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Ode to the Heart

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Ode to the Heart

O, sorrowed heart of mine, to whom shall thou speak?
To where shall thou fly? to flutter? to stoke the flame?
To where shall thou go when thou are fled from me,
when I lay cold upon the field, fallen in the fray?

Return, O, hapless friend, to our homeland,
where it all began for you, for me;
there where thou first did beat thy drum,
and I first walked upon mine own feet.

It was there also where our mother did borne
the two of us, and formed us life-long friends.

Ah! but home, it is said, lies where the heart
doth dwell, in fire bright, not to dim, nor to delve
in darkness cold, but in warming glow.

And for thee, my heart, and for me myself,
home is here on hallowed eastward lands;
where my wife, thine other friend dear,
lives in joy, in that abode,
to which we could call our mead-hall.

And she, though she names us her lord,
is well deserved to namèd-be our lord;
for her majesty, like starlight,
like lustrous moon as warm as the mid-day sun,
is our guide on this our most dreary night.

Here, assuredly, shall I, the bone-house drop,
and Death shall come and take me half-way.

Go there, my friend, my hapless heart,
where my wife, thy friend dear,
enkindles thee in me that earthly blaze.

Alas! our home, that eastward place,
where we doth live, we there live no more,
for now, instead of stone, our home doth rest
upon grim peril, of darkness wrought
in distant lands far off. For this is why
we here stand, hapless thou, despairing me,
in defense of home, the place my wife doth leave
to board a ship, and sail across the sea:
thou inside my breast, me with shield in hand,
and sharpened sword, to answer the call
of the battle-ward.

O, sorrowed heart of mine, O, hapless friend,
but how could thou sail across the sea with thy mate,
my maiden wife, though she and I each other know?
And she walks now with our woe-less child to be,
who harbours in her womb, that warm, safe place.

How could thou go to be with her, my wife,
and to her comfort give whilst here we stay,
perhaps for evermore, upon this blood-stained field.

I suppose it is in strangers where we
must place our trust, our hope, to bring my wife,
thy friend dear, to that shore beside the sea,
mayhaps to that Everlasting City,
where our lord must not know yet the scourge,
the terror that has befallen our most eastern,
holy home of reverence. Pray with me
now, O, heart, O, friend of mine,
for the safety of those— the strangers and my wife—
who soon will fare across the blue-road,
that perilous domain, so they may tell
him, our lord, of the lost lives,
of the children's cries, of the woes of our friends,
of our fallen comrades, of our cold, shivering tears,
of our miserable fears, so he may hear us,
all who cannot avoid the death before the blade,
to guard our sacred Realm, to protect the lives of innocents.
Amen to Thee, Our Liege-lord.

O, sorrowed heart of mine, O, hapless friend,
to where shall thou fly? to flutter? to stoke the flame?
To where shall thou go when I am fled from thee,
when thou lay cold upon the field, fallen in the fray?
Alas! my life-long friend, my hapless comrade,
my tattered mate, this is a sombre day;
for here must I to take my fated leave,
and thou must stay here on this forlorn earth,
and we must part. Aye, to part we must.

But stay thy tears, O, broken friend,
for on that fated day, when the seventh trumpet sounds,
I shall return to thee, here upon the battlefield,
where our friends did they die,
and fell cold upon a warm, bloodied earth.
On that day fated most,
I shall return to thee, and once more
thou shall beat thy drum, and warm mine insides,
O, sorrowed heart of mine, my hapful friend.