

Idunn's Apples

I.

When sky unlocks its latch of reservoir
And blows all loose things on the earth with wind,
Drowning the mouse, tossing the bird from branch,
Thund'ring and crackling, hasting family
With raindrops at their heels into wee hut
(So damp, so crowded, yet most welcome den)
To light the hearth, to catch roof-leaks in cups,
Telling old stories by the fire's warmth –
When tempests catch the fisherman at sea,
Jostling his boat with boist'rous bully waves
Which rise from some stark frenzy of the deep
And mock his paddles' frantic, splashing strokes,
And soak 'im ten times through from head to foot –
When traveler seeks poor shelter of the trees
On some lost road, and pulls his cowl close,
Wrapping his mantel, and rubs sticks for flame,
Shielding emergent smoke with one cold hand
While curses he the damp that frustrates sparks –
Then do as well the gods on Idavoll,
That sparkling plateau, run to hide from rain,
Leaving their playful sticks and instruments
Of sun-time sport amongst the rain-drop herb –
Their bows and arrows, hoops and wooden swords,
Discarded all like toys the child forgets
To find again on floor after his bath –
And gather all in hall of gloried fame
Perched past the rainbow-bridge!

How measures rise
From choirs of Einherjar and the gods:
Carols of war, and lyrics of the fair

Most marv'lous women goddess Freyja's blessed –
Who loved their hero, maybe, or did spurn
Most supplicating passion, ever proud,
E'er pitiless (oh curse their cruel hearts!) –
Or songs of dragons slain and giants hacked
By wondrous weapons and great Asgard-strength,
Ballads of treasures, lays of stalwart kings,
And canticles that praise divinest works:
All these the Aesir lend their choral voice –
Stout magic music, bold as verses sung
By giants hewn of stone, buried so low
Among abyssal valleys... Drink and flame
Are fuel and burning of carousal-night,
And deities each one swing horns and cups
As notes ascend to dusty rafter-nooks,
Frighting the mice to smallest chinks they find
While storm rails on the roof.

All sing except

That one who stokes reprisal in his heart,
That pouting, glowering creature: him deprived
Of wife and children's company in hall,
His offspring three lured by All-Father far
Into the world's recesses; and he broods
In darkened room while wail the gusts outside
And landscapes swirl with twigs and leaves and limbs
Blasted by gasps of storm's mouth.

From his chair,

His seat of envy, throne of planned revenge,
The Sly One now some dark shape spieth float
Across the mists within the stormy swell,
Some bobbing glob of blackness – now it nears
Through lashing downpours; and Lok's much bewitched
To watch that shadow take a huge hawk's form,
Flapping great streams of rain from off its wings

Ere perches it on window.

“Who art thou,”

The trickster asks, “whose eyes are gaps which show
A fiery, seething bed where brain should be:
Thy head an oven, forge, soot-chamber where
The log’s bane burns as in the demons’ lands,
Oh vision flown from storm’s heart?”

Answers hawk

With voice like thunderclaps crumbling to rain:
“Thiazi am I, jotun of these gales
And tempest’s blasts, commotion of sour skies,
A captain who drives clouds through heaven’s seas,
Those darkest ships whose hulls are crammed with rain
(And oft do crack and burst, and sink to floor),
And who now hawk’s guise dons to visit thee –
Ye whom I spied, from forecastle of mists,
Alone in windowed Valhall singing not,
But with resentful-seeming face and mien
Nursing some hurt, methinks, in shut-up ire,
Some grievance ’gainst those happy ones who drink
And lusty strains belt out – is’t sooth I speak?”

Somewhat mistrusting, yet the trickster nods,
And tells of treachery by god who mixed
His blood with Lok’s in compact (which to break
Should mean undoing of all household his,
However long delayed requital be).
Thiazi muses now on Loki’s pique,
Then saith: “Some little help, I trow, we might
Lend each to other in our dark designs –
For mine intent is to filch precious thing
To gods and goddesses salutary –
Nay, vital: golden apples that are gained
By Idunn in her bower screened with leaves

And watched o'er by those walls a mason framed
An age and more ago: sun-splendid fruits
First found by Norns, plucked from some tree unknown,
Which each god eats (save thou) to live for aye:
Sweet gift of Jord's heart inexhaustible,
Rich magic blessing! Those same fleshy orbs
I long that mine own mortal span might stretch
Well nigh infinity – or heal that cleft
In armor Time discovers where to aim
His term-concluding arrow! Aid me then
In scheming how Iduna might we lure
With all her clutch of apples far from field
Beyond high walls' protection, to the wastes
Where might I grasp her with her basket's boon,
And bear to castle mine, fortress of fogs,
At last to dine on fruits shall guard my youth!
Meanwhile the gods, elixir lost for aye,
Shall slowly witness wrinkle-devil wreak
Malicious play on faces horrified,
Until the mortal spell's been spent at last
For each and every, and the winding-sheets
Have all been clipped and wrapped, and Aesir rest
In Idavoll, their perons never wreathed
Nor dusted, for none love them! Gratifies
Thy hatred such a prospect? Thou and I
Both gain our wishes! Lack we only ruse
To draw ambrosia where it might be snatched.”

And swiftly hath the Sly One words at lips,
No pity in his breast, mercy in heart:
“To damsel of rejuvenation, whilst
She gathers from her source mysterious
The shining harvest, once the rain hath sped,
And night hath turned her face from loving day,
I'll skip and steal, with such care none might spy
My progress 'cross the fields – and once at ear,

I'll speak of what fair goddess shan't resist
To view, e'en though it live in outer lands."

II.

Comes morn, and washed away's all stormy strife
From air and earth, leaving the stillness of
Cold puddle, pool, and pond; and mists, they drift
In torn shreds down the green slopes. Something rests
Upon each thing like spirit which doth think
One gentle, anxious thought. From clouds now break
The sword-like sunbeams... Drops from leaves and twigs
Make drips too soft to hear; and creatures sleep
Well into morning.

Idunn, fresh and pale,
Girl of the poet-god, untouched by age,
A virgin not, but maiden all the same,
Her mantle white, her hair done in a bun,
With basket, all alone, now leaves her home
So grand and vast at Asgard's eminence:
One little speck of innocence amidst
Such eerie gray and quiet –

Shuts the door
So softly, that none wakes inside, and walks
Amidst rich flowers frazzled by the rain
Along old paths her cousins and her friends
Take oft to play in fields when weather's fair –
And soon o'er rolling hills of stirless grass
Touched by the firstling rays of Dag, she nears
Her bower soft where every rooted thing
And wandering vine doth riot: Ash and elm
Stand round its margin; and within their shade
The damsel sits, to wait strange hands which gift

Sweet apples.

Like a dream, from out a cloud
That's near or far, fine fingers reach and place
The golden bounty in Iduna's hands,
Each fruit with skin of metal one by one,
Depleting trove that lives nowhere in space,
But in some generous heart. For minutes lasts
This passing of the apples – or for hours –
'Til final time the hand retreats. Then blows
Strange cloud to dissipation – from her trance
The girl is waking.

* * *

Lok through Idavoll
Now softly strolls – he follows where she walked,
That morning maiden, hoping he's not watched,
And to her arbor comes, praying his step
No twig might snap, no leaves rustle or crush.
Beside the beaming goddess trickster slips,
Unnoticed as the wolf stalking the fawn;
And only starts she slightly once she hears
These words so close to ear:

“Oh, how hath blessed
Our clan mysterious Fate with apples grown
In Nowhere's garden, granting life anew
And timeless youth! Sweet maiden, you commune
With what all wights and gods might yearn to know:
That happy passion, yet serene and mild,
That lives in cloud-like objects: majesty
Of face and voice and love! Such hath its home
Within this arbor, and in joyful place
Of mortals or immortals: any yard
And seat and house which blessed are with vim

Of nature in her spring, with growing things,
With children and young life – yet nowhere more,
Dare say I, than one forest which I've glimpsed
When rambled I through Midgard of a spring
More heated by the sun, sultry, and slick
With sweat extracted, than ever I've known
In wanderings long – for what I saw was this:
Around a certain tree, deep in those woods
Where wolves might lurk (except they never do),
Where all is dark and mirk, some children sing
As hand in hand they dance in skipping ring,
Far from all family, under ashen sky,
Gazed on by owls and other eyes that peep
With stony fixedness from gnarled limbs;
And all those youngster-notes from throats emerge
Like ghostly carol 'midst strange wilderness,
That gray waste, telling of each thing they wish,
Those songful children – whereupon such grow
Like flow'rs impetuous from slender twigs,
Then plucked are, and enjoyed: games and desserts,
Fair trinkets, shiny things, baubles of youth,
The toys and treats of blissful sinlessness:
Such miracle beneath a sky so bleak,
Amidst such thorny thickets and the briars!
Past reason strange – and yet, not far from here,
If thou wouldst care to look – and bring thy fruits,
For children sure shall wish to sup on them,
Delighting in sweet taste, extending phase
Of early world-awe, putting off that curse
Of sad adulthood which all mortals strikes,
Their sorrow and their care. I'll be sure guide,
That thou shouldst make good time, and not get lost;
And we'll join all our friends again for lunch,
None knowing we've e'en gone!"

How wonder-wide

Ope Idunn's eyes: she trusts his every word,
And breathes her keen assent, anxious to view
How purity might thrive in holt so dark
With death, decay, and rot. Now quick to gate
The duo make, and none doth them espy –
Save Thor, from Valhall, standing at a door,
Who's learned to guess what ill works often wake
When Sly One's not within the walls at morn.

III.

They near the grim-wild woods so overgrown,
Rainbow behind them, tangled gray before,
Descending slopes, while all things, cold and still,
Do seem to hold their breath. The clouds are towers
That topple imperceptibly – sharp spires,
Pillars and castles, columns, citadels,
Great sweeps and arches shot with beams and spikes
Of gold eruption.

Soon the trickster spots
A speck descending from tempestuous east,
And almost now with pity looks on girl
So curious and smiling, holding tight
Her glowing apple-basket.

At the edge
Of forest's thickness, maiden gapes above
As shadow overwhelms her – and she gasps,
Raising one hand – but oh! It is too late:
The hawk's upon her like some wing of death,
All horrid feathers, beak, and clutching claws
That tear apart her mantle, and grip waist
As Lok leaps far away – he hears the cries
Of girl abducted, already in air,

Wailing so piteously, as when a mouse
By famished bird of prey is deftly snatched
And squeaks and squeals; but where might help be found?
So higher, higher disappears the lass,
Kicking her feet, her voice swallowed by space
That reaches up forever into realms
Of silvery forlornness – and Lok slinks
Away from that place, back to Asgard's keep,
Glad that his plan's in motion... though he might
Feel something of dismay in heart as well.

* * *

Not long, and puzzled Aesir notice one
Among their number's missing:

“Where is she
Who bringeth gold vitality of fruits
Without which we shall die?” Odin inquires.
“Our table lacks her apples, and I feel
Old age's fingers brush my youthful brow!”
And each divinity looks round about,
But finds no one resembling Idunn's looks;
So soon through Valhall every god doth search,
More desp'rate by the hour. Bragi the most
Distraught hath fall'n; he leaves his harp and song –
Sweet custom of each day, from fine-tuned strings
Extracting melodies, fair strains of notes
Like aural gold, and lending to them words
Of colors, creatures, worlds, swevens, and loves
More beautiful than men could hope to write
E'en if they labored at their little lines
For all their lives – and now god seeks for maid
So clumsily, with frantic flustered haste,
Searching in spots too small for her to fit,
Befuddled, muddled, sick in heart and gut,

Calling his poor wife's name... 'til searching team
Of deities concludes to look outside –
But Thor, he halts 'em, for he knows the score:

“Search not for Idunn, but for Lok the knave!
Our blood-cousin so sneaky is to blame,
For late I viewed him leaving Valgrind gate
In Idunn's company – what scheme he means,
I pray, for his sake, brings to her no harm!
From hiding place we'll roust that scoundrel out,
Wrap him in chains, then tug upon his lungs
Until he squeaks where Bragi's gal might be!”

* * *

And soon the story tortured traitor sings:
Proposal, pact, deception, and dread bird's
Rapture of girl to cloud-lands! Thor decrees
That Lok alone shall captured dame retrieve:
“The burden rests all yours, the quest and pain!
Slip on thy charmèd shoes which welkin tread,
And seek the sky for Idunn's prison cell,
Where'er that giant's stashed her, plus her fruits:
Steal what ye vilely offered, bear them back –
And trust some torment double what thou felt'st
At chains shall fall on thee if we do glimpse
One part of thee again ere Idunn's gained!”

IV.

Now vertebrae of clouds he makes his stairs,
Stepping with wingèd slippers, god ashamed,
Guilty and chastened, fearing he'll ne'er find
Dear damsel ta'en by talons, clamped by claws
When last he saw her, now somewhere enclosed

Amongst rain's origins, the windstorm's nook
When slack and sleepy.

All parts hard he scans,
Peruses, traces... O'er wide heavens' bluffs,
Mesas and mounds he skates; near belching sun,
Oven of fire, kettle of spitting heat
He quickly zips – singed at extremities
Just like some child who playeth near the hearth,
Ling'ring too long.

Those frozen, highest realms
Where perch sky's shyest residents, Lok gains,
Halfway to nothingness. Upward sits dark;
Downward, green herb of Midgard; and around,
Naught but a whistling whiteness, chill and pure,
A drowsy steam and whisp'ring. Castles rise
Like frosty crystals here, and whether true
Or sun's illusion, Lok's baffled to say,
The marv'ling false god – who now like a thief
Burgling a palace, reaching central hall,
Stands mazèd there before magnificence,
Dream-architecture, mirror-rich and vast,
Candles and chandeliers, rich furnishings,
Such sparkle and such scale, forgetting what
He came to pilfer.

Walls of ice, or glass –
Or atmosphere's mirage – gleam in Lok's face,
Confusing how he strides. He shields his eyes,
And up that lofty realm still higher walks
To air's attenuation in extreme,
The fringe of Nott's deep pool, black-blue and cold;
And in this place, this intimation of
Some endless depth sublime, one little cloud
Hangs in weird emptiness, embroidered pink

And scintillating yellow 'gainst bold beams
Of distant Sol's flush.

Goblins roam about

Those bulbous fog-formations: warders, guards,
Each armed with lance and targe, and sporting helms
Spiny and knobbed: These o'er the ramparts march,
Cloud-castle's garrison. As when a puff,
Sweet, creamy, white, at picnic's overwhelmed
By horde of ants, so doth that fort appear
To Loki from great distance. This the keep
Which calls Thiazi baron sure must be,
Wolf-Father thinks! So sentineled, secured,
The dulcet filling which this pastry hides
Is sure youth-goddess, with her shining fruits:
Two treasures needing watch (e'en in this spot
Remote from lowly haunts, so seldom viewed),
Being quite tempting hoard th'inquisitive
Wand'rer of sky might find, and think to loot!
Around mist-citadel the trickster skulks,
Snooping for ingress, portal where those imps
Have overlooked their charge... 'Mongst cirrus-drifts
He scampers, screened, concealed: in spiral course
Great stronghold nears he, and sees balustrades,
Arcades, and colonnades of vapor formed,
Great loggias and galleries of mist
E'er shifting slightly, subtly – but no door
The hobs seem to neglect, each surely kept
'Neath scanning eyeballs... 'til at last one hole
Like needle-prick in cotton wad Lok finds;
And catching on some drifting rag of cloud
Wand'ring into the mass, that sneaky chap
Doth wiggle through his entrance.

Tunnel black

Now brightens white to misty corridor,

And branches soon – profusion of the ways
Which overwhelms! Loki his crafty sense
Follows up spiral stairs and down again,
Hiding from goblins, flying up through shafts,
Of ceilings making paths and promenades,
Walking on walls, through mazes roaming round,
Stealing a goblin's casque ere vanishing –
And soon much fun he's having, losing all
His memory of mission...

But abrupt

Remembrance comes, for in a chamber's found
Fair Idunn, lying on a cloudy couch,
Wrapped in strange glossy sheets like cerements
Of peacock-shimmer. Sprawled across the bed,
The damsel smiles, eyes shut, a blissful head,
Shifting her arms so gently, like some weed
Blown by the tender currents under sea;
And notes she rescuer not, seeming entranced
By inner vision gorgeous.

Hesitates

To rouse the goddess, Lok does, for unguessed
Was rapturous state of hers, her deep content
And unperceiving transport – but those words
Threat'ning of Thor's demand he stir the girl;
And careful that Thiazi's nowhere near,
The Sly One shakes her shoulder, whispering
Encouragement to wake.

Her eyelids like

Flow'r petals in the morning ope, and she
Beams on him who deceived her, seeming not
Treason with anger to return – or 'haps
She hath misplaced the memory. In this
Place of deep aureate fulgor, like gold womb

Of brumous walls, not even lifting head,
She lists to Lok.

“Oh rise,” th’intruder saith,
“And follow me from out this billowy room:
I know a way the imp-guards do not look,
And can retrace what steps upon the breeze
So stratospheric carried me to heights
Where air’s so thin, and cloud-troll like a drake
Conceals his fortune of immortal gold.
Forgive, oh Idunn, my foul stratagem,
And lie of dancing children – all such ill
I mean t’annul! The Aesir sore thee miss,
Bragi of all most lonesome; and that flesh
Of apples wish they – else they die of age
'Fore suffering infirmities too base
For lofty clan, so mighty, marvelous,
Deserving of long life and lasting health:
A counterforce to evil, champions
Of man’s endurance ’gainst the elements,
Catastrophes, and creatures causing pain
With demons’ savagery. Up from thy bed,
Oh maiden! I am sure thou wish’st to flee –
And tell me only where those apples hide,
That we may fetch them stealthily, then fly
Along the azure pathways – roads of blue
Straight down ’midst blobby rainclouds – to regain
Good Valhall’s comfort! Rise, oh child, and tell!”

But nothing doth she stir, nor gentle bliss
Evacuate her countenance... She waits
So long in speaking, making anxious god
Who boggles at her strange delight serene –
And with such mild voice, forms these wondrous words:

Oh Loki, ask me not to quit this place

*As soft as any lounge of joyful rest!
If apples mine thou wishest to reclaim,
Pinch them from floor above, where giant's chest*

*Puffs in and out like bellows fanning thoughts
Of dreamish fire... But as for me, I'll stay,
For chamber this my sleeping mind hath brought
To vision promised by thee th'other day:*

*Those children in a ring! In tangled waste,
The grim vine and the thicket! Not below,
But in sweet visions of this upper space,
Such guileless favors on the tree do grow*

*Whilst heaven's furniture doth gather, soft
And slowly, thrones and chairs in ether blue,
Where beings sit to contemplate those lost
Within those woods – that infant prancing crew*

*Which coaxes gifts from tree limbs by weird notes
While bear and wolf witness the sky unfold
To tell its mysteries through angels' throats,
The glory of its auras pink and gold:*

*A sight renewing ever in my brain
Whilst here I lie – so ask me not to leave:
Much rather should I writhe in beauteous chains
Than ever to a lesser life to cleave!*

*Say farewell for me to my father-lord;
To sustren say farewell, whose love I lose;
Say farewell to my doting sweetheart-bard,
And all fair cousins bid my kind adieus.*

Much pleads poor Lok dismayed, now fearing ne'er
He might reenter paradise of manse

Or tread those breezy plains where flowers fresh,
Immortal, bless the senses... Still demurs
Th'enraptured beauty – and Lok finds she weighs
As much as iron, it seemeth: she'll not budge
From haze-divan! She giggles as she's tugged;
And trickster throws his hands, and pulls his hair,
Of plans bereft; and desp'rate now, in haste
Leaves he for higher level, hoping debt
In whole by golden fruits might be repaid,
And so ransom his seat and grudging love
From Valhall's folk.

How maze again confounds
His search distressed! How silence mocks Lok's hunt
For sound of storm-troll! Beauteous shine rooms,
Shine stairwells and arcades – but each new path
Seems demon-sent conundrum! Always fiends
He flits away from (though's not spotted yet);
But hours hath Time scythed down ere Lok finds
Some yellow-beaming threshold...

Giant's sprawled
Half-naked on his water-vapor bed,
His glist'ning lips guilty with apples' blood;
And stertorous rumblings issue from his nose,
Harsh nostril-wheezings like some windy storm
Emerging from deep pit where vast wight sighs
To think of all Death shall of him bereave!
Trophies and spoils crowd the gleaming scene,
All treasures that he's snatched from hapless folk
By ruses, cheats, and ploys – such waste of wealth,
Consigned to cobwebs: robes ne'er to be worn,
Specie of gold and silver he'll not spend,
Harps never play, bright weapons never wield,
Rings ne'er to grace his hands, and crowns his brow,
Combs with no hope they'll run through fluffs of hair –

And heaped amidst all these, the snoring bloke
Doth loosely keep his apples, unconcerned
Whether some spill and roll across the floor;
And strays indeed have hid hither and yon
Among vast heap of pilfered valuables.
Lok sweeps at once all fruit into his arms,
Some tucking in his clothes, some stacking on
The crook of's elbow, careful none should fall
And stir the snoring ettin.

Pile's top

Lok tucks beneath his chin – to door he sneaks,
List'ning to marching of the far-off imps
And breathing of their master. Nearly past
The threshold, suddenly one shoe doth slip:
Up go his feet! and backwards, down he drops,
Spilling the apples – on one overlooked
Small fruit he slipped; oh, cruel calamity!
And all those golden treasures 'cross the floor
Cacophony collaborate to make:
A music that pricks troll's and goblins' ears!
In panic Loki scoops up all he might
Of scattered sweet ambrosia, stuffing fruit
Down collar of his tunic – then like hare
From out a den of wolves he's racing now!
Thiazi bellows, devilish servants squeak,
The walls turn dark, and storm-bolts flare about
From floors and ceilings!

Thief looks briefly back:

Oh frightful sight! A green-skinned horde doth rage
To stab him through with pikes! And jotun strides
With swifter pace than they, and fury flames
In's pupils to do worse! Flap, flap, oh wings
On Sly One's slippers!

Out to blue serene

He zips like bird escaping hunter's net;
And 'cross the azure, boundless firmament
Describes an arc of sparks! The goblins which
So lately pressed upon 'im, race and fall
From out vertiginous portal, shrieking e'en
As plummet they, lusting to punish him
Who's burgled boss's house.

But jotun leaps

All fearless from his cloudy mansion's gate,
Sprouting the hawk's beak of his former shape –
And wings, and feathers, tail, deadly claws;
And now, smoothing and pointing sharp his form,
Like swiftest thing of all creation screams
Toward god escaping, causing air-streams sing
While talons sparkle in the moon's bright shine;
And Loki, glancing back, descries that bird
Like sparkling comet following his course:
A meteor of vengeance, flashing star,
Dread heaven's wrath, a terror from the cold,
Profound immensities!

Lok's poor heart whirs

Pumping his blood, thrill-thumping in his chest,
As from the lower star-realms, panicked shoes,
Sensing his peril, swoop with sweptback wings
Straight down toward Asgard's castle 'bove the earth!

* * *

On Valhall's ramparts Aesir keep their watch,
Waiting reunion with dear Idunn's fruits
And lovely girl herself. Two specks now spot
Those deities, glimm'ring in early night:
And one doth seem the other to pursue –

Some predator, perhaps, on quarry's tail...
Some dreadful avian – and that which flees
Before it seems the hapless figure of
Arm-flailing Loki!

“Fetch some firewood
From kitchen!” Odin bellows at his men.
“Some oil, and light a torch! Quick, Loki flees –
Though seems he hath no Idunn, useless wretch!”
And soon a pile of wood is heaped behind
The crenellations.

Now as trickster zips
Above the deities' heads, the pyre's lit:
Flames leap to heaven, and Thiazi-hawk
No moment hath to swerve from blazing screen –
Like tallow now he burns, a flapping fire,
And spins to Idavoll, squawking with pain,
Then skidding lands, much flame-flecks spreading far;
And gods surround him, who with sticks and swords
Ensure his quick demise.

Now where Lok lights,
He sprawls on grass, and faints, falls fast asleep;
And Aesir, gath'ring round, see apples spilled
From out his vest – but wonder whether fair
And youthful Idunn's lost to them for aye.

V.

What fruits he's brought, just barely purchase him
Forgiveness, place at table, bed again –
But none doth wish Lok's company, and e'er
He bides alone, in eating-suite or hall.
At supper none sits by him – and he sulks

With double rancor now, pond'ring on plans
More wicked than before.

At Idunn's bower

No hand appears, no fingers gift gold fruits,
No hov'ring cloud doth loiter for sweet girl;
And silence drapes like white sheet o'er sad scene
As gloomy gods in Valhall slices chew
Of what few fruits they own, stretching that time
Old Age and Death are kept from hall and home.

* * *

With wide eyes Loki lies long nights in bed,
List'ning to Bragi, somewhere deep in manse,
Pluck notes lugubrious from mournful harp,
Warbling his loss – all numbness.

Sly One dreams

Of worlds a-tremble, sun and moon eclipsed,
Great sinews of the earth shudd'ring with pain,
Collapse of lofty things, the skies run wild,
Black slosh of bleak seas...

Through the moonlit stretch,

So grimly grinning, Lok views dark shapes creep
From nooks of night, the regions of the dead –
Yawning their fangs, pronouncing spells of woe –
To gather at the doors of where gods dream,
And mob the fitful sleep of Aesir's heads.

