

## LOKASENNA, OR THE FLYTING OF LOKI

(called by Thorpe "Oegir's Computation, or Loki's Altercation")

### Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The Lokasenna is found only in *Regius*, where it follows the *Hymiskvitha*; Snorri quotes four lines of it, grouped together as a single stanza.

The poem is one of the most vigorous of the entire collection, and seems to have been preserved in exceptionally good condition. The exchange or contest of insults was dear to the Norse heart, and the Lokasenna consists chiefly of Loki's taunt; to the assembled gods and goddesses, and their largely ineffectual attempts to talk back to him. The author was evidently well versed in mythological lore, and the poem is full of references to incidents not elsewhere recorded. As to its date and origin there is the usual dispute, but the latter part of the tenth century and Iceland seem the best guesses.

The prose notes are long and of unusual interest. The introductory one links the poem closely to the *Hymiskvitha*, much as the *Reginismol*, *Fafnismol* and *Sigrdrifumol* are linked together; the others fill in the narrative gaps in the dialogue—very like stage directions,—and provide a conclusion by relating Loki's punishment, which, presumably, is here connected with the wrong incident. It is likely that often when the poem was recited during the two centuries or so before it was committed to writing, the speaker inserted some such explanatory comments, and the compiler of the collection followed this example by adding such explanations as he thought necessary. The *Lokasenna* is certainly much older than the *Hymiskvitha*, the connection between them being purely one of subject-matter; and the twelfth-century compiler evidently knew a good deal less about mythology than the author whose work he was annotating.

### Bellows' Introductory Prose Notes

**Aegir:** the sea-god; Snorri gives Hler as another of his names, but he is not elsewhere called Gymir, which is the name of the giant, Gerth's father, in the *Skirnismol*. On Aegir cf. *Grimnismol*, 45, and *Hymiskvitha*, 1.

**Frigg:** though Othin's wife is often mentioned, she plays only a minor part in the Eddic poems; cf. *Voluspo*, 34, *Vafthruthnismol*, I, and *Grimnismol*, introductory prose.

**Thor:** the compiler is apparently a trifle confused as to Thor's movements; the "Journey in the East" here mentioned cannot be the one described in the *Hymiskvitha*, nor yet the one narrated by Snorri, as Loki was with Thor throughout that expedition. He probably means no more than that Thor was off killing giants.

**Sif:** concerning Thor's wife the chief incident is that Loki cut off her hair, and, at the command of the wrathful Thor, was compelled to have the dwarfs fashion her a new supply of hair out of gold; cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 48.

**Bragi:** the god of poetry; cf. *Grimnismol*, 44 and note.

**Ithun:** the goddess of youth; cf. note on *Skirnismol*, 19. Ithun is not mentioned by name in any other of the Eddic poems, but Snorri tells in detail how the giant Thjazi stole her and her apples, explaining the reference in *Harbarthsljoth*, 19 (q. v.).

**Tyr:** the god of battle; cf. *Hymiskvitha*, 4, and (concerning his dealings with the wolf Fenrir) *Voluspo*, 39, note.

**Njorth:** the chief of the Waners [Vanir], and father of Freyr and Freyja; cf. (concerning the whole family) *Skirnismol*, introductory prose and note, also *Voluspo*, 21 and note.

**Skathi:** Njorth's wife was the daughter of the giant Thjazi; cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 19, note, and *Grimnismol*, 17.

**Vithar:** the silent god, the son of Othin who avenged his father by slaying the wolf Fenrir; cf. *Voluspo*, 54, *Vafthruthnismol*, 51, and *Grimnismol*, 17.

**Loki:** the mischief-making fire-god; in addition to the many references to his career in the *Lokasenna*, cf. particularly *Voluspo*, 32 and 35, and notes.

**Byggvir** and **Beyla:** not mentioned elsewhere in the poems;

**Freyr's** conspicuous servant is **Skirnir**, hero of the *Skirnismol*.

**Fimafeng** ("The Swift Handler") and **Eldir** ("The Man of the Fire"): mentioned only in connection with this incident.

	Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)	Auden-Taylor (1969)
I	<p>Oegir, who is also named Gymir, had brewed beer for the Æsir, after he had got the great kettle, as has been already related. To the entertainment came Odin and his wife Frigg. Thor did not come, being in the East, but his wife Sif was there, also Bragi and his wife Idun, and Ty, who was one-handed, Fenrisulf having bitten off his hand while being bound. Besides these there were Niord and his wife Skadi, Frey and Freyia, and Odin's son Vidar. Loki too was there, and Frey's attendants, Byggvir and Beyla. Many other Æsir and Alfar were also present.</p> <p>Oegir had two servants, Fimafeng and Eldir. Bright gold was there used instead of fire-light. The beer served itself to the guests. The place was a great sanctuary. The guests greatly praised the excellence of Oegir's servants. This Loki could not hear with patience, and so slew Fimafeng; whereupon the Æsir shook their shields, exclaimed against Loki, chased him into the forest, and then returned to drink. Loki came again, and found Eldir standing without, whom he thus addressed:</p>	<p>Aegir, who was also called Gymir, had prepared ale for the gods, after he had got the mighty kettle, as now has been told. To this feast came Othin and Frigg, his wife. Thor came not, as he was on a journey in the East. Sif, Thor's wife, was there, and Brag, with Ithun, his wife. Tyr, who had but one hand, was there; the wolf Fenrir had bitten off his other hand when they had bound him. There were Njorth and Skathi his wife, Freyr and Freyja, and Vithar, the son of Othin. Loki was there, and Freyr's servants Byggvir and Beyla. Many were there of the gods and elves.</p> <p>Aegir had two serving-men, Fimafeng and Eldir. Glittering gold<sup>2</sup> they had in place of firelight; the ale came in of itself; and great was the peace. The guests praised much the ability of Aegir's serving-men. Loki might not endure that, and he slew Fimafeng. Then the gods shook their shields and howled at Loki and drove him away to the forest, and thereafter set to drinking again. Loki turned back, and outside he met Eldir. Loki spoke to him:</p>	<p>Aegir, who was also known as Gymir, had prepared ale for the gods, when he received the great kettle, as was told earlier. To his party came Odin and his wife Frigg. Thor did not come, for he was in the east. Sif, Thor's wife, was there, Bragi and his wife Idun. Tyr was there; he was one-handed; Fenris-wolf had bitten off his hand while being bound. There was Njord and his wife Skathi; Frey and Freya, and Odin's son Vidar. Loki was there and Frey's servants Byggvir and Beyla. There were many gods and elves.</p> <p>Aegir had two servers, Fimafeng and Eldir. The ale served itself. There was a great peace in that place, all praised Aegir's servers highly. Loki could not bear to hear praise, so he killed Fimafeng. Then the gods shook their spears at Loki and cried out, driving him away to the woods; then they returned to their drinking. Loki turned back and met Eldir outside. Loki said to him:</p>
1	<p>Tell me, Eldir! ere thou thy foot Settest one step forward, On what converse the sons of the triumphant gods At their potation?</p>	<p>"Speak now, Eldir,   for not one step Farther shalt thou fare; What ale-talk here   do they have within, The sons of the glorious gods?"</p>	<p>Loki: Stay where you are, step no further, Eldir, till you have told me Of what the gods, of what the elves, Are talking over their ale.</p>
2	<p>Eldir Of their arms converse, and of their martial fame, The sons of the triumphant gods. Of the Æsir and the Alfar that are here within Not one has a friendly word for thee.</p>	<p>Eldir spake: "Of their weapons they talk,   and their might in war, / The sons of the glorious gods; From the gods and elves   who are gathered here No friend in words shalt thou find."</p>	<p>Eldir: They boast of their weapons, their boldness in arms / As they sit by the banquet-board, But none of the gods, none of the elves Speak of or wish you well.</p>
3	<p>Loki I will go into Oegir's halls, To see the comotation. Strife and hate to the Æsir's sons I bear, And will mix their mead with bale.</p>	<p>Loki spake: "In shall I go   into Aegir's hall, For the feast I fain would see; Bale and hatred   I bring to the gods, And their mead with venom I mix."</p>	<p>Loki: I shall go in to eye them feasting In Aegir's banquet hall: I intend to stir up strife and hate, Mingle gall with their mead.</p>
4	<p>Eldir Knowest thou not that if thou goest Into Oegir's halls to see the comotation, But contumely and clamour pourest forth on the kindly powers, they will wipe it all off on thee?</p>	<p>Eldir spake: "If in thou goest   to Aegir's hall, And fain the feast wouldst see, And with slander and spite   wouldst sprinkle the gods, / Think well lest they wipe it on thee."</p>	<p>Eldir: If you go in to eye them feasting In Aegir's banquet hall And sprinkle the gods with spite and malice, They will wipe your face with your words.</p>
5	<p>Loki Knowest thou not, Eldir, That if we two with bitter words contend, I shall be rich in answers, If thou sayest too much?</p>	<p>Loki spake: "Bethink thee, Eldir,   if thou and I Shall strive with spiteful speech; Richer I grow   in ready words If thou speakest too much to me."</p>	<p>Loki: I tell you, Eldir, if we two should begin To bandy bitter words, I should be ready with apt replies Were you to wag your tongue.</p>
II	<p>Loki then went into the hall, but when those present saw who was come in, they all sat silent.</p>	<p>Then Loki went into the hall, but when they who were there saw who had entered, they were all silent.</p>	<p>(Loki enters the hall.)</p>
6	<p>Loki I Lopt am come thirsty into this hall, From a long journey, To beseech the Æsir one draught To give me of the bright mead.</p>	<p>Loki spake: "Thirsty I come   into this thine hall, I, Lopt,<sup>3</sup> from a journey long, To ask of the gods   that one should give Fair mead for a drink to me.</p>	<p>From a long journey has Loftus come And thirsty is his throat: I ask the gods to give me a cup, A great goblet of mead.</p>
7	<p>Why gods! are ye so silent, So reserved, that ye cannot speak? A seat and place choose for me at your board, Or bid me hie me hence.</p>	<p><sup>4</sup>"Why sit ye silent,   swollen with pride, Ye gods, and no answer give? At your feast a place   and a seat prepare me, Or bid me forth to fare."</p>	<p>Why so silent and sullen, gods, Too moody to speak with me? Appoint me a seat, a place at the feast, Or else bid me be off.</p>
8	<p>Bragi A seat and place will the Æsir Never choose for thee at their board; For well the Æsir know for whom they ought To hold a joyous comotation.</p>	<p>Bragi spake: "A place and a seat   will the gods prepare No more in their midst for thee; For the gods know well   what men they wish To find at their mighty feasts."</p>	<p>Bragi: An appointed seat, a place at the feast, The gods will never give you: You are not one they wish to invite As a friend to their pleasure feast.</p>

9	Loki Odin! dost thou remember when we in early days Blended our blood together? When to taste beer thou didst constantly refuse, Unless to both 'twas offered?	Loki spake: "Remember, Othin,   in olden days That we both our blood have mixed; Then didst thou promise   no ale to pour, Unless it were brought for us both." <sup>5</sup>	Loki: Remember, Odin, in the olden days What blood-brothers we were: You would never have dreamed of drinking ale Unless it was brought for us both.
10	Odin Rise up, Vidar! and let the wolf's sire Sit at our comotation; That Loki may not utter words of contumely In Oegir's hall.	Othin spake: <sup>6</sup> "Stand forth then, Vithar,   and let the wolf's father <sup>7</sup> / Find a seat at our feast; Lest evil should Loki   speak aloud Here within Aegir's hall."	Odin: Make room, Vidar, room for the Wolf's Father to sit at our feast, Lest Loki abuse us with bitter words In Aegir's banquet hall.
III	Vidar then rising, presented Loki with drink, who before drinking thus addressed the Æsir:	Then Vithar arose and poured drink for Loki; but before he drank he spoke to the gods:	
11	Hail, Æsir! Hail, Asyniur! And ye, all-holy gods! All, save that one As, who sits within there, Bragi, on yonder bench.	"Hail to you, gods!   ye goddesses, hail! Hail to the holy throng! Save for the god   who yonder sits, Bragi there on the bench." <sup>8</sup>	Loki: Hail to the gods, hail to the goddesses, Hail to the Holy Powers, Hail to you all, all but one, You, Bragi, on that bench.
12	Bragi A horse and falchion I from my stores will give thee, / And also with a ring reward thee, If thou the Æsir wilt not requite with malice. Provoke not the gods against thee.	Bragi spake: "A horse and a sword   from my hoard will I give, And a ring gives Bragi to boot, That hatred thou makst not   among the gods; So rouse not the great ones to wrath."	Bragi: I will give you a mare, a mace also, And, to better the bargain, a ring, To refrain, Loki, from malicious words, Inciting the gods against you.
13	Loki Of horse and rings wilt thou ever, Bragi! be in want. Of the Æsir and the Alfar, that are here present, In conflict thou art the most backward, And in the play of darts most timid.	Loki spake: "In horses and rings   thou shalt never be rich, Bragi, but both shalt thou lack; Of the gods and elves   here together met Least brave in battle art thou, (And shyest thou art of the shot.)" <sup>9</sup>	Loki: Neither horses nor arm-rings have you to give, For you lack both, Bragi, Of all who sit here, elves and gods, The most backward in battle, The shyest when arrows are shot.
14	Bragi I know that were I without, as I am now within, The hall of Oegir, I thy head would bear in my hand, And so for lying punish thee.	Bragi spake: "Now were I without   as I am within, And here in Aegir's hall, Thine head would I bear   in mine hands away, And pay thee the price of thy lies." <sup>10</sup>	Bragi: If I were outside, not sitting at table In Aegir's banquet hall, My arm would have your head from your neck, With pain repay your lies.
15	Loki Valiant on thy seat art thou, Bragi! / But so thou shouldst not be, Bragi, the bench's pride! Go and fight, if thou art angry; A brave man sits not considering.	Loki spake: "In thy seat art thou bold,   not so are thy deeds, Bragi, adorning of benches! <sup>11</sup> Go out and fight   if angered thou feelest, No hero such forethought has."	Loki: Boldly you speak, less boldly you act, Bragi, the bench-ornament: If you are angry, come out and fight, A hero should feel no fear.
16	Idun I pray thee, Bragi! let avail the bond of children, And of all adopted sons, And to Loki speak not in reproachful words, In Oegir's hall.	Ithun spake: <sup>12</sup> Well, pritheo, Bragi,   his kinship weigh, Since chosen as wish-son <sup>13</sup> he was; And speak not to Loki   such words of spite Here within Aegir's hall."	Idun: Think, Bragi, I beg, of our children, Of all our kith and kin And do not bandy abuse with Loki In Aegir's banquet hall.
17	Loki Be silent, Idun! of all women I declare thee Most fond of men, Since thou thy arms, carefully washed, Didst twine round thy brother's murderer.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Ithun!   thou art, I say, Of women most lustful in love, Since thou thy washed-bright   arms didst wind About thy brother's slayer." <sup>14</sup>	Loki: Enough, Idun! I know what you are, The most wanton of women: Once, half-washed you wound your arms About your brother's killer.
18	Idun Loki I address not with opprobrious words, In Oegir's hall. Bragi I soothe, by beer excited. I desire not that angry ye fight.	Ithun spake: "To Loki I speak not   with spiteful words Here within Aegir's hall; And Bragi I calm,   who is hot with beer, For I wish not that fierce they should fight."	Idun: I will not bandy abuse with Loki In Aegir's banquet hall: Be calm, Bragi, and keep the peace, Nor let ale rouse you to rage.
19	Gefion Why will ye, Æsir twain, here within, Strive with reproachful words? Lopt perceives not that he is deluded, And is urged on by hate.	Gefjun <sup>15</sup> spake: "Why, ye gods twain,   with bitter tongues Raise hate among us here? Loki is famed   for his mockery foul, And the dwellers in heaven he hates." <sup>16</sup>	Gefjun: Why at the table should two gods Bandy bitter words? Loki is envious, as we all know, And hates the Holy Powers.
20	Loki Be silent, Gefion! I will now just mention, How that fair youth thy mind corrupted, Who thee a necklace gave, And around whom thou thy limbs didst twine?	Loki spake: "Be silent, Gefjun!   for now shall I say Who led thee to evil life; The boy so fair   gave a necklace bright, And about him thy leg was laid." <sup>17</sup>	Loki: Enough, Gefjun! I know your secrets, I know your seducer's name, The white god who gave you a jewel To lay your leg over his.
21	Odin Thou art raving, Loki! and hast lost thy wits, In calling Gefion's anger on thee;	Othin spake: "Mad art thou, Loki,   and little of wit, <sup>18</sup> The wrath of Gefjun to rouse;	Odin: You are mad, Loki, you have lost your wits, To give offense to Gefjun:

	For all men's destinies, I ween, She knows as thoroughly as I do.	For the fate that is set   for all she sees, Even as I, methinks."	She is wise, I think, and what is to come Beholds as clearly as I.
22	Loki Be silent, Odin! Thou never couldst allot Conflicts between men: Oft hast thou given to those to whom thou Oughtest not – Victory to cowards.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Othin!   not justly thou settest The fate of the fight among men; Oft gavst thou to him   who deserved not the gift, To the baser, the battle's prize."	Loki: Enough, Odin! You have never been A just judge of warriors: You have often allowed, as allow you should not, Faint-hearted fighters to win.
23	Odin Knowest thou that I gave to those I ought not— Victory to cowards? Thou wast eight winters on the earth below, A milch cow and a woman, And didst there bear children. Now that, methinks, betokens a base nature.	Othin spake: "Though I gave to him   who deserved not the gift, To the baser, the battle's prize; Winters eight   wast thou under the earth, Milking the cows as a maid, (Ay, and babes didst thou bear; Unmanly thy soul must seem.)" <sup>19</sup>	Odin: If I have allowed, as allow I should not, Faint-hearted fighters to win, You lived under the earth for eight winters, And bore babies there, Were milked like a milch-cow And played a woman's part.
24	Loki But, it is said, thou wentest with tottering steps in Samsø, / And knocked at houses as a Vala. In likeness of a fortune teller, thou wentest among people. / Now that, methinks, betokens a base nature.	Loki spake: "They say that with spells   in Samsey <sup>20</sup> once Like witches with charms didst thou work; And in witch's guise   among men didst thou go; Unmanly thy soul must seem."	Loki: Charms on Samsey, they say you worked, Wicked spells like a witch, Flew about in the form of a wizard And played a woman's part.
25	Frigg Your doings ye should Never publish among men, What ye, Æsir twain, did in days of yore. Ever forgotten be men's former deeds!	Frigg spake: "Of the deeds ye two   of old have done Ye should make no speech among men; Whate'er ye have done   in days gone by, Old tales should ne'er be told."	Frigg: You are mad, Loki, to mention here, Aloud among the living, What befell two gods in former days, And disdain their deeds of old.
26	Loki Be thou silent, Frigg! Thou art Fjorgyn's daughter, And ever hast been fond of men, Since Ve and Vili, it is said, thou, Vidrir's wife, Didst both to thy bosom take.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Frigg!   thou art Fjorgyn's <sup>21</sup> wife, But ever lustful in love; For Vili and Ve, <sup>22</sup>   thou wife of Vithrir, <sup>23</sup> Both in thy bosom have lain."	Loki: Enough, Frigg! You are Fjorgyn's daughter And have ever played the whore: Both Ve and Vili, Vidrir's wife, You allowed to lie with you.
27	Frigg Know thou that if I had, in Oegir's halls, A son like Baldr, Out thou shouldst not go from the Æsir's sons: Thou should'st have been fiercely assailed.	Frigg spake: "If a son like Baldr <sup>24</sup>   were by me now, Here within Aegir's hall, From the sons of the gods   thou shouldst go not forth / Till thy fierceness in fight were tried."	Frigg: If I still had a son, sitting here, As brave as Baldr was, You would not escape unscathed from the hall, Before you fought with him.
28	Loki But wilt thou, Frigg! That of my wickedness I more recount? I am the cause that thou seest not Baldr Riding to the halls.	Loki spake: "Thou wilt then, Frigg,   that further I tell Of the ill that now I know; Mine is the blame   that Baldr no more Thou seest ride home to the hall."	Loki: If you like, Frigg, there's a lot more I can tell you about my tricks: For I saw to it that your son died, That Baldr will not come back.
29	Freyia Mad art thou, Loki! In recounting thy foul misdeeds. Frigg, I believe, knows all that happens, Although she says it not.	Freyja spake: "Mad art thou, Loki,   that known thou makest The wrong and shame thou hast wrought; The fate of all   does Frigg know well, <sup>25</sup> Though herself she says it not."	Freyia: You are mad, Loki, to mention here Your foul and ugly arts: Frigg knows all that is fated to be, Though she does not say so herself.
30	Loki Be thou silent, Freyja! I know thee full well; Thou art not free from vices: Of the Æsir and the Alfar, that are herein, Each has been thy paramour.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Freyja!   for fully I know thee, Sinless thou art not thyself; Of the gods and elves   who are gathered here, Each one as thy lover has lain." <sup>26</sup>	Loki: Enough, Freyja! I know well You have been as bad as the rest: With all who sit here, elves and gods, With each you have played the whore.
31	Freyia False is thy tongue. Henceforth it will, I think, Prate no good to thee. Wroth with thee are the Æsir, and the Asyniur. Sad shalt thou home depart.	Freyja spake: "False is thy tongue,   and soon shalt thou find That it sings thee an evil song; The gods are wroth,   and the goddesses all, And in grief shalt thou homeward go."	Freyia: False is your tongue. You will find before long That ill comes to the evil: The gods are enraged, the goddesses also Unhappy will you go hence.
32	Loki Be silent, Freyja! Thou art a sorceress, And with much evil blended; / Since against thy brother thou the gentle powers excited. And then, Freyja! what didst thou do?	Loki spake: <sup>27</sup> "Be silent, Freyja!   thou foulest witch, And steeped full sore in sin; In the arms of thy brother <sup>28</sup>   the bright gods caught thee / When Freyja her wind set free."	Loki: Enough, Freyja! I know you a witch Who has done many wicked deeds: You enticed into bed your own brother, remember, And then, Freyja, you broke-wind.
33	Njord It is no great wonder, if silk-clad dames Get themselves husbands, lovers; But 'tis a wonder that a wretched As, That has borne children, should herein enter.	Njorth <sup>29</sup> spake: "Small ill does it work   though a woman may have A lord or a lover or both; But a wonder it is   that this womanish god Comes hither, though babes <sup>30</sup> he has borne."	Njord: It's a small matter if a maiden chooses To lie with a husband or lover, But a shameful sight is a She-god who has given birth to babies.

34	Loki Be silent, Niord! Thou wast sent eastward hence, A hostage from the gods. Hymir's daughters had thee for an utensil, And flowed into thy mouth. <sup>1</sup>	Loki spake: "Be silent, Njorth;   thou wast eastward sent, To the gods as a hostage given; And the daughters of Hymir <sup>31</sup>   their privy had When use did they make of thy mouth."	Loki: Beware, Njord! I know you were sent From the east as a hostage to gods: For Hymir's daughters you did as a urine-trough, They made water in your mouth.
35	Niord 'Tis to me a solace, as I a long way hence was sent, A hostage from the gods, That I had a son, whom no one hates, And accounted is a chief among the Æsir.	Njorth spake: "Great was my gain,   though long was I gone, To the gods as a hostage given; The son <sup>32</sup> did I have   whom no man hates, And foremost of gods is found."	Njord: It comforted me when I came from afar In the east as a hostage to gods, To beget a son who is greatly loved And appears the prince of gods.
36	Loki Cease now, Niord! in bounds contain thyself; I will no longer keep it secret: It was with thy sister thou hadst such a son; Hardly worse than thyself.	Loki spake: "Give heed now, Njorth,   nor boast too high, No longer I hold it hid; With thy sister <sup>33</sup> hadst thou   so fair a son, Thus hadst thou no worse a hope."	Loki: Beware, Njord! It is wise to be modest. Your secret I shall not conceal: On your own sister that son you begot. What else would one expect?
37	Ty Frey is best of all the exalted gods In the Æsir's courts: No maid he makes to weep, no wife of man, And from bonds looses all.	Tyr <sup>34</sup> spake: "Of the heroes brave   is Freyr <sup>35</sup> the best Here in the home of the gods; He harms not maids   nor the wives of men, And the bound from their fetters he frees."	Tyr: Frey is the best of all bold riders In the golden courts of the gods, Never dallies with maidens, nor men's wives, But frees all from their fetters.
38	Loki Be silent, Ty! Thou couldst never Settle a strife 'twixt two; Of thy right hand also I must mention make, Which Fenrir from thee tore.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Tyr!   for between two men Friendship thou ne'er couldst fashion; <sup>36</sup> Fain would I tell   how Fenrir <sup>37</sup> once Thy right hand rent from thee."	Loki: Enough, Tyr! You have never known how To make peace between men: Feeble you are since Fenris bit Your right hand off at the wrist.
39	Ty I of a hand am wanting, but thou of honest fame; Sad is the lack of either. Nor is the wolf at ease: he in bonds must bide, Until the gods' destruction.	Tyr spake: "My hand do I lack,   but Hrothvitnir <sup>38</sup> thou, And the loss brings longing to both; Ill fares the wolf   who shall ever await <sup>39</sup> In fetters the fall of the gods."	Tyr: I lost a hand, but you lost a son, The wolf brought woe to us both: In painful fetters shall Fenris lie Until the twilight of gods.
40	Loki Be silent, Ty; to thy wife it happened To have a son by me. Nor rag nor penny ever hadst thou, Poor wretch! for this injury.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Tyr!   for a son with me Thy wife <sup>40</sup> once chanced to win; Not a penny, methinks,   wast thou paid for the wrong, / Nor wast righted an inch, poor wretch."	Loki: Enough, Tyr! You know that your wife Mothered a son by me: Nor rag nor penny were you paid for that In recompense, wretched one.
41	Frey I the wolf see lying at the river's mouth, Until the powers are swept away. So shalt thou be bound, if thou art not silent, Thou framer of evil.	Freyr spake: "By the mouth of the river <sup>41</sup>   the wolf remains Till the gods to destruction go; Thou too shalt soon,   if thy tongue is not stilled, Be fettered, thou forger of ill." <sup>42</sup>	Frey: I see a channel and a chained wolf lying Until the twilight of gods: Forger of lies, unless you be silent, That fate will fall on you next.
42	Loki With gold thou boughtest Gyimir's daughter, And so gavest away thy sword: / But when Muspell's sons through the dark forest ride, Thou, unhappy, wilt not have wherewith to fight.	Loki spake: "The daughter of Gyimir <sup>43</sup>   with gold didst thou buy, / And sold thy sword to boot; But when Muspell's sons <sup>44</sup>   through Myrkwood <sup>45</sup> ride, / Thou shalt weaponless wait, poor wretch."	Loki: With gold you bought Gyimir's daughter, For her you sold your sword: When Muspell's sons over Mirkwood ride, Faint shall you feel at heart.
43	Byggvir Know that were I of noble race, like Ingun's Frey, And had so fair a dwelling, Than marrow softer I would bray that ill-boding crow, / And crush him limb by limb.	Byggvir <sup>46</sup> spake: "Had I birth so famous   as Ingunar-Freyr, <sup>47</sup> And sat in so lofty a seat, I would crush to marrow   this croaker of ill, And beat all his body to bits."	Byggvir: Could I own to the lineage of Ingvi-Frey And sit in so honored a seat, I would pound you, crow, to pulp for your words And break every one of your bones.
44	Loki What little thing is that I see wagging its tail, And snapping eagerly? At the ears of Frey thou shouldst ever be, And clatter under mills.	Loki spake: <sup>48</sup> "What little creature   goes crawling there, Snuffling and snapping about? At Freyr's ears ever   wilt thou be found, Or muttering hard at the mill." <sup>49</sup>	Loki: What do I see wagging its tail And yelping like a spoiled pup? To Frey it must sound like slave-girls' Jibber-jabber at the quern.
45	Byggvir Byggvir I am named, and am thought alert, By all gods and men; Therefore am I joyful here, That all the sons of Hropt drink beer together.	Byggvir spake: "Byggvir my name,   and nimble am I, <sup>50</sup> As gods and men do grant; And here am I proud   that the children of Hropt <sup>51</sup> Together all drink ale."	Byggvir: My name is Byggvir, known, I think, To all for my hot temper: Happy am I that Hropt's kin Are gathered over their ale.
46	Loki Be silent, Byggvir! Thou couldst never Dole out food to men, When, lying in thy truckle bed, thou wast not To be found, while men were fighting.	Loki spake: "Be silent, Byggvir!   thou never couldst set Their shares of the meat for men; Hid in straw on the floor,   they found thee not When heroes were fain to fight."	Loki: Enough, Byggvir! You have never learned How to carve meat for men: When others fought you hid yourself Under the straw of the hall.



59	Thor Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating. Up I will hurl thee to the east region, And none shall see thee after.	Thor spake: "Unmanly one, cease,   or the mighty hammer, Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth; <sup>67</sup> I shall hurl thee up   and out in the East, Where men shall see thee no more."	Thor: Be silent and grovel, or my great hammer Mjollnir shall shut your mouth: Be silent or Thor will throw you to the East Where no god shall see you again.
60	Loki Of thy eastern travels thou shouldst Never to people speak, / Since in a glove-thumb thou, Einheri! wast doubled up, And hardly thoughtest thou wast Thor.	Loki spake: "That thou hast fared   on the East-road forth To men shouldst thou say no more; In the thumb of a glove   didst thou hide, thou great one, / And there forgot thou wast Thor." <sup>68</sup>	Loki: Of your eastward journey, if I were you, I would not speak before warriors: You cowered, Thor, in the thumb of a glove, And forgot that you were a god.
61	Thor Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating: With this right hand I, Hrungrnir's bane, will smite thee, / So that thy every bone be broken.	Thor spake: "Unmanly one, cease,   or the mighty hammer, Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth; My right hand shall smite thee   with Hrungrnir's slayer, <sup>69</sup> / Till all thy bones are broken."	Thor: Be silent and grovel, or my great hammer Mjollnir shall shut your mouth: My hand will fell you with Hrungrnir's-killer, Break every one of your bones.
62	Loki 'Tis my intention a long life to live, Though with thy hammer thou dost threaten me. Skrymir's thongs seemed to thee hard, When at the food thou couldst not get, When, in full health, of hunger dying.	Loki spake: "Along time still   do I think to live, Though thou threatenest thus with thy hammer; Rough seemed the straps   of Skrymir's wallet, When thy meat thou mightest not get, (And faint from hunger didst feel.)" <sup>70</sup>	Loki: I reckon I shall live to a ripe old age For all your threats with the hammer: Skrymir's straps were strong, you found, When you could not get to your gear And almost died of hunger.
63	Thor Silence, thou impure being! My mighty hammer, Miollnir, shall stop thy prating. Hrungrnir's bane shall cast thee down to Hel, Beneath the gratings of the dead.	Thor spake: "Unmanly one, cease,   or the mighty hammer, Mjollnir, shall close thy mouth; The slayer of Hrungrnir   shall send thee to hell, And down to the gate of death."	Thor: Be silent and grovel, or my great hammer Mjollnir shall shut your mouth: I will send you to hel with Urungnir's-killer, Down to the gates of the dead.
64	Loki I have said before the Æsir, I have said before the Æsir's sons, / That which my mind suggested: But for thee alone will I go out; Because I know that thou wilt fight.	Loki spake: "I have said to the gods   and the sons of the god, The things that whetted my thoughts; But before thee alone   do I now go forth, For thou fightest well, I ween.	Loki: I have said to gods and the sons of gods What my mind was amused to say: But now I shall go, for I know your rages, With Thor I'm afraid to fight.
65	Oegir! thou hast brewed beer; but thou never Shalt henceforth a comotation hold. All thy possessions, which are herein, Flame shall play over, And on thy back shall burn thee.	"Ale hast thou brewed,   but, Aegir, now Such feasts shalt thou make no more; O'er all that thou hast   which is here within Shall play the flickering flames, <sup>71</sup> (And thy back shall be burnt with fire.)"	Ale have you brewed, Aegir, but never Will you give a feast again: My flames play over all you possess, Already they burn your back.
VII	After this Loki, in the likeness of a salmon, cast himself into the waterfall of Franangr, where the Æsir caught him, and bound him with the entrails of his son Nari; but his other son, Narfi, was changed into a wolf. Skadi took a venomous serpent, and fastened it up over Loki's face. The venom trickled down from it. Sigyn, Loki's wife, sat by, and held a basin under the venom; and when the basin was full, carried the venom out. Meanwhile the venom dropped on Loki, who shrank from it so violently that the whole earth trembled. This causes what are now called earthquakes.	And after that Loki hid himself in Franangr's <sup>72</sup> waterfall in the guise of a salmon, and there the gods took him. He was bound with the bowels of his son Vali, but his son Narfi <sup>73</sup> was changed to a wolf. Skathi took a poison-snake and fastened it up over Loki's face, and the poison dropped thereon. Sigyn, <sup>74</sup> Loki's wife, sat there and held a shell under the poison, but when the shell was full she bore away the poison, and meanwhile the poison dropped on Loki. Then he struggled so hard that the whole earth shook therewith; and now that is called an earthquake. <sup>75</sup>	But after that Loki hid in Franangr's Falls in the form of a salmon. There the gods took him. He was bound with the bowels of his son Nan. But his son Narfi turned into a wolf. Skadi took a poisonous snake and hung it up over the face of Loki; the poison dropped down. Sigyn, Loki's wife, sat there and held a bowl under the poison, and when the bowl was full she carried it off; but, meanwhile, the poison dropped on Loki. Then he struggled so hard that all the earth trembled. We call that now an earthquake.

<sup>1</sup> The events related in this strophe are probably a mere perversion, by the poet, of what we know of Niord's history.

<sup>2</sup> Glittering gold: Aegir's use of gold to light his hall, which was often thought of as under the sea, was responsible for the phrase "flame of the flood," and sundry kindred phrases, meaning "gold."

<sup>3</sup> Lopt: like Lothur (cf. *Voluspo*, 18) another name for Loki; cf. *Hyndluljoth*, 43, and *Svipdagsmol*, 42.

<sup>4</sup> In the manuscript this stanza begins with a small letter, and Heinzel unites it with stanza 6.

<sup>5</sup> There exists no account of any incident in which Othin and Loki thus swore blood-brotherhood, but they were so often allied in enterprises that the idea is wholly reasonable. The common process of "mingling blood" was carried out quite literally, and the promise of which Loki speaks is characteristic of those which, in the sagas, often accompanied the ceremony; cf. *Brot af Sigurtharkvithu*, 18 and note.

<sup>6</sup> In stanzas 10-31 the manuscript has nothing to indicate the identity of the several speakers, but these are uniformly clear enough through the context.

<sup>7</sup> The wolf's father: Loki; cf. *Voluspo*, 39 and note.

<sup>8</sup> Why Loki taunts Bragi with cowardice (stanzas 11-13-15) is not clear, for poetry, of which Bragi was the patron, was generally associated in the Norse mind with peculiar valor, and most of the skaldic poets were likewise noted fighters.

<sup>9</sup> Sijmons makes one line of lines 4-5 by cutting out a part of each; Finnur Jonsson rejects 5 as spurious.

<sup>10</sup> The text of line 4 is somewhat obscure, and has been variously emended, one often adopted suggestion making the line read, "Little is that for thy lies."

<sup>11</sup> Adorner of benches: this epithet presumably implies that Bragi is not only slothful, but also effeminate, for a very similar word, "pride of the benches," means a bride.

<sup>12</sup> The goddesses who, finding that their husbands are getting the worst of it, take up the cudgels with Loki, all find themselves confronted with undeniable facts in their own careers; cf. stanzas 26 (Frigg), 52 (Skathi) and 54 (Sif). Gefjun and Freyja are silenced in similar fashion.

- <sup>13</sup> Wish-son: adopted son; Loki was the son of the giant Farbauti and the giantess Laufey, and hence was not of the race of the gods, but had been virtually adopted by Othin, who subsequently had good reason to regret it.
- <sup>14</sup> We do not even know who Ithun's brother was, much less who slew him.
- <sup>15</sup> Gefjun: a goddess, not elsewhere mentioned in the poems, who, according to Snorri, was served by the women who died maidens. Beyond this nothing is known of her.
- <sup>16</sup> Lines 3-4 in the manuscript are puzzling, and have been freely emended.
- <sup>17</sup> Nothing is known of the incident here mentioned. There is a good deal of confusion as to various of the gods and goddesses, and it has been suggested that Gefjun is really Frigg under another name, with a little of Freyja--whose attributes were frequently confused with Frigg's--thrown in. Certainly Othin's answer (stanza 21, lines 3-4) fits Frigg perfectly, for she shared his knowledge of the future, whereas it has no relation to anything known of Gefjun. As for the necklace (line 3), it may be the Brisings' necklace, which appears in the *Thrymskvitha* as Freyja's, but which, in some mythological writings, is assigned to Frigg.
- <sup>18</sup> Snorri quotes line 1; cf. note on stanza 29.
- <sup>19</sup> There is no other reference to Loki's having spent eight years underground, or to his cow-milking. On one occasion, however, he did bear offspring. A giant had undertaken to build the gods a fortress, his reward being Freyja and the sun and moon, provided the work was done by a given time. His sole helper was his horse, Svathilfari. The work being nearly done, and the gods fearing to lose Freyja and the sun and moon, Loki turned himself into a mare, and so effectually distracted Svathilfari from his task that shortly afterwards Loki gave birth to Othin's eight-legged horse, Sleipnir. In such contests of abuse a man was not infrequently taunted with having borne children; cf. *Helgakvitha Hundingsbana I*, 39-45. One or two of the last three lines may be spurious.
- <sup>20</sup> Samsey: perhaps the Danish island of Samsø. Othin was the god of magic, but there is no other reference to his ever having disguised himself as a witch.
- <sup>21</sup> Fjorgyn: Othin; cf. *Voluspo*, 56 and note.
- <sup>22</sup> Vili and Ve: Othin's brothers, who appear merely as, with Othin, the sons of Bur and Bestla; cf. *Voluspo*, 4. The *Ynglingasaga* says that, during one of Othin's protracted absences, his two brothers took Frigg as their mistress.
- <sup>23</sup> Vithrir: another name for Othin.
- <sup>24</sup> On the death of Baldr, slain through Loki's cunning by the blind Hoth, cf. *Voluspo*, 32 and note.
- <sup>25</sup> Snorri, in speaking of Frigg's knowledge of the future, makes a stanza out of *Lokasenna*, 21, 1; 47, 2; 29, 3-4, thus: "Mad art thou, Loki, | and little of wit, / Why, Loki, leavst thou this not? / The fate of all | does Frigg know well, / Though herself she says it not."
- <sup>26</sup> According to Snorri, Freyja was a model of fidelity to her husband, Oth.
- <sup>27</sup> Before each of stanzas 32-42 the manuscript indicates the speaker, through the initial letter of the name written in the margin.
- <sup>28</sup> Thy brother: Freyr; there is no other indication that such a relation existed between these two, but they themselves were the product of such a union; cf. stanza 36 and note.
- <sup>29</sup> Njorth: father of Freyr and Freyja, and given by the Wanæs as a hostage, in exchange for Honir, at the close of the first war; cf. *Voluspo*, 21 and note, also *Skirmismol*, introductory prose and note.
- <sup>30</sup> Babes: cf. stanza 23 and note. Bugge suggests that this clause may have been a late insertion.
- <sup>31</sup> Daughters of Hymir: we have no clue to who these were, though Hymir is doubtless the frost-giant of the *Hymiskvitha* (q.v.). Loki's point is that Njorth is not a god, but the product of an inferior race (the Wanæs).
- <sup>32</sup> The son: Freyr.
- <sup>33</sup> Thy sister: the *Ynglingasaga* supports this story of Njorth's having had two children by his sister before he came among the gods. Snorri, on the other hand, specifically says that Freyr and Freyja were born after Njorth came to the gods.
- <sup>34</sup> Tyr: the god of battle; cf. notes on *Hymiskvitha*, 4, and *Voluspo*, 39.
- <sup>35</sup> Freyr; concerning his noble qualities cf. *Skirmismol*, introductory prose and note.
- <sup>36</sup> Snorri mentions Tyr's incompetence as a peacemaker.
- <sup>37</sup> Fenrir: the wolf, Loki's son; cf. *Voluspo*, 39.
- <sup>38</sup> Hrothvitnir ("The Mighty Wolf"): Fenrir, who awaits in chains the final battle and death at the hands of Vithar.
- <sup>39</sup> The manuscript has a metrical error in line 3, which has led to various emendations, all with much the same meaning.
- <sup>40</sup> Thy wife: there is no other reference to Tyr's wife, nor do we know who was the son in question.
- <sup>41</sup> The mouth of the river: according to Snorri, the chained Fenrir "roars horribly, and the slaver runs from his mouth, and makes the river called Vam; he lies there till the doom of the gods."
- <sup>42</sup> Freyr's threat is actually carried out; cf. concluding prose.
- <sup>43</sup> The daughter of Gymir: Gerth, heroine of the *Skirmismol*, which gives the details of Freyr's loss of his sword.
- <sup>44</sup> Muspell's sons: the name Muspell is not used elsewhere in the poems; Snorri uses it frequently, but only in this same phrase, "Muspell's sons." They are the dwellers in the fire-world, Muspellshheim, led by Surt against the gods in the last battle; cf. *Voluspo*, 47 and 52 and notes.
- <sup>45</sup> Myrkwood: here the dark forest bounding the fire-world; in the *Atlakvitha* (stanza 3) the name is used of another boundary forest.
- <sup>46</sup> Byggvir: one of Freyr's two servants; cf. introductory prose.
- <sup>47</sup> Ingunar-Freyr: the name is not used elsewhere in the poems, or by Snorri; it may be the genitive of a woman's name, Ingun, the unknown sister of Njorth who was Freyr's mother (cf. stanza 36), or a corruption of the name Ingw, used for Freyr (Fro) in old German mythology.
- <sup>48</sup> Beginning with this stanza, the names of the speakers are lacking in the manuscript.
- <sup>49</sup> The mill: i.e., at slaves' tasks.
- <sup>50</sup> Nothing further is known of either Byggvir's swiftness or his cowardice.
- <sup>51</sup> Hropt: Othin.
- <sup>52</sup> Heimdall: besides being the watchman of the gods (cf. *Voluspo*, 27), he appears also as the god of light (cf. *Thrymskvitha*, 14), and possibly also as a complex cultural deity in the *Rigsthula*. He was a son of Othin, born of nine sisters; cf. *Hynduljoth*, 37-40. In the last battle he and Loki slay one another.
- <sup>53</sup> Line 2 is quoted by Snorri; cf. stanza 29, note.
- <sup>54</sup> Skathi: the wife of Njorth, and daughter of the giant Thjazi, concerning whose death cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 19, note.
- <sup>55</sup> Bowels, etc.: according to the prose note at the end of the *Lokasenna*, the gods bound Loki with the bowels of his son Vali, and changed his other son, Narfi, into a wolf. Snorri turns the story about Vali being the wolf, who tears his brother to pieces, the gods then using Narfi's intestines to bind Loki. Narfi—and presumably Vali—were the sons of Loki and his wife, Sigyn. They appear only in this episode, though Narfi (or Nari) is named by Snorri in his list of Loki's children. Cf. concluding prose, and note.
- <sup>56</sup> [Skathi's father, the giant who captured Idunn – my note]
- <sup>57</sup> Laufey's son: Loki; not much is known of his parents beyond their names. His father was the giant Farbauti, his mother Laufey, sometimes called Nal. There is an elaborate but far-fetched hypothesis explaining these three on the basis of a nature-myth. There is no other reference to such a relation between Skathi and Loki as he here suggests.
- <sup>58</sup> Sif: Thor's wife; cf. *Harbarthsljoth*, 48, where her infidelity is again mentioned. The manuscript omits the proper name from the preceding prose, and a few editors have, obviously in error, attributed the speech to Beyla.
- <sup>59</sup> Hlorrithi: Thor.
- <sup>60</sup> Line 5 is probably spurious.
- <sup>61</sup> Beyla: Freyr's servant, wife of Byggvir; cf. introductory prose and note.
- <sup>62</sup> Mjollnir: concerning Thor's famous hammer see particularly *Thrymskvitha*, 1 and note.
- <sup>63</sup> Shoulder-cliff: head; concerning the use of such diction in the *Edda*, cf. introductory note to *Hymiskvitha*.



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<sup>64</sup> The manuscript indicates line 3 as the beginning of a stanza, but this is apparently a scribal error.

<sup>65</sup> Son of Earth: Thor, son of Othin and Jorth (Earth). The manuscript omits the word "son," but all editors have agreed in supplying it.

<sup>66</sup> The wolf: Fenrir, Loki's son, who slays Othin (Sigfather: "Father of Victory") in the final battle. Thor, according to Snorri and to the *Voluspo*, 56, fights with Mithgarthsorm and not with Fenrir, who is killed by Vithar.

<sup>67</sup> Lines 1-2 are abbreviated in the manuscript, as also in stanzas 61 and 63.

<sup>68</sup> Loki's taunt that Thor hid in the thumb of Skrymir's glove is similar to that of Othin, *Harbarthsljoth*, 26, in the note to which the story is outlined. Line 4 is identical with line 5 of *Harbarthsljoth*, 26.

<sup>69</sup> Hrungnir's slayer: the hammer; the story of how Thor slew this stone-headed giant is indicated in *Harbarthsljoth*, 14-15, and outlined in the note to stanza 14 of that poem.

<sup>70</sup> On the day following the adventure of the glove, Thor, Loki and Thor's servants proceed on their way in company with Skrymir, who puts all their food in his wallet. At evening Skrymir goes to sleep, and Thor tries to get at the food, but cannot loosen the straps of the wallet. In a rage he smites Skrymir three times on the head with his hammer, but the giant—who, it subsequently appears, deftly dodges the blows—Is totally undisturbed. Line 5 may well be spurious.

<sup>71</sup> The flames: the fire that consumes the world on the last day; cf. *Voluspo*, 57. Line 5 may be spurious.

<sup>72</sup> Franang: "Gleaming Water."

<sup>73</sup> Vali and Narfi: cf. stanza 49 and note.

<sup>74</sup> Sigyn: cf. *Voluspo*, 35, the only other place where she is mentioned in the poems.

<sup>75</sup> Snorri tells the same story, with minor differences, but makes it the consequence of Loki's part in the slaying of Baldr, which undoubtedly represents the correct tradition. The compiler of the poems either was confused or thought the incident was useful as indicating what finally happened to Loki. Possibly he did not mean to imply that Loki's fate was brought upon him by his abuse of the gods, but simply tried to round out the story. Snorri omits the naive note about earthquakes, his narrative ending with the words, "And there he lies till the destruction of the gods."