword had melted
 earlier—etched with wave-like patterns,

had burned away, so hot was that blood—
 that alien spirit so poisonous!—who had
 died in there!) And soon Beowulf
 1900 was swimming: he who before had lived
 to see, in combat, the fall of foes
 in the fight, thrust upwards through the water—
 the wave-surges, those broad tracts, had all
 been cleansed when that alien spirit forsook
 1905 the days of her life and this fleeting world.
 And then that stout-hearted lord of seamen
 came swimming to land; he rejoiced in those sea-spoils,
 the mighty burden which he had with him—
 that splendid band of thanes went to meet him,
 1910 then, and they gave God thanks, and rejoiced
 in their prince, that it was given to them
 to see him unharmed! Then helmet and corselet
 were quickly removed from that active one,
 while the lake, the water under the clouds,
 1915 grew sluggish, stained with the blood of slaughter.
 And then that folk went away from there
 along foot-tracks; glad at heart, the men measured
 the pathway, and then the familiar road:
 men brave as kings, they carried that head
 1920 away from that lake-cliff—with difficulty
 for more than two of them, very bold
 as they were: with hard toil, four had to carry
 Grendel's head on the battle-shaft
 of a spear to the gold-hall; fourteen brave
 1925 and war-like men of the Geats strode on,
 till at length they came to that dwelling; high-spirited
 in a great throng, that lord of men trod,
 with his own, the fields near the meadhall; and then
 that prince of thanes, a man daring in deeds
 1930 and honored with glory—a hero brave
 in battle!—came striding in to greet Hrothgar,
 then, where the men were drinking, and Grendel's
 head was carried onto the floor
 by the hair—terrible to those earls

1935 and the lady with them, a marvelous sight!
 The men looked on; then Beowulf spoke,
 Ectheow's offspring: "See, Healfdene's
 son—o Scyldings' prince!—we have brought you
 with gladness—as a token of glory!—
 1940 these sea-spoils, which you are looking at here!
 I barely survived with my life that fight
 underwater, I dared that work with its hardship—
 the combat would have broken off right
 away, except that God shielded me:
 1945 I could not do anything in battle
 with Hrunting, although that weapon may
 be good, but the Lord of men granted me
 that I should see a radiant, huge, old
 sword hanging on the wall (The Lord
 1950 most often shows the way to those
 without friends!), so that I drew that weapon,
 and then, when the chance was permitted me,
 I slew the guardians of that house in
 the fight! Then that war-sword, etched with wave-like
 1955 patterns, burned up, when that blood sprang forth,
 the hottest of battle-sweats. I carried
 that hilt away from those fiends, there, I had
 avenged those crimes, the slaughter of Danes, which was
 as it should be. And so I promise
 1960 you this: that you may sleep without worry,
 in Heorot, with your band of men and
 each of the thanes of your people, both tried
 and youthful—that, prince of the Scyldings, you need not
 fear, from that quarter, injury
 1965 to life for them—for those noblemen!—as
 you did before!" Then the golden hilt,
 the ancient work of giants, was given
 in hand to the aged hero, the hoary
 war-chief: the work of wonder-smiths, it
 1970 came into the keeping, after the death
 of the demons, of the lord of the Danes—
 when, now, that hostile-hearted man, Grendel—

God's enemy, guilty of murder, and his
 mother as well—gave up this world,
 1975 that hilt passed into the power of
 the best of the kings of this world between
 the two seas, of the rulers who dealt out riches
 in Scandinavia; and he—Hrothgar!—
 spoke—he studied the hilt, an ancient
 1980 legacy, on which was engraved
 the beginning of the struggle of old,
 when the flood, the rushing sea, slew the race
 of giants—they suffered horribly, for
 that folk was alien to the eternal
 1985 God: the Ruler gave them that final
 reward through the waters' whelming. It was
 also fittingly marked on the hilt-guard
 of shining gold—set down and stated
 in runic letters—for whom that sword,
 1990 that choicest of irons with its twisted
 hilt and adorned with serpent-figures,
 had first been made. And then the wise son
 of Healfdene spoke—all were silent:
 "This, truly, he who does truth and right
 1995 among the people, while mindful of everything
 far back in time—this old guardian of
 his native land!—may say: that that earl
 was born better! Your glory is exalted
 throughout wide-stretching regions, my friend
 2000 Beowulf—over each of the nations:
 you rule it all patiently, power with wisdom
 of mind! I shall fulfill my friendship
 to you, as both of us said a short
 while ago, while you shall become a complete
 2005 and lasting comfort to your people,
 a help to heroes. Heremod
 was not like this to Ecgwela's
 retainers, the Honor-Scyldings, nor did
 he flourish for their delight, but for slaughter,
 2010 for violent death to the Danish people:

enraged, he killed his bench-companions—
 his shoulder-comrades!—until alone,
 notorious prince, he turned from men's joys—
 though God Almighty had raised him to
 2015 the delights of power and strength, had advanced
 him further above all men—despite this!—
 a bloodthirsty breast-hoard grew in his heart,
 he did not give costly rings to the Danes
 at all, in seeking for glory—he lived
 2020 without joys, so that he suffered that strife's
 distress, long-lasting harm to a people.
 Be taught from this, know expansive virtues!
 Aged and wise in winters, I have
 recounted this tale for your sake! It is
 2025 a wonder to tell how God Almighty,
 in His vast Spirit, deals out wisdom,
 land and earlship, among mankind.
 (The Lord holds power over all things!)
 At times He allows the thoughts of a man
 2030 of famous descent to move in delight,
 He gives him the pleasures of earth in his country,
 the ruling of a stronghold of men,
 He makes regions of the world so subject
 to him—a wide realm!—that he himself
 2035 cannot, in his folly, imagine the end
 of it all. He dwells in abundance, illness
 or age never hinder him in the least,
 deceitful sorrow does not become dark
 in his breast, dispute does not show sword-hatred
 2040 anywhere, for all the world moves
 according to his will; he does not know
 worse than that, until, within him,
 a share of arrogance grows and thrives—
 then, herdsman of the soul, the guardian
 2045 slumbers—and that sleep is too sound,
 bound with afflictions, the slayer is very near,
 he who wickedly shoots from his bow.
 And then the man I am talking about—

who does not know how to defend himself!—
 2050 is struck by the piercing arrow in
 his breast below the helmet—by the
 evil, strange commands of the
 accursed spirit; and to the man
 I speak of, what he has held for long seems
 2055 too little, he covets, angry in mood
 (He does not give costly, gold-plated arm-rings
 honorably at all!), and then he
 forgets and ignores the course of the future,
 and that which God, the Lord of Heaven,
 2060 had given him in the past: his share
 of renown! And in the end, as ever,
 it happens that the mortal body
 weakens and falls, being doomed—another
 succeeds to the throne, a man who deals out
 2065 treasures—the ancient wealth of the
 departed earl!—without mourning, and is
 not mindful of terror! Guard yourself
 against such wickedness, beloved
 Beowulf, best of men, and choose
 2070 the better part, lasting advice—do not lean
 towards pride, glorious champion!
 For, now your might's renown will endure
 for a while; soon afterwards, though, it will be
 that disease or the blade's edge will deprive
 2075 you of strength—or the clasp of the fire, or the surge
 of the flood, or the grip of the sword, or the flight
 of the spear, or dread old age; or the brightness
 of your eyes will fail and grow dim,
 and presently, noble warrior, it will
 2080 be that death will overcome you!
 And so I have ruled the Ring-Danes for a
 hundred half-years under the skies,
 and protected that folk in war with ash-spear and
 sword-edge from many of the nations
 2085 throughout this midyard of earth, until I
 did not count any my foe under heaven's

expanse! But listen: a change from this came to
 me in my homeland, grief after mirth,
 from the time when Grendel, that adversary
 2090 of old, became my invader—I bore great
 heart-care continually from that harrying!
 Thanks be to God, the eternal Lord,
 for this: that I have survived with my life,
 that I am staring with these eyes
 2095 at that sword-gory head after that long warfare!
 Go to your seat, now, enjoy the sumptuous
 feast, made famous in war as you are; there will
 be a great many treasures in common
 for both of us when it is morning.” And the
 2100 Geat was glad in his heart, and went
 at once to seek his seat, as the wise man
 had bidden him. Then again, as before,
 a feast was fittingly spread anew
 for those famed in battle, those sitters in hall. . . .
 2105 Night’s-helmet lowered, dark above
 the warriors, and that body of tried
 retainers all arose, the gray-haired,
 aged Scylding desired to seek
 his bed—very much beyond measure, the Geat,
 2110 the mighty shield-warrior, was pleased
 to rest: at once a chamberlain, who in
 courtesy attended to all
 of a thane’s needs, such as sea-warriors would
 have had in those days, guided him forth
 2115 who was weary from that adventure, had come
 from afar. And then, great-hearted, he rested
 himself; the hall rose high, vaulted
 and ornamented with gold; the guest slept
 within, till, blithe of heart, the black raven
 2120 announced the joy of heaven. The brightness
 came gliding, then, light above the shadows:
 the warriors hastened—those aethelings were looking
 forward to going back to their people,
 that joyous visitor wished to seek

2125 the vessel some distance away! And then
 that brave one bade that Hrunting be borne
 to the son of Ecglaf—bade that he
 accept his sword, that cherished iron,
 gave Unferth thanks for that loan, and said
 2130 that he counted the weapon a good friend in war,
 mighty in battle, and found no fault,
 in his words, with that blade's-edge. (He was a great-hearted
 man!) And then those warriors, eager
 to leave, were ready in their armor,
 2135 and Beowulf, an aetheling dear
 to the Danes, strode to the high seat where
 that other man, Hrothgar, was, and a hero
 bold in battle, the Geat addressed him—
 Ecgtheow's offspring, Beowulf, spoke:
 2140 "Now we seafarers come from afar
 would like to say that we long to seek Hygelac.
 Here we were fittingly attended
 upon in our wishes, you treated us well—
 if, therefore, I can in any way
 2145 on earth earn more of your heart-love, prince
 of men, than I have yet done with deeds
 of battle, I will be ready at once: if I
 learn, from over the floods' expanse,
 of this: that the dwellers about your borders
 2150 are threatening you to your terror—just as
 your enemies did to you time after time!—I
 will bring you a thousand warriors—heroes
 to help you! I know of Hygelac, lord
 of the Geats—that people's protector—that, though
 2155 he may be young, he will further me by
 his words and works, so that I may rightly
 show my esteem for you by my deeds,
 and bring the wooden-shafted spear
 to your aid—strong help, should you have need
 2160 of men! On the other hand, if Hrethic,
 the prince's son, is minded to go
 to the Geatish court, he may well find many

friends there! Far-off countries are better
 visited by him who is worthy
 2165 himself." And Hrothgar spoke to the Geat
 in answer: "The wise Lord sent these speeches
 of yours into your heart, then—I have
 never heard a man of so young
 2170 an age speak more wisely! You are strong
 in might and wise in mind—wise
 in your choice of words! If it comes to pass
 that the spear—sword-vicious battle—carries off
 Hrethel's offspring—disease or iron
 your lord, the guardian of your folk, and
 2175 you have your life, it is likely, I hold, that
 the Sea-Geats will not have any better
 a king for the choosing—a hoard-protector
 of heroes—if you will rule the realm of
 your kinsmen; the sort of man you are pleases me
 2180 more as time goes on, beloved
 Beowulf: you have brought it about
 that for our folk—for the people of
 the Geats and for the Spear-Danes—there shall
 be friendship shared and that fighting shall cease,
 2185 hostilities which they went through with before—
 that as long as I hold sway over this wide
 kingdom there shall be treasures in common:
 many a man will greet another
 with good things over the gannet's bath,
 2190 over the sea the ring-prowed ships
 shall carry gifts and tokens of love.
 I know, then, that those people, both in their
 dealings with foe and their dealings with friend,
 are firmly bent on the old way, are blameless
 2195 in every respect." Moreover, that earls'
 protector, the son of Healfdene,
 gave Beowulf twelve treasures within
 that hall, and bade him with these gifts seek
 his own dear people in safety, and come
 2200 again soon. And then that good king of noble

descent, the prince of the Scyldings, kissed that best
thane and clasped him by the neck
as tears fell down from the gray-haired one,
for within that man so aged and wise,
2205 was the feeling about two things, the one
much more than the other: that Beowulf
and he would never see each other,
great-hearted in council, again! The man
was so dear to him, that he was unable
2210 to hold back the whelmings in his breast, for
within his bosom—fast in his heartstrings!—
a secret longing burned in his blood
for the beloved man. Then—a warrior
splendidly adorned with gold
2215 and exulting in treasure!—Beowulf trod
away from Hrothgar over the greensward,
the sea-going vessel awaited its owner
and lord as it rode at anchor. Then Hrothgar's
gift was often praised on the way,
2220 he was a king who was blameless in every
respect, till old age—that which has often
harmed many!—robbed him of the joys
of great strength. But now that band of youths so
high-spirited, came to the flood; they bore
2225 the ring-net, the interlocked coat of mail—
and the coast-guard spied the return of those earls,
just as he had seen them before;
he did not call to those guests with insults
from the cliff's promontory, but rode
2230 to meet them, and said that the brightly-armored
warriors going, now, to their ship would
be welcomed by the Weder-folk.
And then on the sand that broad, curved vessel
was laden with battle-raidment, that ring-prowed
2235 ship with horses and treasures—the mast
stood high over Hrothgar's hoard-wealth—and Beowulf
gave to the guardian of that boat
a sword bound with gold, so that, afterwards he was

honored the more for that treasure, that heirloom,
 2240 along the meadbench. Then the vessel
 put out to stir the deep water, and left
 the land of the Danes; and then, by the mast,
 a certain sea-raiment—the sail!—was made fast
 by a rope; the sea-timber groaned, the wind
 2245 did not hinder that buoyant craft in her journey
 over the waves—the sea-goer fared,
 the foamy-necked vessel sailed onward through
 the surges—the ship with bound prow over
 the sea-streams—till the men could make out
 2250 the Geatish cliffs, the familiar headlands;
 and driven by the wind, the keeled vessel
 pressed onwards and upwards, and rested on land—
 and at once, by the water, the harbor-guardian,
 he who for a long time before
 2255 had been gazing far out to sea with longing
 for those dear men, was ready, and he
 moored the broad-bosomed ship on the sand fast
 with anchor-ropes, lest the force of the waves
 should drive it, a comely wooden craft,
 2260 away. Then Beowulf bade that the wealth
 of heroes be brought up, ornate war-gear
 and beaten gold—it was not far from there
 for him to seek that giver of treasure,
 Hygelac, Hrethel's son, where he dwells
 2265 at home, himself with his retainers,
 close by the sea-shore. The building was splendid
 the king most valiant and proud in the hall,
 Hygd very young, wise, and able—though, Haereth's
 daughter, she had lived through few winters
 2270 within the castle-fortress, she yet
 was not niggardly or sparing of gifts
 of fine treasures to the Geatish people—
 whereas Modthrytho, that flourishing folk-queen,
 carried out terrible crimes, so that,
 2275 except her great lord, no brave one among
 her own retainers dared venture that he should

gaze at her openly with his eyes,
 for hand-woven deadly bonds were reckoned
 as destined for him, upon which—after
 2280 the gripping by hands—the sword was swiftly
 appointed, so that, marked with clear, branching
 patterns, it might decide the matter,
 might make the murderous evil known—
 this is no queenly custom for a
 2285 lady to be carrying out,
 however beautiful she may be:
 that a weaver of peace should deprive a dear man
 of life because of pretended insult!
 However, Hemming's kinsman stopped that:
 2290 men at their ale spoke of something else,
 that she did less harm to the people—fewer
 acts of deceitful hatred—after
 she was first given, gold-adorned, to the
 young champion, the dear one noble
 2295 in lineage, after she had sought Offa's
 court, at her father's bidding, on
 a journey over the fallow flood—after
 this, she enjoyed—famed for her goodness!—
 living life there on the throne very much:
 2300 she bore great love towards that warriors' lord,
 of all mankind—of the children of men—
 the best, as I heard, between the seas.
 (For Offa was a spear-bold man
 in gifts and war, was widely honored
 2305 and ruled his native land with wisdom!)
 Eomer sprang from him as a help
 of heroes—Hemming's kinsman, Garmund's
 grandson, mighty in battle. But now the brave
 Beowulf went, himself with his hand-picked
 2310 troops, to tread, along the sand,
 the plain by the sea, the wide shores. The world's candle
 shone, the sun making haste from the south.
 The men set out on their way, and walked quickly
 to where, as they had heard, that protector

2315 of earls, the slayer of Ongentheow—
 Hygelac, that worthy young war-king—
 was dealing out armlets within the stronghold.
 And Beowulf's coming was announced
 to Hygelac at once—that there,
 2320 Beowulf, that warriors'
 defender—that shield-comrade!—had
 come living to within the bounds—
 hale from the battle-play, was striding
 towards the court! Then, as Hygelac—he of
 2325 high rank—commanded, room was made quickly,
 within the hall, for those guests on foot—
 then he who had survived the combat
 sat opposite Hygelac himself,
 kinsman facing kinsman (after
 2330 Beowulf had greeted his friendly
 lord with courtly speech and deeply-felt
 words)! The daughter of Haereth moved
 about with mead-flagons through that hall-building—
 cherished the people, then, and bore
 2335 the cup of strong drink to the hands of heroes.
 And Hygelac began to question
 his comrade graciously in that high hall
 (curiosity goaded Hygelac as
 to what the Sea-Geats' exploits had been):
 2340 "How did it go with you all in your journey,
 dear Beowulf, when you suddenly
 resolved to seek combat, far across
 the salt water—strife in Heorot?
 For did you help those widely-known woes
 2345 for Hrothgar, the famous prince, in any
 way? I was troubled with sorrow at heart,
 with surging griefs. I did not have faith
 in that undertaking of my dear man,
 I pleaded with you long that you not
 2350 face that slaughter-guest at all, that you let
 the South-Danes themselves settle the feud
 with Grendel. I say thanks to God

that I am allowed to see you unharmed!”

Beowulf spoke, then, Ecgtheow's child:

- 2355 “It is not hidden from many men—
that great encounter, lord Hygelac—
what time of strife there was for us—Grendel
and me—in that place, where he had brought
about a great many sorrows and ceaseless
2360 distress for the Victory-Scyldings: I
avenged all that, so that none of Grendel's
kinsmen over the earth needs to boast
of that uproar by night—not he who lives
longest of that loathsome race,
2365 caught up in crime! I came there first
to the ring-hall to greet Hrothgar; and at
once—as soon as he knew my mind—
the glorious son of Healfdene
showed me to a seat beside
2370 his own son. The host was in revelry—I have
never seen beneath the vault
of heaven greater mead-joy in men
sitting in hall! At times, the glorious
queen, a pledge of peace to the nations,
2375 went all about the hall-floor and
exhorted the youths; often she gave
an arm-ring to a man before
she went to her seat. At times, for the body
of old retainers, Hrothgar's daughter
2380 carried the ale-flagon to those earls
without end. (I heard those sitting in hall
call her Freaware, whenever she proffered
the studded vessel to those heroes.)
Young and gold-adorned, she is promised
2385 to Froda's kind son; the friendly lord
of the Scyldings, the guardian of that realm,
has agreed to this, and deems it good counsel,
that he may settle, with that lady,
a share of his deadly feuds and quarrels.
2390 But usually, after the fall of a prince,

the slaughter-spear seldom rests anywhere
 for even a little while, however
 virtuous the bride may be,
 and it then may well displease the prince
 2395 of the Heatho-Beardans—and every one
 of the thanes of that people!—when he goes onto
 the floor of the hall with the woman, where the
 noble sons of the Danes are being
 entertained in splendor, on whom
 2400 the leavings of forebears glitter, hard
 and ring-marked: the wealth of the Heatho-Beardans,
 while they were able to wield those weapons—
 until those men led dear companions
 and their own lives to destruction in
 2405 the shield-play! Then, at his beer, an aged
 spear-ash warrior speaks—he who
 espies that one treasure, he who remembers
 all, the death by the spear of men
 (His heart is fierce within him!)—and sad
 2410 of mood, begins to test a young champion's
 spirit through the thoughts of their minds—
 to arouse war with its evils!—and speaks
 this word: 'Can you recognize, my friend,
 the sword—that cherished iron!—which
 2415 your father, under the face-masked helmet,
 bore to the battle for the last time,
 when the Danes, the valiant Scyldings, slew him,
 and ruled the field of slaughter, from
 the time when Withergyld lay there, after
 2420 the fall of heroes? Now here, exulting
 in his adornments, the son of some one
 of those slayers goes about the hall-floor,
 boasts of the murder and bears that treasure—
 that which you by right should have!'
 2425 And thus, at every chance, the aged one
 goads him and reminds him with bitter
 words, till the time comes, when, because
 of his father's deeds, that woman's retainer

sleeps blood-stained after the slash of the sword,
 2430 having forfeited his life, while that other
 man gets away from there alive,
 knowing the land well as he does.
 And then on both sides the oaths of earls
 are broken, after which deadly hatred
 2435 wells up in Ingeld, and his love
 for his wife grows cooler after these seething
 sorrows. I therefore do not regard
 the Hearthbeardans' favor—their share
 of the peace—to be without deceit
 2440 towards the Danes, nor that friendship to be firm
 But I will go on to speak more of Grendel,
 so that, bestower of treasure, you may
 readily know what the outcome was
 in the hand-to-hand combat of heroes. After
 2445 the gem of heaven had glided over the
 ground, the angry "guest" came, dreadful
 and fierce in the evening, to seek us out,
 where we (unharméd!) were guarding the hall.
 There war, that deadly evil, was fatal
 2450 to the doomed Hondscioh; a girded
 champion, he was the first to lie dead:
 Grendel was the slayer-by-maw
 of that glorious young retainer, swallowing
 all of that beloved man's body.
 2455 Yet none the sooner—by no means!—did
 that bloody-toothed murderer, bent on destruction,
 wish to go empty-handed out
 of that gold-hall; rather, strong in his might,
 he made trial of me—he grasped me with ready
 2460 hand! A pouch hung, broad and awesome,
 fast with bands cunningly wrought; it was all
 prepared with skill, with devil's craft
 and dragon's-hides—for Grendel, that
 fierce doer of evil deeds, would there
 2465 have put me in it—guiltless as
 I was!—with many another—but this

was never to be so, once I
 stood upright in my rage! It would be
 too long to recount how I paid that people's
 2470 enemy back with reward for all
 of those evils—there, my prince, I did
 your people honor by my works!
 He escaped to go elsewhere, and enjoyed
 life's pleasures for a little while;
 2475 nevertheless, his right hand remained
 behind in Heorot, and far
 away from there—grieving at heart—he sank
 to the lake-floor. For that gory onslaught,
 the friend of the Scyldings rewarded me
 2480 with many things ornamented with gold—many
 treasures!—as soon as morning came,
 and we had sat down to the banquet. And there
 was song and entertainment: an aged
 Scylding, having learned much, recounted things
 2485 far in the past; at times, one brave
 in war plucked joy from the harp, the glee-wood,
 at times, he related a story both true
 and sad; at times, the noble-hearted
 king himself told a wondrous tale
 2490 in the fitting manner—and, at times,
 the old battle-warrior, fettered by age,
 began in his turn to mourn his lost youth,
 his prowess in war; his breast surged within him,
 when wise in winters, he brought many things
 2495 to mind. This is how we took our pleasure
 the livelong day, till another night came
 to men—when Grendel's mother in her
 turn was ready at once for revenge
 for injury; she journeyed full
 2500 of sorrow, for death—the war-hatred of
 the Weders!—had taken away her son.
 And the monstrous hag avenged her offspring:
 she slew a hero bravely—there life
 fled Aeschere, a counsellor aged

2505 and wise! And when morning came the Danish
 folk could not burn the death-wasted one
 in the flames—could not lay the beloved man
 on the pyre! She had borne the body away
 in the arms of a foe beneath the mountain-stream!
 2510 This, to Hrothgar, was the most bitter
 of sorrows, of those which had long befallen
 that prince of the people, and, despairing
 in mind, that leader implored me by your
 life that I do deeds worthy of an
 2515 earl in that tumult of waters, that I
 might venture with my life, and do glorious
 exploits; and he promised me a
 reward. Then, as is widely known,
 I found the fierce, gruesome guardian of
 2520 the deep surging water, and for a while,
 for us both, there was the shared grappling of hands;
 the flood boiled with gore, and within that war-hall,
 I cut off the head of Grendel's mother
 with a great sword-edge—ungently, then,
 2525 I took life from her, while I myself
 was not as yet near death—far from it:
 that earls' protector, Healfdene's
 offspring, gave me a great many treasures
 once more! That folk-king lived by such customs!
 2530 I have not lost those gifts at all,
 reward for my prowess—Healfdene's
 son, he gave me treasures indeed
 of my own choosing—which I desire
 to bring you, heroic king, and present
 2535 with good will! Each kindness is still dependent
 on you—I have few close kinsmen, Hygelac,
 other than you!" Then Beowulf bade
 them bring in the boar's-head banner, the helmet
 towering in battle, the gray
 2540 corselet, and the splendid war-sword;
 and then he made this speech: "The wise prince
 Hrothgar gave this war-dress to me;

in a word, he bade that I tell you about this
 gift first: he said that King Heorogar,
 2545 the prince of the Scyldings, had had it for a
 long time, but he would none the sooner
 give that breast-garment to his own son,
 the valiant Heorowealde, though he
 was loyal to him. Enjoy it well
 2550 in every way!" And I heard that four steeds,
 swift and alike and fallow-as-apples,
 followed that treasure—Beowulf
 bestowed on Hygelac gifts of horses
 and precious things! So a kinsman should do, not at
 2555 all weave a net of malice with hidden
 cunning for another, preparing
 death for a hand-companion—his nephew
 was very loyal to Hygelac, mighty
 in battle, while each was concerned for the other's
 2560 good; and I heard that Beowulf
 gave Hygd that neck-ring, that finely-wrought, wondrous
 jewel, that which Wealthew,
 that prince's daughter, had given to him,
 Beowulf (He gave Hygd three horses
 2565 as well, graceful and saddle-bright!);
 and after her having received that ring,
 her breast was adorned with it. This is the way
 that Ecgtheow's son, a man famed in war
 and good works, made his courage known—the way
 2570 he bore himself in striving for glory:
 he never slew drunken hearth-companions—
 he was not savage in spirit at all,
 for, bold in battle, he restrained
 with the greatest might of all mankind
 2575 that bounteous gift which God had entrusted
 to him! (He long had been despised,
 for the sons of the Geats did not consider
 him brave, the lord of the Weders would not
 do him much honor at the mead-bench—
 2580 they strongly believed that he was slothful,

a feeble aetheling; but a change
 came for that glorious man, in each
 of his trials!) Then that protector of earls,
 the king famed in battle, bade that Hrethel's
 2585 heirloom, adorned with gold, be brought in—
 there was no finer treasure among
 the Geats in the way of a sword:
 Hygelac laid it in Beowulf's bosom,
 and gave him seven thousand measures
 2590 of land, a hall, and a princely throne.
 (There was inherited land for them both
 alike in that nation, a home and ancestral
 domain, though more—the wide kingdom!—for
 that other who was the higher in rank, there.)
 2595 And then it happened in later days,
 when Hygelac lay dead in the uproar
 of battle, and war-swords became the slayer of
 Heardred under the shield-cover (For those
 hard war-heroes, the Battle-Scylfings,
 2600 had sought him, there, in the glorious troop,
 had attacked the nephew of Hereric fiercely!),
 that then the broad kingdom passed into Beowulf's
 hands; he ruled well for fifty winters—
 and then he was an aged king,
 2605 an old guardian of his native land,
 till in the dark nights a certain dragon
 began to hold sway, who in an upland
 heath watched over a hoard, a steep
 stone-barrow; a path lay below, unknown
 2610 to men. Some man or other had gone
 within, there, who had made his way near to
 that heathen hoard, and whose hand had taken
 a cup, a huge, bright treasure—the dragon
 did not conceal this afterwards, though
 2615 he had been tricked, while asleep, by a thief's craft—
 a troop of warriors found this out,
 a neighboring people of heroes: that that
 dragon was enraged! The man

2620 who had sorely grieved him did not by any
means break into that serpent's hoard
on purpose—by his, the man's, own will—
but from dire need: that slave of someone
or other among the sons of heroes
2625 had fled from angry blows, and, lacking
a refuge, had made his way within there,
a man much troubled by guilt—who at once
felt terror seize him, visitant that he
was! Yet the wretched fugitive
2630 escaped the horrible serpent, for the
man was meant to be the tale-bearer,
eager to take to his heels away from
where that sudden peril had come
upon him—and took the precious cup:
2635 there were many such ancient treasures in
that earth-house, as, in days of old,
some thoughtful man or other had hidden
them there, a great legacy of a noble
race, fine treasures. Death had taken
2640 all of those earls in former times,
while one of those peoples' tried retainers,
who had been moving about there the longest—
a watchman mourning his friends!—supposed this
same thing: that he would be allowed
2645 to enjoy those long-gathered treasures for a
short while only: a barrow stood all
prepared on a place near the sea-waves—was new
beside a cliff and made fast by being
artfully laid out to make entry
2650 difficult; and that keeper of the
jewels bore that princely wealth
within, there—the part that was worthy of being
hoarded, beaten gold—and said
these few words: “Hold fast, now, earth—now that heroes
2655 may not!—these earls' possessions! Yes! Valiant
men obtained it from you before—
but death in war, that savage attack

against the living, has taken every
 one of the men of my nation, of those
 who have left this life, having seen the joys
 2660 of the hall. I have no one who can bear
 the sword or burnish the gold-adorned cup,
 that precious drinking-vessel—those tried
 retainers have gone elsewhere!—now
 the hard helmet must be stripped of its finely-wrought
 2665 gold, of that beaten adornment: the burnisher
 sleeps, the one who was to prepare
 the war-mask, as well as the coat of mail,
 which in combat withstood the slash of iron
 swords above the crashing of shields
 2670 of wood, and decays, now, like its hero—
 the corselet of rings cannot journey afar
 on the battle-leader, side by side with his
 warriors! There is no joy of the harp,
 the mirth of the glee-wood, the fine hawk does
 2675 not fly through the hall, and the swift steed does not
 tramp in the castle court—violent
 death has sent away many kinds
 of living creatures!” Thus, sad at heart,
 the one man left of all gave voice
 2680 to his grief, and went about sorrowing day
 and night, till the surge of death touched his heart.
 And then the ancient dawn-foe found
 the delightful hoard standing open: he, who,
 burning, searches for barrows—the scaly,
 2685 hostile dragon, who flies by night
 wrapped round with fire! (Earth-dwellers fear
 him greatly!) He must seek out a hoard
 in the earth, where, old in winters, he watches
 over the heathen gold—though he
 2690 is no better for it in the least! Thus,
 for three hundred winters that huge and mighty
 foe of the people guarded one
 of the treasure-houses in the earth,
 till that one man angered him in his mind.

2695 (That one had borne the gold-adorned cup
 to his master, had begged for a compact of peace
 with his lord. And when that treasure had been
 explored, that hoard of rings diminished,
 the favor was granted to that wretched
 2700 man, whose lord was beholding, for
 the first time, the ancient work of men.)
 Then the dragon awoke; strife came about,
 for then he moved swiftly over the stones,
 and stout-hearted found the foot-prints of
 2705 the enemy—who had stepped onward with stealthy
 cunning close to the dragon's head:
 in this way the man not fated to die
 may pass through trouble and exile easily—
 he who has the Lord's protection!
 2710 Then that hoard's guardian eagerly searched
 along the ground, for he wanted to find
 the man who had sorely dealt with him while
 he was sleeping: hot and savage in mood,
 he often went all around the barrow
 2715 outside, but there was no man there,
 in that waste (Still the dragon exulted in war,
 in the work of battle!); at times he went into
 the barrow in search of that precious cup,
 but would quickly find this: that some man had come
 2720 upon that gold, those rich treasures! And the
 hoard's guardian waited with difficulty
 till evening had come—then that keeper of
 the barrow was enraged, that loathsome one
 wanted to make requital with fire
 2725 for that costly drinking-vessel! Then day
 departed, which was the serpent's desire—
 he would not lie by the wall, would not wait,
 but set out with flame—was prepared with fire!
 (The beginning was frightening to the folk
 2730 in that land, just as the matter would be
 swiftly and sorely ended for their
 giver of treasure!) The creature then

began to spew flames, to burn the bright dwellings:
 the glare of the fire arose, a horror
 2735 to men, that loathsome air-flier did
 not want to leave anything there alive—
 the serpent's warfare was widely seen—
 the cruelly-hostile onslaught near
 and far!—how the war-scather hated and harmed
 2740 the Geatish people, and hurried back to
 that hidden, glorious hall before daybreak,
 having encircled the people of that
 land with fire, with flames and burning:
 he trusted his barrow, his warfare and wall—
 2745 but his trust betrayed him, for his horror
 was then made known to Beowulf—quickly,
 indeed!—that his own home, that best
 of buildings—the gift-throne of the Geats!—
 had melted in surges of flame! This was
 2750 a sorrow for that worthy man
 in his breast, the greatest of heart-cares; that wise one
 thought that he might have gravely offended
 the Ruler, the Lord eternal, over
 some ancient law, and his breast welled within
 2755 with dark thoughts—which was not usual
 for him: the fire-dragon had
 destroyed that people's stronghold, that land
 by the water from without, that region
 of earth, with flames, and that war-king, that prince
 2760 of the Weders, plotted revenge against him—
 Beowulf, that warriors'
 protector, that lord of heroes, bade
 that a splendid war-shield all of iron
 be made for him—he well knew that wood
 2765 from the forest—a linden-shield!—could not help him
 against the flames! (That aetheling worthy
 of old times would have to endure the end
 of his fleeting days, of his life in this world—
 and the serpent also, though he had held sway
 2770 over that hoarded wealth for so long!)

And then that prince of rings scorned this:
 that he seek that far-flier with a host,
 a great army—Beowulf did not fear
 the fight for himself, he did not consider
 2775 the serpent's war-might, his strength and courage,
 as anything, because, daring distress,
 he—Beowulf—had come through many
 battles—the uproar of combat!—before,
 from the time when, a triumphant man,
 2780 he had cleansed Hrothgar's hall, and crushed Grendel
 and his mother, that loathsome family,
 to death in warfare. For it was not
 the least of hand-strifes where Hygelac
 was slain, when that king of the Geats, in the
 2785 rushes of battle—the friendly lord
 of that folk in the land of the West Frisians—Hrethel's
 offspring!—died in the swilling-by-swords,
 struck down by the blade—and Beowulf came
 away from that place by his own strength,
 2790 making good use of his prowess at swimming:
 he—and he alone!—had thirty
 coats of mail on his arm, when he waded
 into the sea! The Hetwaras did not
 need to exult in foot-combat at all,
 2795 when they bore their linden-shields forward against him—
 few came again from that battle-hero
 to seek their dwellings, while Ecgtheow's son
 swam over the expanse of the seas,
 that wretched lone one back to his people;
 2800 and there Hygd offered him hoard and kingdom,
 rings and the throne. (She did not have faith
 in her own offspring, that he could hold
 the ancestral seat against foreign armies,
 now that Hygelac was dead.)
 2805 Yet that miserable folk could not prevail
 upon that aetheling in any way
 that he be lord over Heardred,
 or wish to accept the kingdom; however,

he upheld Heardred among
 2810 the people with friendly counsel—with kindness
 and honor—until he grew older, and ruled
 the Weder-Geats. Then exiles—the sons
 of Ohtere—sought him from over the sea:
 they had rebelled against the Scylfings'
 2815 protector, that best of sea-kings, of those
 who in Sweden dealt out treasure, a famous
 chieftain. This, for Heardred, was
 the limit of his days: there,
 for his hospitality, he—Hygelac's
 2820 son!—received his mortal wound
 by sword-slashes; and as soon as he
 lay low, Onela, Ongentheow's
 offspring, went back to seek his home,
 letting Beowulf possess the throne
 2825 and rule the Geats—and he *was*
 a worthy king: in later days
 he kept in mind requital for
 the fall of that prince, became the friend
 of the wretched Eadgils, and supported him—
 2830 Ohtere's son—across the broad sea
 with an army: with warriors and weapons—
 and Eadgils then took vengeance with grievous,
 sorrow-bringing forays, robbing
 Onela the king of his life.
 2835 Thus Ecgtheow's son had come unharmed
 through every one of his trials—his perilous
 battles, his courageous works—
 till that one day when he had to fight
 against the serpent. One of twelve, then,
 2840 the Geats' ruler, seething with rage,
 went to observe the dragon—the king
 had learned where the feud had arisen from,
 that dire affliction of heroes: that famous,
 costly vessel had come into
 2845 his clasp through the hand of the informer—
 who was the thirteenth man in that troop,

the man, who, a captive sad in mind,
 had brought about the start of that strife,
 and, abject, had to show them that place
 2850 far off. He went against his will
 to where he knew of a certain earth-hall,
 a barrow under the ground close by
 the surge of the sea, the strife of the waves—
 which barrow was full of art-works, within,
 2855 and wire ornaments—and that monstrous
 guardian, a fighter alert
 and ancient under the ground, was guarding
 those treasures of gold, the obtaining of which
 would not be an easy bargain for any
 2860 man! Then Beowulf, that battle-brave
 king, sat down on the bluff, while, the Geats'
 gold-friend, he wished his hearth-companions
 well-being and good luck. His heart
 was sad within him, restless and ready
 2865 for death—fate was exceedingly near,
 which would come upon the aged man,
 would seek the treasure of his soul
 and part asunder his life from his body.
 (That aetheling's spirit would not be clothed
 2870 in his flesh for long, then!). And Beowulf spoke,
 Ecgtheow's offspring: "I went through many
 onslaughts of battle and seasons of war
 in my youth—I remember that all. I was seven
 winters old when my prince of treasures,
 2875 the friendly lord of the people, received
 me from my father; mindful of our
 kinship, King Hrethel held me and kept me,
 giving me wealth and feasting—during
 his life, I, as a warrior in the
 2880 stronghold, was not one bit more loathsome
 to him than any of his own offspring:
 Herebeald and Haethcyn—or my
 Hygelac! Now, a murder-bed
 was wrongfully laid out for the oldest—

2885 Herebeald—by the deeds
 of a kinsman, when Haethcyn struck him down—
 his friendly lord-to-be!—with a shaft
 from his horn-tipped bow—he missed his mark
 and shot his kinsman dead—one brother
 2890 the other!—with a bloody arrow—
 that was a fight beyond payment for,
 wrong done exceedingly, wearying
 the heart and the mind—in spite of which, though,
 that ætheling had to part from life
 2895 unavenged! And so this is sad for an aged
 man to live to see: that his son should ride
 young on the gallows! His father then
 may utter a song, a mournful lay,
 while his son hangs, as a delight for the raven,
 2900 and old—very old and wise!—the father
 cannot bring forth any help for his offspring!
 And always each morning his father is
 reminded of his son's departing
 journey, and does not care to wait
 2905 for another heir within the castle,
 now that the one has met with base deeds
 by way of death's violence: with sorrow
 and care the father perceives in his oldest son's
 dwelling, the deserted winehall,
 2910 a windy resting-place deprived
 of joy—the horsemen slumber, heroes
 in the grave's darkness, and there is
 no sound of the harp—no mirth in the dwelling!—
 as there once was. And the father goes
 2915 to his bed, then, and sings a song of sorrows,
 one lone man for one lost, and it seems all
 too large to the mourner, the plains and the dwelling-
 place—thus the protector of the Weders
 bore surging sorrow in his heart
 2920 for Herebeald: Hrethel could not
 settle that feud in any way
 with that life-destroyer—could none the sooner

hate that warrior for that loathsome
 deed, though he was not dear to him, either.
 2925 And then, for that grief which had come to him
 so sorely in his heart, he gave up
 the joys of men, and chose God's light—
 and left to his sons, as the thriving man does,
 his land and his town when he departed
 2930 this life. Now, there was wrong-doing and fighting
 between the Swedes and the Geats, shared
 dispute and bitter warfare across
 the wide water after Hrethel died:
 for Ongentheow's offspring were active
 2935 and warlike—they did not want to keep up
 friendship across the sea, rather,
 they often brought about dire, malicious
 slaughter around Hreosnabeorh!
 My kinsmen and friends avenged that, the feud
 2940 and the outrage, as it was well known—
 though one of them paid for it with his life,
 a hard bargain: war was fatal to Haethcyn,
 the lord of the Geats! But then, in the morning,
 as I have heard, one brother avenged
 2945 the other with the edge of the sword
 on the slayer, where Ongentheow confronted
 Eofor: the war-helmet split,
 and the old Scylfing fell, pale from the sword-wound—
 Eofor's hand recalled feuds enough,
 2950 and did not withhold the deadly blow!
 I repaid Hygelac in war—
 as was granted me by fate—with the gleaming
 sword, for those gifts which he had bestowed
 upon me: he had given me land,
 2955 and a dwelling—a pleasant, ancestral estate!
 There was no need for him—no cause!—
 that he should have to seek to purchase
 a lesser warrior, for a price,
 from among the Gifthas or the Spear-Danes,
 2960 or in the land of the Swedes: I would always

be before him among the foot-troops,
 alone in the front, and so shall always
 do battle as long as this sword endures,
 which has served me often, early and late,
 2965 from the time when, in the retainers' sight, I
 became the slayer-by-hand of Daeghrefn,
 the champion of the Hugas—he could
 not bring my ornaments and my breast
 adornment to the West Frisian king
 2970 at all, but, keeper of the standard—
 a nobleman in his prowess!—he perished
 in war—although my sword's edge was not
 the slayer: rather, my battle-grip crushed
 his heart-streams and that bone-house, his body.
 2975 And now this blade's edge—my hand and hard sword—
 shall fight for the treasure!" Then Beowulf spoke,
 and said words of boasting for the last time:
 "I took part in many wars in my youth,
 and, an old and wise guardian of the people,
 2980 I wish to seek combat still—achieve
 a glorious exploit!—if that wicked
 ravager will seek me out
 from his earth-hall!" And then Beowulf spoke
 to each of his men—those brave helmet-bearers,
 2985 his own dear comrades!—for the last time:
 "I would not bear the sword—any weapon—
 against the serpent, if I knew how
 else I might come to grips with that monster,
 according to my boast, as I did
 2990 with Grendel that time; but I expect
 hot, deadly fire, there, breath and venom—
 and that is why I have shield, and coat of
 mail upon me! I will not flee
 one footstep from the barrow's guardian;
 2995 rather, it shall be with the two of us,
 further forward beside the wall,
 as Fate, the ruler of every man,
 ordains for us both—I am firm in spirit,

and so I will dispense with boasting
 3000 against that war-flier: wait by the barrow,
 protected by coats of mail as you are—
 warriors in armor!—to find out
 which of the two of us will be better
 able to survive his wounds,
 3005 after the murderous onslaught: this is
 not your venture—for no man's power!—
 save mine alone!—that he should strive
 with his strength against that monster, and do
 heroic deeds. I will gain that gold
 3010 with my courage, or war, that fearsome, deadly
 evil, will take away your lord!"

And then the brave warrior arose
 beside his buckler, and, stern beneath
 his helmet, bore his battle-shirt under
 3015 the stone-cliffs, trusting as he did
 in the strength of one man—such is no coward's
 venture! Then he, who, excelling in manly
 virtues, had come through a great many wars—
 crashes of battle!—safely, when foot-troops
 3020 clashed together, saw, by the wall,
 an arch—a stone-bow—standing, and a
 stream gushing out of there from the barrow—
 a stream the surging of which was hot
 with deadly fires!—he could not survive
 3025 unburned in the hollow passage close to
 the hoard for any length of time,
 because of the dragon's flame. And then,
 enraged as he was, the Weder-Geats'
 prince let a word go out of his breast—
 3030 stout-hearted, he stormed aloud and, clear
 in battle, his voice went roaring within,
 beneath the gray stone. Then hate was aroused,
 the guardian of that hoard knew the voice
 of a man—and there was no more time
 3035 to seek friendship! First, the monster's breath—that
 hot battle-steam!—came from out of the stone,

the earth resounded, and, a hero
 under the barrow, the lord of the Geats
 swung his shield's boss against that horrible
 3040 stranger—and the coiling dragon's
 heart was stirred to seek strife! The good war-king
 had already drawn his sword, that ancient
 heirloom not dull of edge at all
 (In each of those two bent upon harm
 3045 was terror of the other!); the stout-hearted
 prince of friends took his stand by his towering
 shield-boss as the serpent coiled quickly
 together: Beowulf waited in
 his armor—then, having coiled, that burning
 3050 creature came slithering, hastening to his
 fate. But the shield protected the life
 and body of the famous ruler
 well for a shorter while than his thinking
 had looked for, were he to be allowed
 3055 to prevail at this hour, on this, the first day
 when fate had not decreed for him triumph
 in battle. The Geats' lord then raised up
 his hand, and with his sword—that fine heirloom!—
 struck the monster, terrible in his
 3060 mottled coloring—so that, bright
 on the bone, the edge gave way! It slashed
 less strongly than that ruler of men
 had need for, hard-pressed as he was in that
 affliction! And after that battle-stroke,
 3065 the guardian of that barrow was fierce
 in his breast and threw forth murderous fire—
 which battle-flames leaped far! The Geats'
 gold-giving friend did not boast of glorious
 victories: bared in the combat, his war-sword
 3070 had failed—the way it should not have, iron
 weapon good from old that it was. (This would
 not be something easily done:
 that Ecgtheow's famous offspring should willingly
 leave his place on this earth—would have

3075 to dwell in a habitation elsewhere
 against his wishes!—as every man
 must lay aside these days that are lent us.)
 It was not long, now, for those fierce foes,
 before they closed again: that hoard's
 3080 protector (whose breath surged with his breathing!)
 had heartened himself anew, while, engulfed
 in the flames, Beowulf was in great
 distress—he who had ruled that folk, once!
 Even his own comrades—the offspring
 3085 of nobles!—did not stand round him in a
 troop, as those who were best in war—
 rather, they fled to the woods to save
 their lives! The heart of one of them only
 was seething with sorrows, for nothing can ever
 3090 set aside kinship in him who thinks
 as he should! He was called Wiglaf, Weoxstan's
 son, a dear shield-warrior:
 a prince of the Scylfings, Aelfhere's kinsman,
 he saw that his lord was suffering heat
 3095 beneath his helmet. And when he—Wiglaf—
 remembered the honor which Beowulf
 had bestowed upon him before—the Waegmundings'
 prosperous home, and all of the folk-rights
 such as his father had had—he, Wiglaf,
 3100 could not hold back, then: his hand seized the buckler
 of yellow linden-wood, and he drew
 his ancient sword—which, among men,
 was an heirloom of Eanmund, Ohtere's son.
 (Weohstan had become that friendless
 3105 exile's slayer in war with his own
 blade's-edge, and bore to Eanmund's kinsfolk
 the brown, shining helmet, the ringed coat of mail,
 and that ancient, giant-made sword: these things—
 his kinsman's battle-dress, ready war-gear—
 3110 Onela gave to Weohstan
 and did not speak about that feud—
 though Weohstan had laid the son

of the brother of that same Onela low!
And Weohstan kept those adornments—sword
3115 and corselet—for many years, until his
own son could show his manliness, like
his father before him; then, when Weohstan,
old and wise at that going forth,
departed this life, he gave to Wiglaf,
3120 among the Geats, suits of armor
altogether countless in number.)
This was the first time for the young champion,
now, that he should make good the storm
of battle beside his beloved prince—
3125 Wiglaf's heart did not melt within him,
neither did his kinsman's heirloom
weaken in war: the serpent found
this out, once they had come together!
But Wiglaf spoke, now, saying many
3130 just words to his comrades (his heart was sad
within him): "I remember the time
when we were drinking our mead—when in
the beerhall we promised our lord—him who
gave us these rings, there!—that we would
3135 repay him for these trappings of war,
these helmets and hard sword, should such a need as
this come upon him. He who chose
us from among the host for this venture
according to his own will, considered
3140 us worthy of fame and gave me these treasures—
he who deemed us worthy spear-warriors—
active helmet-bearers!—even
though our lord meant to do this work
of prowess alone (that shepherd of his
3145 people!), for he most among men has
done famous exploits, deeds of great daring!
But now the day has come in which
our lord has need of the strength of worthy
warriors! Let us go now to help
3150 our battle-leader for as long as

that heat—that savage, fiery terror!—
 shall last! God knows that, as for myself,
 it is much more agreeable to me
 that the flames embrace my body along with
 3155 my gold-giving prince! It does not seem to
 me fitting that we should bear our bucklers
 home again, unless we can fell
 that enemy first, and protect the life
 of the lord of the Weders! I know well that
 3160 his deeds of former times were not such
 that he alone among the host
 of the Geats should suffer this distress,
 and fall in this combat! The sword and the helmet,
 the corselet and coat of armor, shall be
 3165 common to us both!” Then Wiglaf
 strode through the murderous stench—he bore
 his helmet to the aid of his lord,
 and said these few words: “Dear Beowulf,
 do all things well—as you once said,
 3170 in the days of your youth, that you would not
 allow your glory to fail during
 your lifetime! Therefore, resolute hero—
 renowned in deeds!—you must protect
 your life with all of your strength—I will help you!”
 3175 After these words, the angry serpent,
 that horrible, evil creature, came shining
 with surges of fire a second time
 to attack his foes, the loathed men. And Wiglaf’s
 wooden shield was burned to the boss
 3180 from the waves of flame, his armor could not
 afford the young spear-warrior help,
 and the young man dashed at once beneath
 his kinsman’s shield, now that his—the youth’s—
 own had been consumed by the flames.
 3185 Then, mindful of glorious deeds once more,
 that war-king struck with great strength with his battle-
 sword, so that, driven by hatred, the weapon
 lodged in the dragon’s head—and Naegling

burst! Ancient and gray-coloured, Beowulf's
3190 sword had failed him in the fight! It had
not been granted to him that the edges
of iron blades could help him in war—
his hand was too strong, that man whose stroke,
as I heard, tried every sword too much
3195 when he bore the weapon wondrously hard
into battle. (He was not in the least
the better for it!) Then, for the third time,
that enemy of the people, the dangerous
fire-dragon, was mindful of feuding,
3200 and, hot and battle-grim, rushed, as soon as
an opening was given to him, at the
mighty Beowulf, and clasped his
whole neck with his—the dragon's—sharp fangs—
and Beowulf became gory with his
3205 own life's blood, which "sweat" welled forth
in waves! Then, as I heard, at that folk-king's
distress, the earl at Beowulf's side
showed courage, strength, and boldness, as was
his nature: he paid no attention to
3210 the head, though the brave man's hand was burned
the while he was helping his kinsman, as,
a man in armor, he, Wiglaf, struck
the fell visitant somewhat lower down, so that,
gleaming and overlaid with gold,
3215 that sword plunged in—so that, afterwards,
the fire began to subside! And the king
himself still ruled his senses: he drew
the war-dagger, keen and battle-sharp, which he
kept in his armor—and the Weders'
3220 protector cut the serpent in half
through the middle! The enemy fell (courage
had driven out his life!)—and they both
had killed him, kinsmen-noblemen that they
were! Such should a man be: a thane
3225 in a time of need! (This, for that prince,
was the final hour of victory by his own

deeds—of his work in this world!) Then the wound
 which that earth-dwelling dragon had dealt him before
 began to burn and swell—at once
 3230 he found out this: that the poison within him
 was welling with fierce rage in his breast!
 And the wise nobleman made his way
 till he sat on a bench by the wall; he gazed
 on the work of giants, and saw how that
 3235 eternal earth-hall had within it
 stone-bows, arches, fast on pillars.
 Then, with his hands, Wiglaf, that
 retainer good beyond measure, laved him
 with water—that sword-gory, glorious prince,
 3240 his friendly ruler, wearied with the
 battle—and unfastened his helmet.
 Then Beowulf spoke (he talked despite
 his injury, his mortal wound—
 he knew very well that he had passed
 3245 through the length of his days, his joy on this earth:
 now his allotted time of life was
 all gone, and death was exceedingly near):
 “I now would give this war-garment to
 my son, had fate so granted that any
 3250 heir—flesh of my flesh!—should come after
 me. I have ruled this nation for fifty
 winters; and there was not the folk-king
 of any of the neighboring peoples
 who dared to taunt me with swords—those friends
 3255 in war!—to threaten me with fear!
 I lived out my destiny on earth,
 and defended my own well—I did not
 seek treacherous feuds, nor did I swear
 many oaths for myself deceitfully!—
 3260 sick as I am with these mortal wounds,
 I can know joy in all of this, for the
 Ruler of men will never need
 to charge me with the violent death
 of kinsfolk, when my life takes leave

3265 of my body! Now go quickly to gaze
 upon the hoard beneath the gray stone,
 beloved Wiglaf, now that the serpent
 lies dead, asleep from sore wounds and bereft
 of the treasure—be in haste, now, that I
 3270 may see those ancient riches, that store
 of gold—may readily look on those gleaming,
 precious jewels, so that, after
 gaining that wealth of treasure, I may
 the more gently lay aside my life,
 3275 and the nation which I have ruled for so long.”
 Then I heard, that, after these words, the son
 of Wihstan quickly obeyed his wounded
 lord—that one sick in war!—and wore
 his own ring-mail, that woven battle-sark, under
 3280 the roof of the barrow. Then, when he went
 along the seat, the victorious, bold
 young retainer saw many priceless treasures:
 glittering gold lying on the ground,
 wonders on the wall (and the den
 3285 of the serpent, that ancient flier-by-twilight!),
 and vessels of men of old: cups standing
 without a burnisher, and deprived
 of their ornaments. There was many a helmet,
 old and rusty, and many arm-rings
 3290 bent round with craftsmanship. (Hide it who will,
 treasure—gold on the ground!—may easily
 overcome every man among men!)
 And what is more, Wiglaf saw a banner,
 hanging high above the hoard
 3295 and all of gold—the greatest of hand-made
 marvels, woven by fingers with skill:
 a light shone from that standard, so that
 he could perceive the floor of the place,
 and examine those works of art. (There was not
 3300 one sight of the serpent, there, for the edge
 of the sword had carried him off!) Then I heard
 that one man plundered the hoard in the barrow,

that ancient work of giants, and loaded
 flagons and plates onto his bosom,
 3305 according to his own choice; and he took
 the banner—that brightest of beacons!) also.
 (The sword—whose edge was iron—of
 that aged ruler had earlier injured
 3310 the one who for a long time had been
 the guardian of those treasures—because
 of which hoard, he had waged hot, flaming terror—
 which welled out fiercely at midnight!—until
 he died in misery.) And now Wiglaf—
 that herald!—was in great haste, eager
 3315 for his return, urged on by the treasures:
 anxiety pressed him as to whether,
 bold in spirit, he would find
 the prince of the Weders alive in the place
 where he—Wiglaf— had left him before, deprived
 3320 of his strength. Then, bearing those treasures, Wiglaf
 found that glorious prince, his lord,
 bleeding, and at the end of his life;
 and Wiglaf began again to sprinkle
 water upon him, until this word's
 3325 beginning broke from his breast-hoard (The aged
 one in his sorrow gazed at the gold!): “I
 say thanks with words to the Lord of all,
 the King of Glory, the Prince everlasting,
 for these adornments which I am looking
 3330 on here—that I was allowed to gain
 such for my people, before the day of
 my death! Now I have sold my old life
 for this hoard of riches—attend the more
 to the needs of my people, I cannot stay
 3335 here longer! After my funeral pyre,
 command those famed in battle to raise
 a glorious mound on the sea's cape, as a
 reminder to my people; it shall
 stand high on the Cape of the Whales, so that
 3340 seafarers—they who drive the ships

from afar over the murkiness of
 the floods—thereafter will call it Beowulf's
 barrow." And then that valorous prince
 took his golden ring from around his neck,
 3345 and gave his thane, that young spear-warrior,
 gold-adorned helmet, ring, and corselet,
 bidding him use them well: "You are
 the last descendent of our race,
 the Waegmundings. Fate has swept away
 3350 all of my kinsmen to their deaths,
 earls in their valor, and I must follow
 after them!" That was the final word
 from the thoughts of the aged one's heart, before
 he chose the fire, the hot, fierce flames:
 3355 his soul went out of his breast to seek
 the glory of the righteous. Then it
 had happened sorrowfully for the young man,
 that he had seen that dearest one
 fare wretchedly at the end of his life
 3360 on earth. But the murderer lay low as well,
 that terrible earth-dragon, spoiled of his life
 and oppressed with affliction: the coiled serpent
 no longer would be allowed to guard
 the ring-hoard—rather, the edges of iron
 3365 blades—those hard, battle-sharp leavings
 of hammers—had destroyed him, so that,
 silent from his wounds, the far-ranging
 flier had fallen on earth near that treasure-house;
 he did not move about at all,
 3370 disporting through the air at midnight,
 and proud of those costly possessions, while showing
 his form—rather, he had fallen
 to earth through the war-chief's handiwork.
 (Truly, I heard that it had gone well
 3375 in that land for few men of strength, though one
 be daring in every exploit, that he should
 rush against the breath of the venomous
 foe, or disturb that hall of rings

with his hands—if he found that guardian watchful,
 3380 and present in the barrow!) That vast
 amount of princely treasure was
 requited to Beowulf by his death.
 (Each of those two adversaries
 had come to the end of this fleeting life!)
 3385 It was not long, now, before those laggards
 in war—cowardly oath-breakers, ten
 in all!—came out of the wood; they had
 not dared to do battle with their spears,
 earlier, in their lord's great need,
 3390 and, ashamedly, they bore their shields and
 their war-apparel to where the aged one
 lay; and there those ten looked at Wiglaf, as,
 wearied—and a foot-warrior!—
 he sat by his lord's shoulders, and tried
 3395 to arouse him with water; but it did not
 avail him in any way: though he wished
 very much to do so, Wiglaf could not,
 on earth, keep life within that chieftain,
 nor alter a thing which pertained to the
 3400 Almighty—the judgment of God would rule
 the deeds of every man, as it still
 does now. And then, from that youth, a harsh
 reply to him who had lost his courage
 before was easily come by: the son
 3405 of Weohstan, Wiglaf, sick—and sad!—
 at heart, spoke (fixing his eyes on those
 unloved ones!): “This, indeed, may he say,
 who wishes to speak the truth: that the lord
 who gave you those treasures—that war-raiment which you
 3410 are standing in there!—when often along
 the ale-bench he gave men sitting in hall
 helmet and corselet—(such as—a prince
 to his thanes!—the most resplendent he could
 find anywhere, far or near!)—that he
 3415 completely—and grievously!—threw that war-dress
 away, when battle came upon him!

That folk-king did not need to boast
 at all of his comrades in war, yet God,
 the Lord of victories, granted him
 3420 that he should avenge himself alone with
 the sword-edge, when there was need of valor
 within him. I could give him little
 protection for his life in that combat,
 and yet I made a start, beyond
 3425 my powers, at helping my kinsman: when I
 struck the deadly foe with my sword,
 he was ever the weaker, the fire surged
 from his nostrils and maw less strongly—but too few
 defenders thronged around that prince,
 3430 when that hardship befell him! And now the receiving
 of treasure and the giving of swords,
 all joys of ancestral estates—dear homes!—
 shall cease, for your kind—every man of your people
 shall wander deprived of his land-rights!—when aethelings
 3435 hear from afar of your fleeing, that deed
 without honor! Death is better for every
 earl than a life of disgrace!” And then
 he bade that that work of war be proclaimed
 within the enclosure up over the sea-cliff,
 3440 where, sad at heart, that troop of earls—
 those shield-possessors!—had been sitting
 the whole forenoon in the expectation of
 both: the last day—or the return!—
 of the beloved man. Then he who
 3445 had ridden up the headland was little
 silent about the unheard-of news,
 and truthfully said to them all: “Now the giver
 of joy of the Weder people—the lord of
 the Geats!—is fast on his death-bed; he
 3450 remains on the slaughter-couch by the serpent’s
 deeds. That deadly enemy, stricken with
 dagger-wounds, lies beside him—he could not
 deal a wound with the sword to that monster
 in any way! Wiglaf, Weohstan’s

3455 offspring, sits over Beowulf—one earl
 over that lifeless other—and in
 distress of soul keeps a death-watch over
 him who was loved and him who was loathed.
 And now there is the likelihood
 3460 of a time of war for the people, once
 the fall of the king becomes widely known
 to the Franks and the Frisians. That harsh dispute
 was brought into being with the Hugas,
 when Hygelac came faring with a
 3465 sea-borne army to the land
 of the Frisians; there the Hetware
 attacked him in war, and swiftly brought it
 to pass with a superior force
 that the mailed warrior had to give way,
 3470 falling among the foot-troop—that prince
 did not give treasure at all to those tried
 retainers!—and the favor of the
 Merovingian king has ever
 since been denied us. Neither do I
 3475 look for peace and good faith at all
 from the Swedes; rather, it was widely
 known that Ongentheow had robbed
 Haethcyn, Hrethel’s offspring, of life
 near Ravenswood, when, in their pride, the Geatish
 3480 people first sought the Battle-Scylfings—
 for Ongentheow, Ohtere’s aged
 father—old and terrible!—quickly
 gave Haethcyn a counter-blow, killing that sea-king:
 an old man, Ongentheow rescued
 3485 his wife, that aged woman robbed
 of her gold—Onela’s mother as well as
 Ohtere’s—and then pursued
 his mortal enemies, till they just barely
 escaped into Ravenswood without
 3490 their leader. And then the Swedes’ huge army
 besieged those who had been left by the sword
 and were weary from wounds—often, throughout

the night, Ongentheow threatened
woe for that wretched band: he said,
3495 that, in the morning, he would rip them
apart with the sword's-edge, hanging some
on gallows-trees as sport for the birds.
But relief came about once more for those sad-hearted
folk at daybreak, when they heard
3500 the sound of Hygelac's horn and trumpet,
as the good man came striding along
the trail with a host of his countrymen—for the
bloody track of the Swedes and the Geats—
the murderous onslaught of men!—was visible
3505 far and wide, how either folk
had stirred up that strife between them! And then
that worthy one, old and very sad,
departed with his kinsmen to seek
his stronghold: the hero Ongentheow
3510 moved farther away—he had heard of Hygelac's
war-prowess, of that proud one's skill
in combat, and he, Ongentheow,
did not have faith in resisting, that he
could strive against those seamen—could
3515 defend his hoard, children, and wife
from those seafaring warriors: old that he was, he
turned back from there, to behind a wall
of earth. Then pursuit was offered to the
Swedish people, and Hygelac's banners
3520 ran forth all over that field of refuge
as Hrethel's folk pressed forward towards
the entrenchment. And there Ongentheow
the gray-haired was brought to bay with the edges
of swords, so that the king of that people
3525 had to submit to Eofor's will
alone. Then Wonred's offspring, Wulf,
struck Ongentheow angrily with a
weapon, so that, due to that blow,
the "sweat"—blood!—sprang forth in streams from under
3530 his hair. Yet he was not afraid,

the aged Scylfing—rather, he quickly
 repaid that murderous blow with one worse
 in exchange, when, king of his people, he turned towards
 that quarter: quick in his movements, the son
 3535 of Wonred could not give the old man
 a counter-blow—rather, he cleft the helmet
 on Wulf's head first, so that, stained with blood,
 he had to sink down—he fell on the earth!
 But he was not yet fated to die—
 3540 rather, he recovered himself,
 though his wound was hurting him. And then Eofor,
 Hygelac's hardy retainer—while his
 brother lay low—let the broadsword, an ancient,
 giant-made blade, burst Ongentheow's
 3545 giant-made helmet over the shield-wall—
 and the king, that herdsman of
 his people, sank down, struck in a vital
 part! And then, when room was made for
 the Geats, so that they might possess
 3550 the battlefield, there were many who bound up
 Eofor's brother, and promptly lifted
 him up, as one hero, Eofor, plundered
 the other, Ongentheow, and took from
 him his iron corselet, the hard, hilted
 3555 sword, and his helmet also—and bore
 the old man's adornments to Hygelac, who
 accepted those treasures, and fittingly promised
 Eofor rewards among the
 people—and kept that vow in this way: when
 3560 he had come home, the Geats' lord, Hrethel's
 offspring, paid Eofor and Wulf,
 for that onslaught in battle, with exceeding
 treasure—he gave to each of them
 a hundred thousand measures of land, and
 3565 linked rings—and no man on this earth-midyard
 had reason to blame him for that reward,
 after those men had performed such glorious
 exploits! And then Hygelac gave

his only daughter to Eofor, as
 3570 an ornament to his home, and as
 a pledge of good will. This is the feud
 and the enmity, now—the deadly hatred
 of men!—which I expect from the Swedish
 people, who will attack us as soon
 3575 as they learn that our lord is lifeless—he who
 before had guarded a hoard and kingdom
 from enemies, after the fall of heroes,
 the valiant Scyldings: he looked to that people’s
 benefit, and, further still, did
 3580 heroic deeds! Now haste is best,
 that we behold our folk-king, there,
 and bring that one—who gave us rings!—
 on the way to his funeral pyre. And not
 one portion only shall melt with that brave one—
 3585 rather, there is a hoard of treasures,
 gold beyond counting, grimly purchased—
 and now, at the last, rings bought with his own
 life: the flames must consume, the fire
 embrace, these—the earl not at all wear a precious
 3590 item in remembrance, nor
 the beauteous maiden have round her neck
 a ring-adornment—rather, sad
 in mind and bereft of gold, she must often—
 not once only!—walk through a foreign
 3595 land, now that the leader of the
 host has laid aside laughter, sport,
 and music—for which cause, many a javelin,
 cold in the morning, shall be grasped
 by fingers, lifted by hands: the sound
 3600 of the harp shall not at all awaken
 the warrior—rather, the dusky raven,
 eager over the dead, shall say very
 much, shall tell the eagle how he,
 the raven, throve at the meal, when with
 3605 the wolf he plundered the carnage.” The brisk
 man thus was the teller of grievous tales: he

did not lie overmuch with respect
to facts or words! That troop all arose, then,
and sorrowing—with welling tears—
3610 went under the Cape of the Eagles to see
the wonder. And there on the sand that folk
found, soulless, and keeping his bed of rest,
him who had given them rings in earlier
times! For now the final day
3615 had come to the worthy man, in which, he,
that war-king, the prince of the Weders, had died
a wondrous death—for there they had already
seen a stranger being: the loathsome
serpent, lying opposite him,
3620 there, in that place—the fire-dragon,
fierce, and terrible in his mottled
coloring, had been scorched by his own
flames! He was fifty foot-lengths long where
he lay, having ruled the joy-giving air
3625 by night, at times, and then gone down
to visit his den: now he was fast
in death, having enjoyed the last
of his earthen-caverns! Near him stood cups
and flagons; dishes lay there, and precious
3630 swords, rusty and eaten through,
since they had been there in the bosom
of earth for a thousand winters—moreover,
that heritage exceedingly vast—
the gold of men of old!—had been bound
3635 with a spell, in order that none among men
could reach that ring-hall, save him whom God
Himself, the True King of Triumphs, should grant,
as He wished (He is mankind's Protector!),
to open the hoard—even to such
3640 a man as seemed fitting to Him. Then it
was plain that his doing so had not profited
him who had wrongfully hidden those works
of art within, under the wall:
the guardian first had killed a man like

3645 few others—and then that feud had been fiercely
 avenged! (It is a wonder where or
 when an earl renowned for his courage
 may reach the end of his allotted
 life—when such a man may no longer
 3650 dwell with his kinsmen in the mead-hall!)
 Thus it was for Beowulf, when
 he sought the barrow’s guardian—
 sought battle: Beowulf himself did
 not know what the cause of his parting from
 3655 this world should be! Thus the famous lords
 who had stored that treasure there, had solemnly
 placed it under a curse till doomsday,
 so that the man who ravaged the place would
 be guilty of sins and confined in heathen
 3660 temples—fast in the bonds of Hell, be
 tormented in ghastly ways: he none
 the sooner possessed the owner’s legacy,
 rich in gold, having seen it first!
 Then Wiglaf spoke, the son of Weohstan:
 3665 “Many an earl must often suffer
 misery through the will of one, as
 is happening to us now. We could not
 persuade our dear prince—the keeper of
 the kingdom!—with any good counsel, that
 3670 he not attack that guardian of
 the gold, but let him lie where he long
 had been, remaining in this hall
 till the end of the world; but our prince held fast
 to his high destiny: the hoard is
 3675 revealed, terribly won! (The fate
 was too harsh that drove our folk-king there!) I wa
 in there, and looked all through that, the stores
 of that building, when an errand—not at all
 kindly allowed!—was granted to me,
 3680 under the earth-wall within: I hastily
 seized a huge, mighty burden of hoarded
 possessions with my hands, and carried

it out here to my king. He was still
 alive, then, alert, and in his own senses,
 3685 and old and in sorrow, he spoke of a great
 many things: he asked that I greet you, and bade,
 that, in keeping with the exploits of
 your friendly lord, you raise, on the place
 of the pyre, a barrow as lofty as that,
 3690 huge and magnificent, just as he,
 among men, was the most illustrious warrior
 far and wide throughout the earth,
 for as long as he was allowed to enjoy
 the wealth of his castle! Let us hasten,
 3696 now, a second time, to see
 and seek out the heap of curious gems—
 the wonder under the wall! I will guide you,
 so that you may gaze from up close
 on those abundant rings and broad gold. Let
 3700 the bier be made ready—quickly prepared!—
 when we come out, and then let us carry
 our leader, that beloved man, to where
 long he must wait in the Lord's own keeping.”
 Then Weohstan's son, a warrior brave
 3705 in battle, bade the order be given
 to many heroes—house-owners, chieftains—
 that they bring wood from afar for the pyre
 towards the good man: “And now the flame
 must devour—the dark fire consume!—that chief
 3710 of warriors, he who often survived
 the iron shower, when the storm
 of arrows, urged on by force, sped over
 the shield-wall, as the shaft did its duty,
 and ready with its feather-gear served
 3715 the arrow-head.” Truly, Weohstan's knowing
 son called forth from the host, then, seven in
 all—the best!—of the king's retainers,
 and, one of eight warriors, went beneath
 the sinister roof. (The man who went
 3720 in the front bore a flaming torch in his hand.) It was

not by the casting of lots, then, that anyone
 plundered that hoard, whenever the men
 saw any part remaining without
 a guardian in that hall, and lying
 3725 there for so transitory a time:
 little did any of them mourn
 that they were hastily bringing dear valuables
 out! Moreover, the men pushed the dragon,
 that serpent, over the wall-like cliff—
 3730 they let the wave take, the flood embrace,
 the guardian of those treasures. Then wound
 gold, altogether countless in number,
 was loaded onto a wagon, and the
 prince, that hoary battle-warrior,
 3735 borne to the Cape of the Whales. Then on
 the earth, the Geatish people prepared for him
 no mean funeral pile, hung round
 with helmets, wooden battle-shields, and
 bright corselets, as he had asked; then, lamenting
 3740 that hero—their beloved lord!—
 his folk laid that glorious ruler in
 the midst—and then the warriors
 began to arouse that greatest of funeral
 fires on the barrow: wood-smoke arose, dark
 3745 over the blaze, the roaring fire
 mingled with weeping (the tumult of the
 winds died down), till, hot at the heart,
 the flames had broken that bone-house. Sad
 in their thoughts, the people spoke of their heart-care—
 3750 the death of their lord! Likewise, her hair
 bound up . . . a Geatish woman,
 sorrowing, sang a mournful lay
 that she greatly dreaded evil days
 for herself—much slaughter, horrors of
 3755 the host, humiliation and
 captivity. Heaven swallowed the smoke. Then the
 people of the Weders raised
 on that promontory a shelter that was

high and broad—visible from
3760 afar by seafarers—and in ten days
completed the beacon of that one bold
in battle, and built a wall around
those leavings of the flames, one such as
exceedingly wise men might devise
3765 most splendidly. And the folk placed circlets
and jewels on the barrow—all such
adornments as valorous men had earlier
taken from the hoard—and let
the earth keep that wealth of earls—gold in
3770 the ground!—where it all dwells even now,
as useless to men as it was before.
Then, brave in battle, noblemen's offspring,
twelve in all, rode around that barrow;
they wished to lament their grief, and to mourn
3775 for their king, to utter an elegy, and to
speak of the man; they praised his manliness
and his acts of courage, spoke well
of his prowess—as it is fitting that a
man praise his friendly lord with words—
3780 with love in his heart!—when such a one
must be led forth from his body. Thus the
Geatish people—his hearth-companions!—
lamented the death of their lord; they said,
that, among the kings of this world, he was
3785 the mildest of men and the most gentle,
the kindest to his people, and
the most eager for fame.

❖ HERE IS THE SAGA OF THE GLORY
HOARDERS, FIRST SUNG TO THE HARP
IN AN AGE OF RING BESTOWING, WHEN
BATTLEMOODY WARRIORS COMPETED
IN DEEDS STORY-WORTHY, AND MEAD
RAN APLENTY IN THE WIDE-DOORED
HALLS.

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MUST BE COMPLETELY NATURAL IN
THE NEW LANGUAGE, AND ALSO BE OF
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AND EXPRESSIONS CLOSELY RESEMBLING
THOSE GIVEN IN THE ORIGINAL TEXT, TO
"PRESERVE THE NATIVE QUALITY" OF
OUR EARLIEST EPIC POEM.

❖ WHAT EMERGES IS A BEOWULF
THAT IS CLEAN, CLEAR, AND JOYFUL TO
READ, YET RINGING WITH THE HARD,
AMBIGUOUS GLORY OF THE FATE-
WIELDERS AND THEIR HEROIC AGE.

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