

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.21v. 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  
10 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  
15 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  
20 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.  
30 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  
25 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

"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,  
45 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

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  
10 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,  
15 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  
20 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

---

From AN ANTHOLOGY OF OLD ENGLISH POETRY, translated  
by Charles W. Kennedy. Copyright © 1960 by Oxford University  
Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

MEDALLION EDITION • AMERICA READS

# ENGLAND in Literature

Helen McDonnell  
Neil E. Nakadate  
John Pfordresher  
Thomas E. Shoemate



Scott, Foresman and Company

Editorial Offices: Glenview, Illinois

Regional Offices: Palo Alto, California •  
Tucker, Georgia • Glenview, Illinois •  
Oakland, New Jersey • Dallas, Texas

**HELEN McDONNELL** English Supervisor of the Ocean Township Junior and Senior High Schools, Oakhurst, New Jersey. Formerly Chairman of the Committee on Comparative and World Literature, NCTE. Editor of *Nobel Parade* and co-author of titles in the America Reads and Fountainhead Series, Scott Foresman and Company.

**NEIL E. NAKADATE** Assistant Professor of English, Iowa State University. Formerly Assistant Professor of English, the University of Texas, Austin. Contributor of papers to the Modern Language Association, the South Central MLA, and the NCTE Conference on College Composition and Communication.

**JOHN PFORDRESHER** Associate Professor of English, Georgetown University. Formerly Assistant Professor of English, the University of New Hampshire, Durham. Editor, *Variorum Edition of the Idylls of the King*. Co-author of titles in the America Reads and Fountainhead Series, Scott Foresman and Company.

**THOMAS E. SHOEMATE** Language Arts Consultant and Associate Right-to-Read Director for Grades K-12 in the Marietta (Georgia) City Schools. Formerly President of the Georgia Council of Teachers of English. Formerly teacher of English, Lakeside High School, Atlanta, NCTE director representing the Georgia Council, and member Professional Practice Commission in Georgia.

ISBN: 0-12936-5 (*Macbeth*)  
ISBN: 0-12937-3 (*Hamlet*)

Copyright © 1982, 1979  
Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview Illinois.  
All Rights Reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

This publication is protected by Copyright and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permission, write to: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1900 East Lake Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025.

45678910-RRW-A-9089888786858483  
45678910-RRW-B-9089888786858483