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Anglo-Saxons.net

The Seafarer

4a

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Mæg ic be me sylfum I can make a true song soðgied wrecan, about me myself, siþas secgan, tell my travels, hu ic geswincdagum how I often endured earfoðhwile days of struggle,

earfoðhwile days of struggle,
oft þrowade, troublesome times,
bitre breostceare [how I] have suffered
gebiden hæbbe, grim sorrow at heart,
gecunnad in ceole have known in the ship

cearselda fela, many worries [abodes of care], atol yþa gewealc, the terrible tossing of the waves, bær mec oft bigeat where the anxious night watch

nearo nihtwaco often took me æt nacan stefnan, at the ship's prow,

8a þonne he be clifum enossað. when it tossed near the cliffs.

Calde gebrungen Fettered by cold wæron mine fet, were my feet, forste gebunden bound by frost caldum clommum, in cold clasps,

bær þa ceare seofedun where then cares seethed hat ymb heortan; hungor innan slat a hunger tears from within

12a merewerges mod. the sea-weary soul.

Pæt se mon ne wat This the man does not know

be him on foldan for whom on land

fægrost limpeð, it turns out most favourably, hu ic earmcearig how I, wretched and sorrowful,

iscealdne sæ on the ice-cold sea winter wunade dwelt for a winter wræccan lastum, in the paths of exile,

16a winemægum bidroren, bereft of friendly kinsmen,

bihongen hrimgicelum; hung about with icicles; hægl scurum fleag. hail flew in showers.

bær ic ne gehyrde There I heard nothing butan hlimman sæ, but the roaring sea, iscaldne wæg. the ice-cold wave.

Hwilum ylfete song At times the swan's song dyde ic me to gomene, I took to myself as pleasure,

ganotes hleobor the gannet's noise

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and the voice of the curlew ond huilpan sweg fore hleahtor wera, instead of the laughter of men,

mæw singende the singing gull

fore medodrince. instead of the drinking of mead. Stormas bær stanclifu beotan, Storms there beat the stony cliffs,

þær him stearn oncwæð, where the tern spoke,

24a isigfebera; icy-feathered;

> ful oft bæt earn bigeal, always the eagle cried at it,

dewy-feathered; urigfebra; nænig hleomæga no cheerful kinsmen

feasceaftig ferð can comfort frefran meahte. the poor soul.

Forbon him gelyfeð lyt, Indeed he credits it little,

se be ah lifes wyn the one who has the joys of life,

28a gebiden in burgum, dwells in the city,

> bealosiba hwon, far from terrible journey, wlonc ond wingal, proud and wanton with wine,

hu ic werig oft how I, weary, often in brimlade have had to endure bidan sceolde. in the sea-paths.

Nap nihtscua, The shadows of night darkened,

it snowed from the north,

norban sniwde, hrim hrusan bond, frost bound the ground, hail fell on the earth, hægl feol on eorban, corna caldast. coldest of grains.

Forbon cnyssað nu Indeed, now they are troubled, heortan gebohtas the thoughts of my heart,

bæt ic hean streamas, that I myself should strive with

sealtyþa gelac the high streams,

the tossing of salt waves -sylf cunnige -the wish of my heart urges monað modes lust

mæla gehwylce all the time

ferð to feran, my spirit to go forth, bæt ic feor heonan that I, far from here, should seek the homeland elbeodigra eard gesece -of a foreign people --

Forbon nis bæs modwlonc Indeed there is not so proud-spirited

mon ofer eorban, a man in the world, ne his gifena bæs god, nor so generous of gifts,

ne in geogube to bæs hwæt, nor so bold in his youth, ne in his dædum to bæs deor, nor so brave in his deeds, ne him his dryhten to bæs hold, nor so dear to his lord,

bæt he a his sæfore that he never in his seafaring

sorge næbbe, has a worry,

to hwon hine Dryhten as to what his Lord gedon wille. will do to him.

44a	Ne biþ him to hearpan hyge	Not for him is the sound of the harp
	ne to hringbege	nor the giving of rings
	ne to wife wyn	nor pleasure in woman
	ne to worulde hyht	nor worldly glory
	ne ymbe owiht elles	nor anything at all
	nefne ymb yða gewealc;	unless the tossing of waves;
	ac a hafað longunge	but he always has a longing,
	se þe on lagu fundað.	he who strives on the waves.
48a	Bearwas blostmum nimað,	Groves take on blossoms,
	byrig fægriað,	the cities grow fair,
	wongas wlitigað,	the fields are comely,
	woruld onetteð:	the world seems new:
	ealle þa gemoniað	all these things urge on
	modes fusne	the eager of spirit,
	sefan to sibe	the mind to travel,
	þam þe swa þenceð	in one who so thinks
52a	on flodwegas	to travel far
	feor gewitan.	on the paths of the sea.
	Swylce geac monað	So the cuckoo warns
	geomran reorde;	with a sad voice;
	singeð sumeres weard,	the guardian of summer sings,
	sorge beodeð	bodes a sorrow
	bitter in breosthord.	grievous in the soul.
	Þæt se beorn ne wat,	This the man does not know,
56a	sefteadig secg,	the warrior lucky in worldly things
	hwæt þa sume dreogað	what some endure then,
	þe þa wræclastas	those who tread most widely
	widost lecgað.	the paths of exile.
	Forbon nu min hyge hweorfeð	And now my spirit twists
	ofer hreberlocan,	out of my breast,
	min modsefa	my spirit
	mid mereflode,	out in the waterways,
60a	ofer hwæles eþel	over the whale's path
	hweorfeð wide,	it soars widely
	eorþan sceatas	through all the corners of the world
	cymeð eft to me	it comes back to me
	gifre ond grædig;	eager and unsated;
	gielleð anfloga,	the lone-flier screams,
	hweteð on hwælweg	urges onto the whale-road
	hreber unwearnum	the unresisting heart
64a	ofer holma gelagu.	across the waves of the sea.
	Forbon me hatran sind	Indeed hotter for me are
	Dryhtnes dreamas	the joys of the Lord
	bonne bis deade lif	than this dead life
	læne on londe.	fleeting on the land.
	Ic gelyfe no	I do not believe

	þæt him eorðwelan	that the riches of the world
	ece stondað.	will stand forever.
68a	Simle preora sum	Always and invariably,
00 a	binga gehwylce	one of three things
	ær his tiddege	will turn to uncertainty
	to tweon weorbeð:	before his fated hour:
	adl obbe yldo	disease, or old age,
	obbe ecghete	or the sword's hatred
	fægum fromweardum	will tear out the life
	feorh oðþringeð.	from those doomed to die.
72a	Forbon bib eorla gehwam	And so it is for each man
	æftercweþendra	the praise of the living,
	lof lifgendra	of those who speak afterwards,
	lastworda betst,	that is the best epitaph,
	bæt he gewyrce,	that he should work
	ær he on weg scyle,	before he must be gone
	fremum on foldan	bravery in the world
	wið feonda niþ,	against the enmity of devils,
76a	deorum dædum	daring deeds
	deofle togeanes,	against the fiend,
	þæt hine ælda bearn	so that the sons of men
	æfter hergen,	will praise him afterwards,
	ond his lof siþþan	and his fame afterwards
	lifge mid englum	will live with the angels
	awa to ealdre,	for ever and ever,
	ecan lifes blæd,	the glory of eternal life,
80a	dream mid dugeþum.	joy with the Hosts.
	Dagas sind gewitene,	The days are gone
	ealle onmedlan	of all the glory
	eorþan rices;	of the kingdoms of the earth;
	nearon nu cyningas	there are not now kings,
	ne caseras	nor Cæsars,
	ne goldgiefan	nor givers of gold
	swylce iu wæron,	as once there were,
84a	ponne hi mæst mid him	when they, the greatest, among themselves
	mærþa gefremedon	performed valorous deeds,
	ond on dryhtlicestum	and with a most lordly
	dome lifdon.	majesty lived.
	Gedroren is þeos duguð eal,	All that old guard is gone
	dreamas sind gewitene;	and the revels are over
	wuniað þa wacran	the weaker ones now dwell
00	ond þæs woruld healdaþ,	and hold the world,
88a	brucað þurh bisgo.	enjoy it through their sweat.
	Blæd is gehnæged,	The glory is fled,
	eorþan indryhto	the nobility of the world
	ealdað ond searað,	ages and grows sere,

	swa nu monna gehwylc	as now does every man
	geond middangeard.	throughout the world.
	Yldo him on fareb,	Age comes upon him,
	onsyn blacað,	his face grows pale,
92a	gomelfeax gnornað,	the graybeard laments;
	wat his iuwine,	he knows that his old friends,
	æþelinga bearn	the sons of princes,
	eorþan forgiefene.	have been given to the earth.
	Ne mæg him þonne se flæschoma	His body fails then,
	bonne him bæt feorg losað	as life leaves him
	ne swete forswelgan	he cannot taste sweetness
	ne sar gefelan	nor feel pain,
96a	ne hond onhreran	nor move his hand
	ne mid hyge bencan.	nor think with his head.
	Þeah þe græf wille	Though he would strew
	golde stregan	the grave with gold,
	brobor his geborenum,	a brother for his kinsman,
	byrgan be deadum	bury with the dead
	maþmum mislicum,	a mass of treasure,
	þæt hine mid wille,	it just won't work
100a	ne mæg þære sawle	nor can the soul
	þe biþ synna ful	which is full of sin
	gold to geoce	preserve the gold
	for Godes egsan,	before the fear of God,
	þonne he hit ær hydeð	though he hid it before
	þenden he her leofað.	while he was yet alive.
	Micel bib se Meotudes egsa,	Great is the fear of the Lord,
	forbon hi seo molde oncyrreð;	before which the world stands still;
104a	se gestaþelade	He established
	stipe grundas,	the firm foundations,
	eorþan sceatas	the corners of the world
	ond uprodor.	and the high heavens.
	Dol bib se be him his Dryhten ne ondrædeb:	A fool is the one who does not fear his Lord
	cymeð him se deað unþinged.	death comes to him unprepared.
	Eadig bið se þe eaþmod leofaþ;	Blessed is he who lives humbly
	cymeð him seo ar of heofonum.	to him comes forgiveness from heaven.
108a	Meotod him þæt mod gestaþelað,	God set that spirit within him,
	forbon he in his meahte gelyfeð.	because he believed in His might.
	Stieran mon sceal strongum mode,	Man must control his passions
	ond þæt on staþelum healdan,	and keep everything in balance,
	ond gewis werum,	keep faith with men,
	wisum clæne.	and be pure in wisdom.
	Scyle monna gehwylc	Each of men must
	mid gemete healdan	be even-handed
112a	wip leofne ond wið lapne	with their friends and their foes.
	* * * bealo.	?

	beah be he hine wille	? though he does not wish him
	fyres fulne	? in the foulness of flames
	oppe on bæle	? or on a pyre
	forbærnedne	? to be burned
	his geworhtne wine,	? his contrived friend,
	Wyrd biþ swiþre,	Fate is greater
116a	Meotud meahtigra,	and God is mightier
	bonne ænges monnes gehygd.	than any man's thought.
	Uton we hycgan	Let us ponder
	hwær we ham agen,	where we have our homes
	ond bonne gebencan	and then think
	hu we þider cumen;	how we should get thither
	ond we bonne eac tilien	and then we should all strive
	þæt we to moten	that we might go there
120a	in þa ecan	to the eternal
	eadignesse	blessedness
	þær is lif gelong	that is a belonging life
	in lufan Dryhtnes,	in the love of the Lord,
	hyht in heofonum.	joy in the heavens.
	Þæs sy þam Halgan þonc	Let there be thanks to God
	þæt he usic geweorþade,	that he adored us,
	wuldres Ealdor	the Father of Glory,
124a	ece Dryhten,	the Eternal Lord,
	in ealle tid. Amen.	for all time. Amen.

[<u>List of Texts</u>] Site by <u>Sean Miller</u>

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