

HYMISKVIÐA, THE LAY OF HYMIR

Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The Hymiskvitha is found complete in both manuscripts; in *Regius* it follows the *Harbarthsljoth*, while in the *Arnarnagnaean Codex* it comes after the *Grimnismol*. Snorri does not quote it, although he tells the main story involved.

The poem is a distinctly inferior piece of work, obviously based on various narrative fragments, awkwardly pieced together. Some critics, Jessen and Edzardi for instance, have maintained that the compiler had before him three distinct poems, which he simply put together; others, like Finnur Jonsson and Mogk, think that the author made a new poem of his own on the basis of earlier poems, now lost. It seems probable that he took a lot of odds and ends of material concerning Thor, whether in prose or in verse, and worked them together in a perfunctory way, without much caring how well they fitted. His chief aim was probably to impress the credulous imaginations of hearers greedy for wonders.

The poem is almost certainly one of the latest of those dealing with the gods, though Finnur Jonsson, in order to support his theory of a Norwegian origin, has to date it relatively early. If, as seems probable, it was produced in Iceland, the chances are that it was composed in the first half of the eleventh century. Jessen, rather recklessly, goes so far as to put it two hundred years later. In any case, it belongs to a period of literary decadence-- the great days of Eddic poetry would never have permitted the nine hundred headed person found in Hymir's home-- and to one in which the usual forms of diction in mythological poetry had yielded somewhat to the verbal subtleties of skaldic verse.

While the skaldic poetry properly falls outside the limits of this book, it is necessary here to say a word about it. There is preserved, in the sagas and elsewhere, a very considerable body of lyric poetry, the authorship of each poem being nearly always definitely stated, whether correctly or otherwise. This type of poetry is marked by an extraordinary complexity of diction, with a peculiarly difficult vocabulary of its own. It was to explain some of the "kennings" which composed this special vocabulary that Snorri wrote one of the sections of the *Prose Edda*. As an illustration, in a single stanza of one poem in the *Egilssaga*, a sword is called "the halo of the helm," "the wound-hoe," "the blood-snake" (possibly; no one is sure what the compound word means) and "the ice of the girdle," while men appear in the same stanza as "Othin's ash-trees," and battle is spoken of as "the iron game." One of the eight lines has defied translation completely.

Skaldic diction made relatively few inroads into the earlier Eddic poems, but in the *Hymiskvitha* these circumlocutions are fairly numerous. This sets the poem somewhat apart from the rest of the mythological collection. Only the vigor of the two main stories--Thor's expedition after Hymir's kettle and the fishing trip in which he caught Mithgarthsorm--saves it from complete mediocrity.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
1	Once the celestial gods had been taking fish, / And were in comotation ere they the truth discovered. ¹ Rods ² they shook, and blood inspected, When they found at Oegir's a lack of kettles.	Of old the gods made feast together, And drink they sought ere sated they were; Twigs ⁶ they shook, and blood they tried: Rich fare in Aegir's ⁷ hall they found.	Long ago the gods had game in abundance, Ate their fill, feasting together, Scored runes and relished blood. In Aegir's hall there was great plenty.
2	Sat the rock-dweller glad as a child, Much like the son of Miskorblindi. In his eyes looked Ygg's son steadfastly. "Thou to the Æsir shalt oft a comotation give."	The mountain-dweller ⁸ sat merry as boyhood, But soon like a blinded man he seemed; ⁹ The son of Ygg ¹⁰ gazed in his eyes: "For the gods a feast shalt thou forthwith get."	In the hall sat Fell-Dweller, happy as a child, Much like the kin of Miskurblindi, Till Ygg's son mockingly met his eye: 'Slave, at our feast you shall serve for ever.'
3	Caused trouble to the Jotun th' unwelcome-worded As: he forthwith meditated vengeance on the gods. Sif's husband he besought a kettle him to bring, "In which I beer for all of you may brew."	The word-wielder toil for the giant worked, ¹¹ And so revenge on the gods he sought; He bade Sif's mate the kettle bring: ¹² "Therein for ye all much ale shall I brew."	The taunts of the hero troubled the giant, His thoughts were turned by them to revenge: 'Let Sif's husband bring in the cauldron That I may brew ale for all the gods.'
4	The illustrious gods found that impossible, Nor could the exalted powers it accomplish, Till from true-heartedness, Ty to Hlorridi Much friendly counsel gave.	The far-famed ones could find it not, And the holy gods could get it nowhere; Till in truthful wise did Tyr ¹³ speak forth, And helpful counsel to Hlorrithi ¹⁴ gave.	But none of the gods, none of the powers, Had such a cauldron; they could not get one. Until Tyr, the trusty warrior, Counseled Thunderer with these words.
5	"There dwells eastward of Elivagar The all-wise Hymir, at heaven's end. My sire, fierce of mood, a kettle owns, A capacious cauldron, a rast in depth."	"There dwells to the east of Elivagar ¹⁵ Hymir ¹⁶ the wise at the end of heaven; A kettle my father fierce doth own, A mighty vessel a mile in depth."	'Away to the east of Elivagar At the sky's end wise Hymir lives, My savage father: he possesses a kettle, A magic cauldron, miles deep.'
6	[Thor] "Knowest thou whether we can get the liquor-boiler?" [Ty] "Yes, friend! if we stratagem' employ."	[Thor spake:] ¹⁷ "May we win, dost thou think, this whirler of water?" [Tyr spake:] "Aye, friend, we can, if cunning we are."	Then said Thunderer: 'Do you think we can get it?' 'We can,' said Tyr, 'if cunning enough.'
7	Rapidly they drove forward that day from Asgard, till to the giant's home they came. Thor stalled his goats, splendid of horn, Then turned him to the hall that Hymir owned.	Forward that day with speed they fared, From Asgarth came they to Egil's home; ¹⁸ The goats with horns bedecked he guarded; Then they sped to the hall where Hymir dwelt.	Long they drove, a day's journey From Asgard, till to Egil they came: They left their goats to graze with him, And entered the hall where Hymir lived.
8	The son his granddam found to him most loathful; Heads she had nine hundred.	The youth ¹⁹ found his grandam, that greatly he loathed, / And full nine hundred heads she had;	Grandson met grandmother: grim she looked, A nine-hundred-headed monster:

	But another came all-golden forth, fair-browed, Bearing the beer-cup to her son:	But the other fair with gold came forth, / And the bright-browed one brought beer to her son.	But white-browed, golden, the wife of Hymir Brought cups of beer to her son.
9	"Ye Jotuns' kindred! I will you both, Ye daring pair, under the kettles place. My husband is oftentimes niggard towards guests, To ill-humour prone."	"Kinsman of giants, beneath the kettle Will I set ye both, ye heroes bold; For many a time my dear-loved mate To guests is wrathful and grim of mind."	"Though you be strong and stout-hearted, I had better hide you under the cauldron: Ungenerous with guests is my giant husband, And very often ill-tempered."
10	But the monster, the fierce-souled Hymir, Late returned home from the chase. / He the hall entered, the icebergs resounded, as the churl approached; The thicket on his cheeks was frozen.	Late to his home the misshapen Hymir, The giant harsh, from his hunting came; The icicles rattled as in he came, For the fellow's chin-forest frozen was.	Late to his home came the evil-doer, Back from the chase; the brutal Hymir Entered the hall; the icicles clinked On his chin-forest as the churl came in.
11	"Hail to thee, Hymir! be of good cheer: Now thy son is come to thy hall, Whom we expected from his long journey; Him accompanies our famed adversary, The friend of man, who Veor hight.	²⁰ "Hail to thee, Hymir! good thoughts mayst thou have; / Here has thy son to thine hall now come; (For him have we waited, his way was long;) ²¹ And with him fares the foeman of Hroth, ²² The friend of mankind, and Veur they call him.	'Now greet, Hymir, with glad mood Your son who tonight sits in the hall: He whom we missed has made his way back. The comrade with him is called Veur, Hrod's foe and a friend to man.
12	See where they sit under the hall's gable, As if to shun thee: the pillar stands before them." In shivers flew the pillar at the Jotun's glance; The beam was first broken in two.	"See where under the gable they sit! Behind the beam do they hide themselves." The beam at the glance of the giant broke, And the mighty pillar in pieces fell.	Under the gable of the hall they sit, Protecting themselves with a tall pillar.' The pillar gave at the glance of the giant, The main beam was broken in pieces,
13	Eight kettles fell, but only one of them, A hard-hammered cauldron, whole from the column. The two came forth, but the old Jotun With eyes surveyed his adversary.	Eight ²³ fell from the ledge, and one alone, The hard-hammered kettle, of all was whole; Forth came they then, and his foes he sought, The giant old, and held with his eyes.	Eight cauldrons, hard-hammered, fell One by one from the wood shelf: They stepped out, but the old giant Held his foe with a fierce gaze.
14	Augured to him his mind no good, when he saw The giantess's sorrow on the floor coming. Then were three oxen taken, And the Jotun bade them forthwith be boiled.	Much sorrow his heart foretold when he saw The giantess' foeman come forth on the floor; Then of the steers did they bring in three; Their flesh to boil did the giant bid. ²⁴	Hymir was uneasy, beholding before him The Peril of Giants pacing his floor: Then at his orders three bulls Were led away at once to be boiled.
15	Each one they made by the head shorter, And to the fire afterwards bore them. Sif's consort ate, ere to sleep he went, Completely, he alone, two of Hymir's beeves.	By a head was each the shorter hewed, And the beasts to the fire straight they bore; The husband of Sif, ere to sleep he went, Alone two oxen of Hymir's ate. ²⁵	He made each of them a head shorter, They were carried thence to the cooking-fire. Before sleeping Sif's husband Ate two oxen all by himself.
16	Seemed to the hoary friend of Hrungrir Hlorridi's refection full well large: "We three to-morrow night shall be compelled On what we catch to live."	To the comrade hoary of Hrungrir then ²⁶ Did Hlorridi's meal full mighty seem; "Next time at eve we three must eat The food we have {illegible} the hunting's spoil."	Ample indeed Hrungrir's friend Thought the repast of Thunderer had been: 'If we three are to eat an evening meal Of game-meat, we must go hunting.'
17	Veor said he would on the sea row, If the bold Jotun him would with baits supply:	Fain to row on the sea was Veur, he said, If the giant bold would give him bait. ²⁷	Veur said he was ready to row on the waves If the villainous giant would provide bait. ²⁹
18	"To the herd betake thee, (if thou in thy courage trustest, crusher of the rock-dwellers!) for baits to seek. I expect that thou wilt bait from an ox easily obtain."	[Hymir spake:] ²⁸ "Go to the herd, if thou hast it in mind, Thou slayer of giants, thy baitto seek; For there thou soon mayst find, methinks, Bait ²⁹ from the oxen easy to get."	'Take your pick of my herd if it pleases you, Bane of Fell Dwellers, for the bait you need. There, Veur, I think you will find Ox-turds easy to get.'
19	The guest in haste to the forest went, Where stood an all-black ox before him. The Thursar's bane wrung from an ox The high fastness of his two horns.	Swift to the wood the hero went, Till before him an ox all black he found; From the beast the slayer of giants broke ³⁰ The fortress high of his double horns. ³¹	Quickly the warrior went to the field Where, all-black, an ox was grazing. The Bane of Giants broke off Its two horns from the high place.
20	"To me thy work seems worse by far, Ruler of keels! than if thou hadst sat quiet."	[Hymir spake:] "Thy works, methinks, are worse by far, Thou steerer of ships, ³² than when still thou sittest." /	'Much worse do I deem your deeds now, Keel Wielder, than when you were sitting.'
21	The lord of goats the apes' kinsman besought The horse of plank farther out to move; But the Jotun declared His slight desire farther to row.	The lord of the goats ³³ bade the ape-begotten ³⁴ Farther to steer the steed of the rollers; ³⁵ But the giant said that his will, forsooth, Longer to row was little enough.	The Goat Lord bade the Brother of Apes To steer the ship a stretch further, But the giant was weary, weak already, And little eager for a longer row.
22	The mighty Hymir drew, he alone, Two whales up with his hook; But at the stern abaft Veor cunningly made him a line.	Two whales on his hook did the mighty Hymir Soon pull up on a single cast; In the stern the kinsman of Othin sat, And Veur with cunning his cast prepared.	Fierce Hymir on his fish hook Drew up two whales at one cast: Aft in the stern, Odin's son, Veur, with patience prepared his line.
23	Fixed on the hook the shield of men, The serpent's slayer, the ox's head. Gaped at the bait the foe of gods, The encircler beneath of every land. ³	The warder of men, the worm's destroyer, ³⁶ Fixed on his hook the head of the ox; There gaped at the bait the foe of the gods, The girdler of all the earth beneath.	With an ox-head his angle he baited, The slayer of serpents, the savior of men: From his hook gaped the gods' foe, Who under the seas encircles the world.

24	Drew up boldly the mighty Thor / The worm with venom glistening, up to the side; / With his hammer struck, on his foul head's summit, Like a rock towering, the wolf's own brother.	The venomous serpent swiftly up To the boat did Thor, the bold one, pull; With his hammer the loathly hill of the hair ³⁷ Of the brother of Fenrir ³⁸ he smote from above.	Doughty Thor drew boldly The hideous serpent up on board, Struck with his hammer the high hair-mountain Of the writhing Coiler, Kin of the Wolf.
25	The icebergs resounded, the caverns howled, The old earth shrank together: At length the fish back into ocean sank. ⁴	The monsters roared, and the rocks resounded, And all the earth so old was shaken; ³⁹ Then sank the fish in the sea forthwith.	The monster roared, the mountains echoed, Middle Earth was mightily shaken Then the serpent-fish sank back.
26	The Jotun was little glad, as they rowed back, So that the powerful Hymir nothing spake, But the oar moved in another course.	Joyless as back they rowed was the giant; Speechless did Hymir sit at the oars, With the rudder he sought a second wind. ⁴¹	Rueful was the giant as they rowed back, Far too angry and afraid to speak, As he labored to catch a lee wind.
27	"Wilt thou do half the work with me, Either the whales home to the dwelling bear, Or the boat fast bind?"	[Hymir spake:] ⁴² "The half of our toil wilt thou have with me, And now make fast our goat of the flood; ⁴³ Or home wilt thou bear the whales to the house, [Across the gorge of the wooded glen?]" ⁴⁴	'Now you will have to do half the work, If I am to get home with my whales And our sea-buck bring to harbor.'
28	Hlorridi went, grasped the prow, quickly, With its hold-water, lifted the water-steed, Together with its oars and scoop; Bore to the dwelling the Jotun's ocean-swine, The curved vessel, through the wooded hills.	Hlorrithi stood and the stem he gripped, And the sea-horse ⁴⁵ with water awash he lifted; Oars and bailer and all he bore With the surf-swine ⁴⁶ home to the giant's house.	Sif's husband seized the stern Of the sea-stallion, swung it up With its bilge water, oars and bailing-can, And bore the giant's brim-swine home Past the boiling springs and the birch-scrub.
29	But the Jotun yet ever frowned, To strife accustomed, with Thor disputed, Said that no one was strong, however vigorously he might row, unless he his cup could break.	His might the giant again would match, For stubborn he was, with the strength of Thor; None truly strong, though stoutly he rowed, Would he call save one who could break the cup. ⁴⁷	Hymir, though, would not own he was beaten, But continued still to contend with Thor: 'Stoutly you row, but strong you are not Unless you can break this beaker of mine.
30	But Hlorridi, when to his hands it came, Forthwith brake an upright stone in twain; Sitting dashed the cup through the pillars: Yet they brought it whole to Hymir back.	Hlorrithi then, when the cup he held, Struck with the glass the pillars of stone; As he sat the posts in pieces he shattered, Yet the glass to Hymir whole they brought.	Thunderer took it and threw it quickly At a stone column that cracked in pieces And fell down, but the drinking cup, When they brought it to Hymir, was undamaged.
31	Until the beautiful woman gave important, Friendly counsel, which she only knew: "Strike at the head of Hymir, the Jotun with food oppressed, / That is harder than any cup."	But the loved one fair ⁴⁸ of the giant found A counsel true, and told her thought: "Smite the skull of Hymir, heavy with food, For harder it is than ever was glass." ⁴⁹	Then whispered the beautiful wife of the giant A secret known to herself alone: 'Harder than the cup is Hymir's skull; If you want to smash it, smite him there.'
32	Rose then on his knee the stern lord of goats, Clad in all his godlike power. Unhurt remained the old man's helm-block, But the round wine-bearer was in shivers broken.	The goats' mighty ruler then rose on his knee, And with all the strength of a god he struck; Whole was the fellow's helmet-stem, ⁵⁰ But shattered the wine-cup rounded was.	The Lord of Goats got to his feet, Exerted every ounce of his strength: Whole remained Hymir's helmet-stump, But the wine cup was cracked in half.
33	"Much good, I know, has departed from me, Now that my cup I see hurled from my knees." Thus the old man spake: "I can never say again, Beer thou art too hot.	[Hymir spake:] "Fair is the treasure that from me is gone, Since now the cup on my knees lies shattered;" So spake the giant: "No more can I say In days to be, 'Thou art brewed, mine ale.' ⁵¹	Seeing the shattered shards on his knees, The giant lamented: 'Many good things Are gone from me, I know I may never say From now on - "Ale, be brewed!"
34	"Now 'tis to be tried if ye can carry The beer-vessel out of our dwelling." Ty twice assayed to move the vessel, Yet at each time stood the kettle fast.	"Enough shall it be if out ye can bring Forth from our house the kettle here." Tyr then twice to move it tried, But before him the kettle twice stood fast.	It is yet to be proved that you can bear Out of this hall my ale-kettle.' Tyr tried twice to budge it, But still the cauldron stood where it was.
35	Then Modi's father by the brim grasped it, And trod through the dwelling's floor. Sif's consort lifted the kettle on his head, While about his heels its rings jingled.	The father of Mothi ⁵² the rim seized firm, And before it stood on the floor below; Up on his head Sif's husband raised it, And about his heels the handles clattered.	Sif's husband seized the rim, His feet broke through the floor of the hall: He lifted to his head the huge cauldron; The pot-rings clashed and clattered at his heels.
36	They had far journeyed before Odin's son Cast one look backward: he from the caverns saw, With Hymir from the east, A troop of many-headed monsters coming.	Not long had they fared, ere backwards looked The son of Othin, once more to see; From their caves in the east beheld he coming With Hymir the throng of the many-headed. ⁵³	They had not gone far before he looked Round behind him: Odin's son Saw, then, coming from caves in the east, Hymir with a many-headed throng.
37	From his shoulders he lifted the kettle down; Miollnir hurled forth towards the savage crew, And slew all the mountain-giants, Who with Hymir had him pursued.	He stood and cast from his back the kettle, And Mjollnir, the lover of murder, he wielded; ⁵⁴ So all the whales of the waste ⁵⁵ he slew.	He lifted the kettle, loosed it from his shoulders, And swung Mjollnir: he slew all Those wilderness monsters With his murderous hammer.
38	Long they had not journeyed when of Hlorridi's goats one lay down half-dead before the car. It from the pole had sprung across the trace; But the false Loki was of this the cause.	Not long had they fared ere one there lay Of Hlorrithi's goats half-dead on the ground; In his leg the pole-horse there was lame; The deed the evil Loki had done. ⁵⁶	They had not gone far before he observed That Thunderer's goat had gone lame: The Puller on the Harness was half dead. That was malicious Loki's doing.

39	Now ye have heard,— For what fabulist can more fully tell— What indemnity he from the giant got: He paid for it with his children both. ⁵	But ye all have heard,— for of them who have The tales of the gods, who better can tell? ⁵⁷ What prize he won from the wilderness-dweller, Who both his children gave him to boot.	But you have all heard, all who are skilled In the lore of the gods, what later happened, How the waste-dweller was rewarded in return: Both his sons were the price he paid for that.
40	In his strength exulting he to the gods' council came, / And had the kettle, which Hymir had possessed, / Out of which every god shall beer With Oegir drink at every harvest-tide.	The mighty one came to the council of gods, And the kettle he had that Hymir's was; So gladly their ale the gods could drink In Aegir's hall at the autumn-time. ⁵⁸	The Strong One came to the Council of gods, Entered with the cauldron Hymir had possessed, And all the gods from now on could drink Ale at Aegir's every winter.

¹ To wit, that they were short of kettles for brewing.

² That is divining rods.

³ The great serpent that encircles the earth.

⁴ According to the *Prose Edda*, the giant, overcome with fright, took out his knife and severed Thor's line.

⁵ This strophe belongs apparently to another poem.

⁶ Twigs: Vigfusson comments at some length on "the rite practised in the heathen age of inquiring into the future by dipping bunches of chips or twigs into the blood (of sacrifices) and shaking them." But the two operations may have been separate, the twigs being simply "divining-rods" marked with runes. In either case, the gods were seeking information by magic as to where they could find plenty to drink.

⁷ Aegir: a giant who is also the god of the sea; little is known of him outside of what is told here and in the introductory prose to the *Lokasenna*, though Snorri has a brief account of him, giving his home as Hlesey (Laso, cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 37). *Grimnismol*, 45, has a reference to this same feast.

⁸ Mountain-dweller: the giant (Aegir).

⁹ Line 2: the principal word in the original has defied interpretation, and any translation of the line must be largely guesswork.

¹⁰ Ygg: Othin; his son is Thor. Some editors assume a gap after this stanza.

¹¹ Word-wielder: Thor. The giant: Aegir.

¹² Sif: Thor's wife; cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 48. The kettle: Aegir's kettle is possibly the sea itself.

¹³ Tyr: the god of battle; his two great achievements were thrusting his hand into the mouth of the wolf Fenrir so that the gods might bind him, whereby he lost his hand (cf. *Voluspo*, 39, note), and his fight with the hound Garm in the last battle, in which they kill each other.

¹⁴ Hlorrithi: Thor.

¹⁵ Elivagar ("Stormy Waves"): possibly the Milky Way; cf. *Vafthruthnismol*, 31, note.

¹⁶ Hymir: this giant figures only in this episode. It is not clear why Tyr, who is elsewhere spoken of as a son of Othin, should here call Hymir his father. Finnur Jonsson, in an attempt to get round this difficulty, deliberately changed the word "father" to "grandfather," but this does not help greatly.

¹⁷ Neither manuscript has any superscriptions, but most editors have supplied them as above. From this point through stanza 11 the editors have varied considerably in grouping the lines into stanzas. The manuscripts indicate the third lines of stanzas 7, 8, 9, and 10 as beginning stanzas, but this makes more complications than the present arrangement. It is possible that, as Sijmons suggests, two lines have been lost after stanza 6.

¹⁸ Egil: possibly, though by no means certainly, the father of Thor's servant, Thjalfi, for, according to Snorri, Thor's first stop on this journey was at the house of a peasant whose children, Thjalfi and Roskva, he took into his service; cf. stanza 38, note. The *Arnarnagaeian Codex* has "Aegir" instead of "Egil," but, aside from the fact that Thor had just left Aegir's house, the sea-god can hardly have been spoken of as a goat-herd.

¹⁹ The youth: Tyr, whose extraordinary grandmother is Hymir's mother. We know nothing further of her, or of the other, who is Hymir's wife and Tyr's mother. It may be guessed, however, that she belonged rather to the race of the gods than to that of the giants.

²⁰ Two or three editors give this stanza a superscription ("The concubine spake", "The daughter spake").

²¹ Line 3 is commonly regarded as spurious.

²² The foeman of Hroth: of course this means Thor, but nothing is known of any enemy of his by this name. Several editors have sought to make a single word meaning "the famous enemy" out of the phrase. Concerning Thor as the friend of man, particularly of the peasant class, cf. introduction to *Harbarthsljoth*. Veur: another name, of uncertain meaning, for Thor.

²³ Eight: the giant's glance, besides breaking the beam, knocks down all the kettles with such violence that all but the one under which Thor and Tyr are hiding are broken.

²⁴ Hymir's wrath does not permit him to ignore the duties of a host to his guests, always strongly insisted on.

²⁵ Thor's appetite figures elsewhere; cf. *Thrymskvitha*, 24.

²⁶ The comrade of Hrungnir: Hymir, presumably simply because both are giants; cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 14 and note.

²⁷ The manuscripts indicate no lacuna, and many editors unite stanza 17 with lines 1 and 2 of 18. Sijmons and Gering assume a gap after these two lines, but it seems more probable that the missing passage, if any, belonged before them, supplying the connection with the previous stanza.

²⁸ The manuscripts have no superscription. Many editors combine lines 3 and 4 with lines 1 and 2 of stanza 19. In Snorri's extended paraphrase of the story, Hymir declines to go fishing with Thor on the ground that the latter is too small a person to be worth bothering about. "You would freeze," he says, "if you stayed out in mid-ocean as long as I generally do."

²⁹ Bait: the word literally means "chaff," hence any small bits; Hymir means that Thor should collect dung for bait.

³⁰ Many editors combine lines 3 and 4 with stanza 20. [Auden-Taylor have done so, but I have returned them to Bellows' arrangement – my note]

³¹ Fortress, etc.: the ox's head; cf. introductory note concerning the diction of this poem. Several editors assume a lacuna after stanza 19, but this seems unnecessary.

³² Steerer of ships: probably merely a reference to Thor's intention to go fishing. The lacuna after stanza 20 is assumed by most editors.

³³ Lord of the goats: Thor, because of his goat-drawn chariot.

³⁴ Ape-begotten: Hymir; the word "api," rare until relatively late times in its literal sense, is fairly common with the meaning of "fool." Giants were generally assumed to be stupid.

³⁵ Steed of the rollers: a ship, because boats were pulled up on shore by means of rollers.

³⁶ Warder of men: Thor; cf. stanza 11. Worm's destroyer: likewise Thor, who in the last battle slays, and is slain by, Mithgarthsorm; cf. *Voluspo*, 56. The foe of the gods: Mithgarthsorm, who lies in the sea, and surrounds the whole earth.

³⁷ Hill of the hair: head,—a thoroughly characteristic skaldic phrase.

³⁸ Brother of Fenrir: Mithgarthsorm was, like the wolf Fenrir and the goddess Hel, born to Loki and the giantess Angrbotha (cf. *Voluspo*, 39 and note), and I have translated this line accordingly; but the word used in the text has been guessed as meaning almost anything from "comrade" to "enemy."

³⁹ No gap is indicated in the manuscripts, but that a line or more has been lost is highly probable. In Snorri's version, Thor pulls so hard on the line that he drives both his feet through the flooring of the boat, and stands on bottom. When he pulls the serpent up, Hymir cuts the line with his bait-knife, which explains the serpent's escape. Thor, in a rage, knocks Hymir overboard with his hammer, and then wades ashore. The lines of stanzas 25 and 26 have been variously grouped.

⁴⁰ No gap is indicated in the manuscripts, but line 2 begins with a small letter.

⁴¹ A second wind: another direction, i. e., he put about for the shore.

⁴² No superscription in the manuscripts. In its place Bugge supplies a line—"These words spake Hymir, | the giant wise."

⁴³ Goat of the flood: boat.

⁴⁴ The manuscripts reverse the order of lines 2 and 3, and in both of them line 4 stands after stanza 28.

⁴⁵ Sea-horse: boat.

⁴⁶ Surf-swine: the whales.

⁴⁷ Snorri says nothing of this episode of Hymir's cup. The glass which cannot be broken appears in the folklore of various races.

⁴⁸ The loved one: Hymir's wife and Tyr's mother; cf. stanza 8 and note.

⁴⁹ The idea that a giant's skull is harder than stone or anything else is characteristic of the later Norse folk-stories, and in one of the so-called "mythical sagas" we find a giant actually named Hard-Skull.

⁵⁰ Helmet-stem: head.

⁵¹ Line 4 in the manuscripts is somewhat obscure, and Bugge, followed by some editors, suggests a reading which may be rendered (beginning with the second half of line 3): "No more can I speak / Ever again | as I spoke of old."

⁵² The father of Mothi and Sif's husband: Thor.

⁵³ The many-headed: The giants, although rarely designated as a race in this way, sometimes had two or more heads; cf. stanza 8, *Skirnismol*, V and *Vafthruthnismol*, 33. Hymir's mother is, however, the only many-headed giant actually to appear in the action of the poems, and it is safe to assume that the tradition as a whole belongs to the period of Norse folk-tales of the marchen order.

⁵⁴ No gap is indicated in the manuscripts. Some editors put the missing line as 2, some as 3, and some, leaving the present three lines together, add a fourth, and metrically incorrect, one from late paper manuscripts: "Who with Hymir followed after."

⁵⁵ Whales of the waste: giants.

⁵⁶ According to Snorri, when Thor set out with Loki (not Tyr) for the giants' land, he stopped first at a peasant's house (cf. stanza 7 and note). There he proceeded to cook his own goats for supper. The peasant's son, Thjalfi, eager to get at the marrow, split one of the leg-bones with his knife. The next morning, when Thor was ready to proceed with his journey, he called the goats to life again, but one of them proved irretrievably lame. His wrath led the peasant to give him both his children as servants (cf. stanza 39). Snorri does not indicate that Loki was in any way to blame.

⁵⁷ This deliberate introduction of the story-teller is exceedingly rare in the older poetry.

⁵⁸ The translation of the last two lines is mostly guess work, as the word rendered "gods" is uncertain, and the one rendered "at the autumn-time" is quite obscure.

⁵⁹ [Stanzas are rearranged from this point through 20 to match Bellows – my note]