

Easy Old Norse, from Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*, chapter 49: Hermóðr rides to Hel

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(For translation and an MP3 of Hildur Jónsdóttir reading the text out, see <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/spokenword/ONword.htm>).

<p>En þat er at segja frá Hermóði at hann reið níu nætr dökkva dala ok djúpa svá at hann sá ekki fyrr en hann kom til árinna Gjallar ok reið á Gjallar brúna. Hon er þokð lýsigulli. Móðguðr er nefnd mæsr sú er gætir brúarinnar. Hon spurði hann at nafni eða ætt ok sagði at hinn fyrra dag riðu um brúna fimm fylki dauðra manna,</p>	<p><i>en</i> 'but, and'; <i>þat</i> 'that, it'; <i>er</i> 'is'; <i>at segja</i> 'to say'; <i>frá</i> 'from, about'; <i>Hermóði</i> dative of <i>Hermóðr</i>, one of the gods; <i>at</i> 'that'; <i>hann</i> 'he, him'; <i>reið</i> 'rode' (past 3rd person singular of <i>ríða</i>); <i>níu</i> 'nine'; <i>nætr</i> 'nights' (accusative plural of <i>nótt</i>); <i>dökkva</i> 'dark' (accusative plural of <i>dökk</i>); <i>dala</i> 'valleys' (accusative plural of <i>dalr</i>); <i>ok</i> 'and'; <i>djúpa</i> 'deep' (accusative plural of <i>djúpr</i>); <i>svá at</i> 'so that'; <i>sá</i> 'saw' (past 3rd person singular of <i>sjá</i>); <i>ekki</i> 'not'; <i>fyrr en</i> 'before'; <i>kom</i> 'came' (past 3rd person singular of <i>koma</i>); <i>til</i> 'to'; <i>árinna</i> 'the river' (genitive [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>á in</i>); <i>Gjallar</i> genitive of <i>Gjöll</i>, the river separating the world of the living from the dead; <i>á</i> 'on'; <i>brúna</i> 'the bridge' (accusative singular of <i>brú n</i>). <i>Hon</i> 'she'; <i>þokð</i> 'roofed' (past participle from <i>þekja</i> 'to roof, thatch'); <i>lýsigulli</i> '(with) shining gold' (dative of <i>lýsigull</i> 'shining gold'); <i>Móðguðr</i> a personal name; <i>nefnd</i> 'named' (past participle of <i>nefna</i> 'to name'); <i>mæsr sú er</i> 'that maiden who'; <i>gætir</i> 'guards' (present 3rd person singular of <i>gæta</i>); <i>brúarinnar</i> 'the bridge' (genitive singular [<i>gæta</i> takes the genitive], of <i>brú n</i>). <i>Spurði</i> 'asked' (past 3rd singular of <i>spyrja</i>); <i>hann at nafni</i> 'him about [his] name'; <i>eða</i> 'or'; <i>ætt</i> 'lineage'; <i>sagði</i> 'said' (past 3rd singular of <i>segja</i>); <i>hinn fyrra dag</i> 'the day before'; <i>riðu</i> 'rode' (past 3rd plural of <i>ríða</i>); <i>um</i> 'around, across'; <i>fimm</i> 'five', <i>fylki</i> 'battalions' (nominative plural of <i>fylki</i>); <i>dauðra manna</i> 'of dead people' (genitive plural of <i>dauðr maðr</i> 'dead person')</p>
<p>"En eigi dynr brúin minnr undir einum þér ok eigi hefir þú lit dauðra manna. Hví ríðr þú hér á Helveg?"</p>	<p><i>eigi</i> 'no, none, not'; <i>dynr</i> 'resound' (present 3rd singular of <i>dynja</i>); <i>brú n</i> 'the bridge'; <i>minnr</i> 'less'; <i>undir</i> 'under'; <i>einum þér</i> 'you alone' (dative singular [<i>undir</i> takes the dative] of <i>einn þú</i>); <i>hefir</i> 'has' (present 3rd person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>þú</i> 'you' (singular); <i>lit</i> 'appearance' (accusative of <i>lit</i>). <i>Hví</i> 'why'; <i>ríðr</i> 'ride' (present 2nd person singular of <i>ríða</i>); <i>hér</i> 'here'; <i>Helveg</i> accusative of <i>Helveg</i> 'the Hel-road'.</p>
<p>Hann svarar at "ek skal ríða til Heljar at leita Baldrs. Eða hvárt hefir þú nakkvat sét Baldr á Helvegi?"</p>	<p><i>svavar</i> at 'replies that' (present 3rd person singular of <i>svara</i>); <i>ek</i> 'I'; <i>skal</i> 'must' (present 1st person singular of <i>skulu</i>); <i>Heljar</i> genitive [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Hel</i> 'Hell/the Goddess Hel'; <i>at leita</i> 'to look for'; <i>Baldrs</i> 'Baldr's', genitive [<i>leita</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Baldr</i>, one of the gods; <i>hvárt</i> 'whether; interrogative particle'; <i>nakkvat</i> 'anything'; <i>sét</i> 'seen' (past participle of <i>sjá</i> 'see'); <i>Baldr</i> accusative of <i>Baldr</i>; <i>Helvegi</i> dative [<i>á</i> takes the dative] of <i>Helveg</i>.</p>
<p>En hon sagði at Baldr hafði þar riðit um Gjallar brú, "en niðr ok norðr liggir Helveg."r.</p>	<p><i>hafði</i> 'had' (past 3rd person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>þar</i> 'there'; <i>riðit</i> 'ridden' (past participle of <i>ríða</i>); <i>niðr</i> 'downwards'; <i>norðr</i> 'northwards'; <i>ligg</i> 'lies' (present 3rd person singular of <i>liggja</i>).</p>
<p>Þá reið Hermóðr þar til er hann kom at Helgrindum. Þá sté hann af hestinum ok gyrði hann fast, steig upp ok keyrði hann sporum. En hestrinn hljóp svá hart ok yfir grindina at hann kom hvergi nær. Þá reið Hermóðr heim til hallarinnar ok steig af hesti, gekk inn í hollina, sá þar sitja í öndugi Baldr bróður sinn, ok dvalðisk Hermóðr þar um nóttina. En at morni þá beiddisk Hermóðr af Helju at Baldr skyldi ríða heim með honum ok sagði hversu mikill grátr var með Ásum. En Hel sagði at þat skyldi svá reyna</p>	<p><i>þá</i> 'then'; <i>er</i> 'where'; <i>at</i> 'to'; <i>Helgrindum</i> dative plural of <i>Helgrindr</i> 'the Hell-gates'. <i>Sté</i> 'stepped' (past 3rd person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>af</i> 'off, from'; <i>hesti num</i> 'the horse' (dative singular of <i>hestr inn</i>); <i>gyrði</i> 'tighten the saddle on a horse' (past 3rd person singular of <i>gyrða</i>); <i>fast</i> 'firmly'; <i>steig upp</i> 'stepped up' (present 3rd person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>keyrði</i> 'drove' (past 3rd person singular from <i>keyra</i>); <i>sporum</i> 'with spurs' (dative plural of <i>spori</i>). <i>Hestr inn</i> 'the horse'; <i>hljóp</i> 'leaped' (past 3rd person singular from <i>hlaupa</i>); <i>hart</i> 'hard, forcefully'; <i>yfir</i> 'over'; <i>grind ina</i> 'the gate' (accusative singular of <i>grind in</i>); <i>hvergi</i> 'never, nowhere'; <i>nær</i> 'near'. <i>Heim</i> 'home, homewards'; <i>hallar innar</i> 'the hall' (genitive singular [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>holl in</i>); <i>steig</i> 'stepped' (past 3rd person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>gekk</i> 'walked' (past 3rd person singular from <i>ganga</i>); <i>inn i</i> 'into'; <i>holl ina</i> 'the hall' (accusative singular of <i>holl in</i>); <i>sitja i</i> 'sit in'; <i>öndugi</i> 'seat of honour' (dative [<i>i</i> usually takes the dative] of <i>öndugi</i>); <i>bróður</i> 'brother'; <i>sinn</i> 'his (own)'; <i>dvalðisk</i> 'stayed' (past 3rd person singular from <i>dveljask</i>); <i>um nótt ina</i> 'for the night' (accusative of <i>nótt in</i>). <i>At morni</i> 'in the morning' (dative of <i>morgunn</i>); <i>beiddisk</i> 'requested' (past 3rd person singular from <i>beiðask</i>); <i>Helju</i> dative [<i>af</i> takes the dative] of <i>Hel</i>, the name of a goddess; <i>skyldi</i> 'must' (present 3rd person singular subjunctive from <i>skulu</i>); <i>með</i> 'with, among'; <i>honum</i> 'him' (dative [<i>með</i> takes the dative] singular of <i>hann</i>); <i>hversu</i> 'how'; <i>mikill</i> 'great'; <i>grátr</i> 'weeping'; <i>var</i> 'was' (past 3rd singular from <i>vera</i>); <i>Ásum</i> dative plural [<i>með</i> takes the dative] of <i>Ás</i> '(pagan) god'. <i>Reyna</i> 'test, prove';</p>

<p>hvárt Baldr var svá ástsæll sem sagt er,</p>	<p><i>hvárt</i> 'whether'; <i>ástsæll</i> 'beloved'; <i>sem</i> 'as'; <i>sagt</i> 'said' (past participle of <i>segja</i>); <i>er</i> 'is'.</p>
<p>"Ok ef allir hlutir í heiminum, kykvir ok dauðir, gráta hann, þá skal hann fara til Ása aptr, en haldask með Helju ef nakkvarr mælir við eða vill eigi gráta."</p>	<p><i>Ef</i> 'if'; <i>allir</i> 'all' (plural of <i>allr</i>); <i>hlutir</i> 'things'; <i>heimi num</i> 'the world(s)' (dative plural of <i>heimr</i>); <i>kykvir</i> 'alive' (plural of <i>kykr</i>); <i>dauðir</i> 'dead' (plural of <i>dauðr</i>); <i>gráta</i> 'weep (for)' (present 3rd person plural of <i>gráta</i>); <i>fara</i> 'travel'; <i>Ása</i> genitive plural [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Ás</i> 'pagan god'; <i>aptr</i> 'back'; <i>haldask</i> 'remain, be kept'; <i>nakkvarr</i> 'any'; <i>mælir</i> 'speaks' (present 3rd person singular from <i>mæla</i>); <i>við</i> 'against'; <i>vill</i> 'desires' (present 3rd singular verb from <i>vilja</i>)</p>
<p>Þá stóð Hermóðr upp, en Baldr leiðir hann út ór hollinni ok tók hringinn Draupni ok sendi Óðni til minja, en Nanna sendi Frigg ripti ok enn fleiri gjafar; Fullu fingrgull. Þá reið Hermóðr aptr leið sína ok kom í Ásgarð ok sagði ǫll tíðindi þau er hann hafði sét ok heyrtr.</p>	<p><i>Stóð</i> 'stood' (past 3rd person singular of <i>standa</i>); <i>upp</i> 'up'; <i>leiðir</i> 'leads' (present 3rd person singular of <i>leiða</i>); <i>út</i> 'out'; <i>ór</i> 'out from'; <i>holl inni</i> 'the hall' (dative [<i>ór</i> takes the dative] of <i>holl in</i>); <i>tók</i> 'took' (past 3rd person singular of <i>taka</i>); <i>hring inn</i> 'the arm-ring' (accusative of <i>hringr inn</i>); <i>Draupni</i> accusative singular of Draupnir, the name of an arm-ring; <i>sendi</i> 'sent' (past 3rd person singular from <i>senda</i>); <i>Óðni</i> dative singular of Óðinn, the name of a god (meaning 'to Óðinn'); <i>til minja</i> 'as a reminder' (genitive plural of plural noun <i>minjar</i>); <i>Nanna Baldr's</i> wife; <i>Frigg Óðin's</i> wife (dative of <i>Frigg</i>); <i>ripti</i> 'linen' (accusative of <i>ripti</i>); <i>enn</i> 'still, yet'; <i>fleiri gjafar</i> 'more gifts' (genitive singular of <i>gjǫf</i>); <i>Fullu</i> dative of Fulla, a goddess; <i>fingrgull</i> 'gold ring' (accusative of <i>fingrgull</i>); <i>Leið</i> 'way, journey' (accusative of <i>leið</i>); <i>sína</i> 'his'; <i>í Ásgarð</i> 'into Ásgarðr'; <i>ǫll tíðindi þau</i> 'all those tidings'; <i>er</i> 'which'; <i>sét</i> 'seen' (past participle of <i>sjá</i>); <i>heyrtr</i> 'heard' (past participle of <i>heyra</i>)</p>
<p>Því næst sendu Æsir um allan heim ǫrindreka at biðja at Baldr væri grátinn ór Helju. En allir gerðu þat, menninir ok kykvendin ok jǫrðin ok steinarnir ok tré ok allr málmr, svá sem þú munt sét hafa at þessir hlutir gráta þá er þeir koma ór frosti ok í hita. Þá er sendimenn fóru heim ok hǫfðu vel rekit sín eyrindi, finna þeir í helli nokkvorum hvar gýgr sat. Hon nefndisk þökk. Þeir biðja hana gráta Baldr ór Helju. Hon segir:</p>	<p><i>Því næst</i> 'next'; <i>sendu</i> 'sent' (past 3rd person plural of <i>senda</i>); <i>Æsir</i> plural of <i>Ás</i> 'pagan god'; <i>um allan heim</i> 'around the whole world' (accusative singular of <i>allr heimr</i>); <i>ǫrindreka</i> 'messengers' (accusative plural of <i>ǫrindreki</i>); <i>biðja</i> 'request'; <i>væri</i> 'might be' (present 3rd person singular subjunctive of <i>vera</i>); <i>grátinn</i> 'wept' (past participle of <i>gráta</i>); <i>Gerðu</i> 'did' (past 3rd person plural of <i>gera</i>); <i>menni nir</i> 'the people' (plural of <i>maðr inn</i>); <i>kykvendi n</i> 'the living'; <i>jǫrð in</i> 'the earth'; <i>steinar nir</i> 'the stones' (plural of <i>steinn inn</i>); <i>tré</i> 'wood'; <i>allr</i> 'all'; <i>málmr</i> 'metal'; <i>svá sem þú munt sét hafa</i> 'just as you will have seen'; <i>þessir</i> 'these' (plural of <i>þetta</i>); <i>hlutir</i> 'things'; <i>þá er</i> 'when'; <i>þeir</i> 'they'; <i>koma</i> 'come' (present 3rd person plural from <i>koma</i>); <i>frosti</i> 'frost' (dative [<i>ór</i> takes the dative] of <i>frost</i>); <i>hita</i> 'heat' (accusative of <i>hiti</i>); <i>Sendimenn</i> 'messengers' (plural of <i>sendimaðr</i>); <i>fóru</i> 'travelled' (past 3rd person plural of <i>fara</i>); <i>hǫfðu vel rekit</i> 'had fulfilled well'; <i>sín</i> 'their'; <i>eyrindi</i> 'errand' (accusative of <i>eyrindi</i>); <i>finna</i> 'find' (present 3rd person plural of <i>finna</i>); <i>helli nokkvorum</i> 'a certain cave' (dative of <i>hellir nokkvorr</i>); <i>hvar</i> 'where'; <i>gýgr</i> 'female troll, witch'; <i>sat</i> 'sat' (past 3rd person singular of <i>sitja</i>); <i>Nefndisk</i> 'was named' (past 3rd singular of <i>nefna</i>); <i>þökk</i> personal name but as a common noun meaning 'thanks'; <i>Hana</i> 'her' (accusative singular of <i>hon</i>); <i>Segir</i> 'says' (present 3rd person singular of <i>segja</i>)</p>
<p>"Þökk mun gráta þurrum tárur Baldrs bálfarar. Kyks né dauðs nautka ek karls sonar; haldi Hel því er hefir."</p>	<p><i>Mun</i> 'will' (present 3rd person singular of <i>munu</i>); <i>þurrum</i> 'dry' (dative plural of <i>þurr</i>); <i>tárum</i> 'tears' (dative plural of <i>tár</i>); <i>bálfarar</i> 'cremation (literally 'fire-journey')' (genitive of <i>bálfǫr</i>); <i>Kyks</i> 'alive' (genitive of <i>kykr</i>, agreeing with <i>sonar</i>); <i>dauðs</i> 'dead' (genitive of <i>dauðr</i>, agreeing with <i>sonar</i>); <i>naut k a</i> 'I did not enjoy, I did not get any profit from' (special weird poetic verb form from <i>njóta</i>); <i>karls</i> 'man's' (genitive of <i>karl</i>); <i>sonar</i> 'son' (genitive [<i>njóta</i> takes the genitive] of <i>sonr</i>); <i>haldi</i> 'may hold' (present 3rd person singular subjunctive of <i>halda</i>); <i>því er</i> 'that which'.</p>
<p>En þess geta menn at þar hafi verit Loki Laufeyjarson er flest hefir illt gert með Ásum.</p>	<p><i>Þess</i> 'about that' (genitive singular of <i>sá</i> 'that'); <i>geta</i> 'reckon' (present 3rd person plural of <i>geta</i>); <i>hafi</i> 'would have' (past 3rd person singular subjunctive of <i>hafa</i>); <i>verit</i> 'been' (past participle of <i>vera</i>); <i>er</i> 'who'; <i>flest</i> 'most'; <i>hefir</i> 'has' (past 3rd person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>illt</i> 'evil' (substantive adjective from <i>illr</i> 'bad'); <i>gert</i> 'done' (past participle from <i>gera</i>).</p>