

Norwegian Rune Poem (Word-For-Word Translation)

Translated by Randall L. Baker
Ilf School of Theology

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Randylbaker.wordpress.com

1. Fé

Fé veldur frænda rógi;
fæðist úlfur í skógi.

Wealth causes familys' conflict;
Wolf is born in the forest.

Fé : wealth, money, cattle. *veldur* : causes. *frænda* : gen. plur. kinsmen. *rógi*: strife, slander, defamation. *fæðist*: born. *úlfur*: nom. sing wolf. *í*: in. *skógi*: dat. sing. Forest.

2. Úr

Úr er af illu jární;
oft leypur hreinn á hjarni.

Dross is of evil iron;
Often [the] reindeer runs over the ice-covered snow.

Úr: dross. *er*: is. *af*: of. *illu*: evil. *jární*: dat. sing. in iron. *oft*: often. *(h)leypur*¹: runs. *hreinn*: the reindeer. *á*: at. *hjarn*: snow covered by ice.

3. Þurs

Þurs veldur kvenna kvillu;
kátur verður fár af illu.

Giant causes women's afflictions;
Joy is sickened by evil.

Þurs: Giant. *veldur*: causes. *kvenna*: gen. plur. women's. *kvillu*: disorders. *kátur*: joy. *verður*: will be. *fár*: to become ill. *af*: of. *illu*: evil.

4. Óss

Óss er flestra ferða
för; en skalpur er sverða.

River outlets are the [way of] movement of journeys
But scabbards [for] swords.

Óss: mouth, outlet of a river. *er*: is. *flestra*: most. *ferða*: journey, travel. *för*: movement. *en*: but. *skalpur*: scabbard. *er*: is. *sverða*: gen. plur. swords.

¹ Letters in parentheses indicate how the word would be spelled in more standardized Old Norse as would be found in a dictionary rather than the original Norwegian dialect of the poem.

5. Reið

Reið kveða rossum væsta;
Reginn sló sverðið besta.

Riding is the worst for horses;
Regin struck the best sword.

Reið: riding (a horse). *kveða*: to provide. *(h)rossum*: horses. *ve(r)sta*: worst. *Reginn* : Dwarven blacksmith from the *Volsungasaga*. *sló*: struck. *sverðið*: sword. *besta*: best.

6. Kaun

Kaun er barna bölván;
böl gerir ná fölván.

Sore is the children's curse;
harm pales the corpse.

Kaun: sore, wounds and scabs. *er*: is. *barna*: gen. plur. children's, boy's. *bölván*: curse. *böl* : misfortune. *gerir*: does, makes. *ná*: cover, reach, catch, overtake, get, obtain. *fölván*: pallor.

7. Hagall

Hagall er kaldastur korna;
Kristur skóp heiminn forna.

Hail is the coldest of grains;
Christ shaped the ancient world.

Hagall: hail. *er* : is. *kaldastur* : coldest. *korna*: gen. plur. grains. *Kristur*: Christ. *skóp*: shaped, formed. *heiminn*: the world. *forna*: old, ancient.

8. Nauð

Nauð gerir næppa kosti;
naktan kelur í frosti.

Hardship makes makes [for] few choice(s);
The unclad one becomes hypothermic in frost.

Nauð: need, difficulty, distress. *gerir* : does, makes. *(k)nappa* : chilliness, cold. *kosti*: 1) choice 2) trial 3) condition 4) chance. *naktan* : naked. *kelur*: to get cold, frostbitten, or to freeze to death. *í*: in. *frosti*: frost.

9. Ís

Ís köllum brú breiða;
blindan þarf að leiða.

Ice is called broad bridge:
[The] blind need to be led.

Ís: Ice. *köllum*: call. *brú*: bridge. *breiða*: broad. *blindan*: blind. *þarf*: needs. *að leiða*: to lead.

10. Ár

Ár er gumna góði;
get ek að örr var Fróði.

Harvest is humankind's good;
I can [affirm that] Fróði was generous.

Ár: harvest, year. *er*: is. *gumna*: men's. *góði*: good. *get*: can. *ek*: I. *að örr*: to be generous. *var*: was. *Fróði*: Fróði, the good king described in Saxo Grammaticus's *Gesta Danorum*.

11. Sól

Sól er landa ljómi;
lúti eg helgum dómi.

Sun is the lands' light;
I subject [myself] to holy command.

Sól: Sun. *er*: is. *landa*: lands'. *ljómi*: light. *lúti*: subject to. *eg*: I. *helgum*: holy. *dómi*: command.

12. Týr

Týr er einændur ása;
oft verður smiður að blása.

Of Aesir Týr is one-handed;
The blacksmith has to blow often.

Týr: Týr. *er*: is. *ein(h)endur*: one-handed. *ása*: gen. plural of *Æsir*. *oft*: often. *verður*: will. *smiður*: smith. *að blása*: to blow [with a bellows].

13. Bjarkan

Bjarkan er laufgrænstur lima;
Loki bar flærða tíma.

Birch [has] the greenest-leaved limbs;
Loki was the greatest villain [of all] time.

Bjarkan: Birch. *er*: is. *laufgrænstur*: greenest-leaved. *lima*: limb. *Loki*: Loki. *bar*: bar. *flærða*: villainy. *tíma*: time.

14. Maður

Maður er moldar auki;
mikil er greip á hauki.

Man is dirt [which has been] added [to];
Mighty is the hawk's claw.

Maður: Man. *er*: is. *moldar*: dirt, earth. *auki*: in addition. *mikil*: high. *er*: is/are. *greip*: claw. *á*: on. *hauki*: hawk.

15. Lögur

Lögur er, er fellur úr fjalli,
foss; en gull eru nosser.

Water falling from a mountain is a waterfall,
But [its] precious [things] are gold.

Lögur: water, any liquid. *er*: is. *fellur*: falls. *úr*: from. *fjalli*: a fell, mountain. *foss*: waterfall. *en*: but. *gull*: gold. *eru*: are. *(h)nossir*: costly things, ladys' ornaments, precious things.

16. Ýr

Ýr er veturgrænstur viðá;
vant er, er brennur, að sviða.

Yew is the most evergreen of woods;
[It] chars when is burns.

Ýr: Yew. *er*: is. *vetur*:-: winter. *grænstur*: greenest. *viða*: wood. *vant*: want, lack. *brennur*: burns, is consumed by fire. *að sviða*: to singe, to burn, to blacken with heat.

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