Like "The Wanderer," these two poems are examples of Anglo-Saxon lyric poetry. They are similar because they show the loneliness of separation. The wife in "The Wife's Lament" has been banished because of accusations by her husband's parents. A wooden staff conveys the loneliness of a husband exiled from his wife and his people in "The Husband's Message." Because the manuscript was torn, "The Husband's Message" contains runes (lines 49–50) that have not been deciphered.

The Man, Symbol of Saint Matthew, The Book of Durrow fol.2tv. The Board of Trinity College, Dublin.

The Husband's Message

Translated by Burton Raffel

A tree grew me; I was green, and wood. That came first. I was cut and sent Away from my home, holding wily Words, carried out on the ocean,

5 Riding a boat's back. I crossed
Stormy seas, seeking the thresholds
Where my master's message was meant to travel
And be known. And now the knotted planks
Of a ship have brought me here, and you

Shall read my lord's heart and hear His soul's thought. I promise a glowing Faith shall be what you find. Read.

See: this wood has come to make you
Remember the hands that carved it, to take you
Back to the love and the pledges you shared,
You two, in that buried time when you both
Could walk unharmed across this festive
Town, the land yours, and you
Each other's. Your people fought, and the feud
Brought him exile. Now he asks you
To listen for the sad cuckoo calling
In the grove: when its song has reached the edge

Of the woods, he wants you to come to him over The waves, letting nothing lead you

25 Aside and no man living stop you.

Go down to the sea, the gull's home,

And come to a ship that can carry you south,

Away, out on the water to where
Your husband and lord longs for your coming.
Nothing the world can send him, he says
Through me, could bring him more delight
Than for Almighty God to grant him you,
And for you and he together to bless
His soldiers and friends with treasure, with
hammered

Bracelets and rings. For though his home Is with strangers, he lives in a lovely land And is rich: shining gold surrounds him. And though my master was driven from here, Rushing madly down to his ship

40 And onto the sea, alone, only

[&]quot;The Husband's Message" Reprinted from *Prairie Schooner*, Vol. XXXII, No. 2, translated by Burton Raffel, by permission of University of Nebraska Press.

Alive because he fled, and glad To escape, yet now he is served and followed, Loved and obeyed by many. He has beaten Misery: there's nothing more he wants,

- Oh prince's daughter, no precious gems, No stallions, no mead-hall pleasure, no treasure On earth, but you, you to enjoy In spite of the ancient oath that parted you. And I fit together an S and an R,
- 50 And E, an A, a W and D,
 In an oath to prove that your pledge is sacred
 To him, and his faith as steady as his heart.
 As long as life shall be in him, he'll long
 To fulfill the vows and the love you shared.

The Wife's Lament

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Translated by Charles Kennedy

A song I sing of sorrow unceasing, The tale of my trouble, the weight of my woe, Woe of the present, and woe of the past, Woe never-ending of exile and grief,

- 5 But never since girlhood greater than now.
 First, the pang when my lord departed,
 Far from his people, beyond the sea;
 Bitter the heartache at break of dawn,
 The longing for rumor in what far land
- So weary a time my loved one tarried.

 Far I wandered then, friendless and homeless,
 Seeking for help in my heavy need.

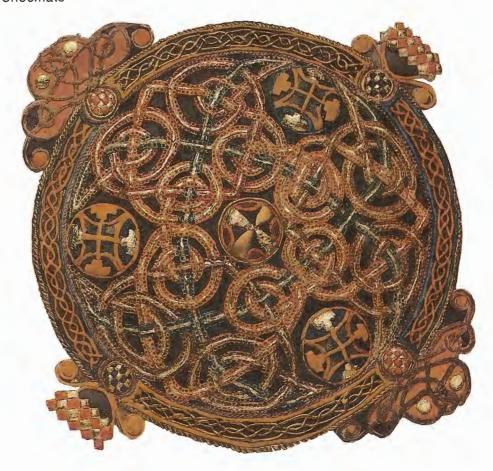
With secret plotting his kinsmen purposed To wedge us apart, wide worlds between,

- And bitter hate. I was sick at heart.
 Harshly my lord bade lodge me here.
 In all this land I had few to love me,
 Few that were loyal, few that were friends.
 Wherefore my spirit is heavy with sorrow
- To learn my beloved, my dear man and mate Bowed by ill-fortune and bitter in heart, Is masking his purpose and planning a wrong. With blithe hearts often of old we boasted

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ENGLAND in Literature

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