

SVIPDAGSMÁL

(or, the Lay of Svipdagr)

Bellows' Introduction (1936)

The two poems, *Grougaldr* (Groa's Spell) and *Fjolsvinmsmol* (the Ballad of Fjolsvith), which many editors have, very wisely, united under the single title of *Svipdagsmol*, are found only in paper manuscripts, none of them antedating the seventeenth century. Everything points to a relatively late origin for the poems: their extensive use of "kennings" or poetical circumlocutions, their romantic spirit, quite foreign to the character of the unquestionably older poems, the absence of any reference to them in the earlier documents, the frequent errors in mythology, and, finally, the fact that the poems appear to have been preserved in unusually good condition. Whether or not a connecting link of narrative verse joining the two parts has been lost is an open question; on the whole it seems likely that the story was sufficiently well known so that the reciter of the poem (or poems) merely filled in the gap with a brief prose summary in pretty much his own words. The general relationship between dialogue and narrative in the Eddic poems is discussed in the introductory note to the *Grimmsmol*, in connection with the use of prose links.

The love story of Svipdag and Mengloth is not referred to elsewhere in the *Poetic Edda*, nor does Snorri mention it; however, Groa, who here appears as Svipdag's mother, is spoken of by Snorri as a wise woman, the wife of Orvandil, who helps Thor with her magic charms. On the other hand, the essence of the story, the hero's winning of a bride ringed about by flames, is strongly suggestive of parts of the Sigurth-Brynhild traditions. Whether or not it is to be regarded as a nature or solar myth depends entirely on one's view of the whole "solar myth" school of criticism, not so highly esteemed today as formerly; such an interpretation is certainly not necessary to explain what is, under any circumstances, a very charming romance told, in the main, with dramatic effectiveness.

In later years the story of Svipdag and Mengloth became popular throughout the North, and was made the subject of many Danish and Swedish as well as Norwegian ballads. These have greatly assisted in the reconstruction of the outlines of the narrative surrounding the dialogue poems here given.

Thorpe (1866)	Bellows (1936)
<p>THE INCANTATION OF GROA.</p> <p>Son 1. Wake up, Groa! wake up, good woman! At the gates of death I wake thee! If thou rememberest, that thou thy son badest To thy grave-mound to come.</p> <p>Mother 2. What now troubles my only son? With what affliction art thou burthened, That thou thy mother callest, who to dust is come, And from human homes departed?</p> <p>Son 3. A hateful game thou, crafty woman, didst set before me, Whom has my father in his bosom cherished, When thou badest me go no one knows whither, Menglod to meet.</p> <p>Mother 4. Long is the journey, long are the ways, Long are men's desires. If it so fall out, that thou thy will obtainest, The event must then be as it may.</p> <p>Son 5. Sing to me songs which are good. Mother! Protect thy son. Dead on my way I fear to be. I seem too young in years.</p> <p>Mother 6. I will sing to thee first one that is thought most useful, Which Rind sang to Ran; That from thy shoulders thou shouldst cast what to thee seems irksome: / Let thyself thyself direct.</p> <p>7. A second I will sing to thee, As thou hast to wander joyless on thy ways. May Urd's protection hold thee on every side, Where thou seest turpitude.</p>	<p>I. GROUGALDR (GROA'S SPELL)</p> <p>Svipdag spake:² 1. "Wake thee, Groa! wake, mother good! At the doors of the dead I call thee; Thy son, bethink thee, thou badst to seek Thy help at the hill of death."</p> <p>Groa spake: 2. "What evil vexes mine only son, What baleful fate hast thou found, That thou callest thy mother, who lies in the mould, And the world of the living has left?"</p> <p>Svipdag spake: 3. "The woman false whom my father embraced³ Has brought me a baleful game; For she bade me go forth where none may fare, And Mengloth the maid to seek."</p> <p>Groa spake: 4. "Long is the way, long must thou wander, But long is love as well; Thou mayst find, perchance, what thou fain wouldst have, If the fates their favor will give."</p> <p>Svipdag spake: 5. "Charms full good then chant to me, mother, And seek thy son to guard; For death do I fear on the way I shall fare, And in years am I young, methinks."</p> <p>Groa spake: 6. "Then first I will chant thee the charm oft-tried,⁴ That Rani taught to Rind;⁵ From the shoulder whate'er mislikes thee shake, For helper thyself shalt thou have.</p> <p>7. "Then next I will chant thee, if needs thou must travel, And wander a purposeless way: The bolts of Urth⁶ shall on every side Be thy guards on the road thou goest.</p>

8. A third I will sing to thee.
If the mighty rivers to thy life's peril fall,
Horn and Rud, may they flow down to Hel,
And for thee ever be diminished.

9. A fourth I will sing to thee.
If foes assail thee ready on the dangerous road,
Their hearts shall fail them, and to thee be power,
And their minds to peace be turned.

10. A fifth I will sing to thee.
If bonds be cast on thy limbs,
Friendly spells I will let on thy joints be sung,
And the lock from thy arms shall start,
[And from thy feet the fetter].

11. A sixth I will sing to thee.
If on the sea thou comest, more stormy than men have known it,
Air and water shall in a bag attend thee,
And a tranquil course afford thee.

12. A seventh I will sing to thee.
If on a mountain high frost should assail thee,
Deadly cold shall not thy carcase injure,
Nor draw thy body to thy limbs.

13. An eighth I will sing to thee.
If night overtake thee, when out on the misty way,
That the dead Christian woman
No power may have to do thee harm.

14. A ninth I will sing to thee.
If with a far-famed spear-armed Jotun thou words exchangest,
Of words and wit to thy mindful heart
Abundance shall be given.

15. Go now ever where calamity may be,
And no harm shall obstruct thy wishes.
On a stone fast in the earth I have stood within the door,
While songs I sang to thee.

16. My son! bear hence thy mother's words,
And in thy breast let them dwell;
For happiness abundant shalt thou have in life,
While of my words thou art mindful.

* * *

THE LAY OF FIOLSVITH.

1. From the outward wall he saw one ascending
To the seat of the giant race.

Fiolsvith
Along the humid ways haste thee back hence,
Here, wretch! is no place for thee.

2. What monster is it before the fore-court standing,
And hovering round the perilous flame?
Whom dost thou seek? Of what art thou in quest?
Or what, friendless being! desirest thou to know?

Wanderer

3. What monster is that, before the fore-court standing,
Who to the wayfarer offers not hospitality?
Void of honest fame, prattler! hast thou lived:
But hence hie thee home.

Fiolsvith

4. Fiolsvith is my name; wise I am of mind,
Though of food not prodigal.
Within these courts thou shalt never come:
So now, wretch! take thyself off.

8. "Then third I will chant thee, | if threatening streams
The danger of death shall bring:
Yet to Hel shall turn | both Horn and Ruth,⁷
And before thee the waters shall fail.

9. "Then fourth I will chant thee, | if come thy foes
On the gallows-way against thee:
Into thine hands | shall their hearts be given,
And peace shall the warriors wish.

10. "Then fifth I will chant thee, | if fetters perchance
Shall bind thy bending limbs:
O'er thy thighs do I chant | a loosening-charm,
And the lock is burst from the limbs,
And the fetters fall from the feet.⁸

11. "Then sixth I will chant thee, | if storms on the sea
Have might unknown to man:
Yet never shall wind | or wave do harm,
And calm is the course of thy boat.

12. "Then seventh I chant thee, | if frost shall seek
To kill thee on lofty crags:
The fatal cold | shall not grip thy flesh,
And whole thy body shall be.

13. "Then eighth will I chant thee, | if ever by night
Thou shalt wander on murky ways:
Yet never the curse | of a Christian woman⁹
From the dead shall do thee harm.

14. "Then ninth will I chant thee, | if needs thou must strive
With a warlike giant in words:
Thy heart good store | of wit shall have,
And thy mouth of words full wise.

15. "Now fare on the way | where danger waits,
Let evils not lessen thy love!
I have stood at the door | of the earth-fixed stones,
The while I chanted thee charms.

16. "Bear hence, my son, | what thy mother hath said,
And let it live in thy breast;
Thine ever shall be the | best of fortune,
So long as my words shall last."¹⁰

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II. FJOLMINNSMOL (THE LAY OF FJOLSVITH)

17.¹¹ Before the house | he beheld one coming
To the home of the giants high.

Svipdag spake:
"What giant is here, | in front of the house,
And around him fires are flaming?"

Fjolsvith spake:
18. "What seekest thou here? | for what is thy search?
What, friendless one, fain wouldst thou know?
By the ways so wet | must thou wander hence,
For, weakling, no home hast thou here."

Svipdag spake:
19. "What giant is here, | in front of the house,
To the wayfarer welcome denying?"

Fjolsvith spake:
"Greeting full fair | thou never shalt find,
So hence shalt thou get thee home.

20. "Fjolsvith am I, | and wise am I found,
But miserly am I with meat;
Thou never shalt enter | within the house,--
Go forth like a wolf on thy way!"

<p>Wanderer 5. From the eye's delight few are disposed to hurry, Where there is something pleasant to be seen. These walls, methinks, shine around golden halls. Here I could live contented with my lot.</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 21. "Few from the joy of their eyes will go forth, When the sight of their loves they seek; Full bright are the gates of the golden hall, And a home shall I here enjoy."</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 6. Tell me, youth; of whom thou art born, Or of what race hast sprung.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 22. "Tell me now, fellow, what father thou hast, And the kindred of whom thou camst."</p>
<p>Wanderer 7. Vindkald I am called, Varkald was my father named, His sire was Fiolkald.</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: "Vindkald am I, and Varkald's son, And Fjolkald his father was."¹²</p>
<p>8. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: Who here holds sway, and has power over These lands and costly halls?</p>	<p>23. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: Who is it that holds and has for his own The rule of the hall so rich?"</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 9. Menglod is her name, her mother her begat With Svaf, Thorin's son. She here holds sway, and has power over These lands and costly halls.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 24. "Mengloth is she, her mother bore her To the son of Svafrthorin;¹³ She is it that holds and has for her own The rule of the hall so rich."</p>
<p>Vindkald 10. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: What the grate is called, than which among the gods Mortals never saw a greater artifice?</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 25. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: What call they the gate? for among the gods Ne'er saw man so grim a sight."</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 11. Thrymgjoll it is called, And Solblindi's three sons constructed it: A fetter fastens, every wayfarer, Who lifts it from its opening.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 26. "Thrymgjol¹⁴ they call it; 'twas made by the three, The sons of Solblindi;¹⁵ And fast as a fetter the farer it holds, Whoever shall lift the latch."</p>
<p>Vindkald 12. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: What that structure is called, than which among the gods Mortals never saw a greater artifice?</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 27. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: What call they the house? for no man beheld 'Mongst the gods so grim a sight."</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 13. Gastropnir it is called, and I constructed it Of Leirbrimir's limbs. I have so supported it, That it will ever stand while the world lasts.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 28. "Gastropnir¹⁶ is it, of old I made it From the limbs of Leirbrimir;¹⁷ I braced it so strongly that fast it shall stand So long as the world shall last."</p>
<p>Vindkald 20. ¹ Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: What that tree is called that with its branches Spreads itself over every land?</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 29. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: What call they the tree that casts abroad Its limbs o'er every land?"</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 21. Mimameidir it is called; but few men know From what roots it springs: It by that will fall which fewest know. Nor fire nor iron will harm it.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 30. "Mimameith¹⁸ its name, and no man knows What root beneath it runs; And few can guess what shall fell the tree, For fire nor iron shall fell it."</p>
<p>Vindkald 22. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: To what the virtue is of that famed tree applied, Which nor fire nor iron will harm?</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 31. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: What grows from the seed of the tree so great, That fire nor iron shall fell?"</p>
<p>Fiolsvith 23. Its fruit shall on the fire be laid, For labouring women; Out then will pass what would in remain: So is it a creator of mankind.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 32. "Women, sick with child, shall seek Its fruit to the flames to bear; Then out shall come what within was hid, And so is it mighty with men."¹⁹</p>
<p>Vindkald 24. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee, And I desire to know: What the cock is called that sits in that lofty tree, And all-glittering is with gold?</p>	<p>Svipdag spake: 33. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, the question I ask, For now the truth would I know: What cock is he on the highest bough, That glitters all with gold?"</p>

Fiolsvith

25. Vidofnir he is called; in the clear air he stands,
In the boughs of Mima's tree:
Afflictions only brings, together indissoluble,
The swart bird at his lonely meal.

Vindkald

14. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
What those dogs are called, that chase away the giantesses,
And safety to the fields restore?

Fiolsvith

15. Gifr the one is called, the other Geri,
If thou that wouldst know.
Eleven watches they will keep,
Until the powers perish.

Vindkald

16. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether any man can enter
While those fierce assailants sleep?

Fiolsvith

17. Alternate sleep was strictly to them enjoined,
Since to the watch they were appointed.
One sleeps by night, by day the other,
So that no wight can enter if he comes.

Vindkald

18. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether there is any food that men can get,
Such that they can run in while they eat?

Fiolsvith

19. Two repasts lie in Vidofnir's wings,
If thou that wouldst know:
That is alone such food as men can give them
And run in while they eat.

Vindkald

26. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether there be any weapon,
Before which Vidofnir may fall to Hel's abode?

Fiolsvith

27. Hævatein the twig is named, and Lopt plucked it,
Down by the gate of Death.
In an iron chest it lies with Sinmoera,
And is with nine strong locks secured.

Vindkald

28. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether he will alive return, who seeks after,
And will take, that rod?

Fiolsvith

29. He will return who seeks after,
And will take, the rod,
If he bears that which few possess
To the dame of the glassy clay.

Vindkald

30. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether there is any treasure, that mortals can obtain,
At which the pale giantess will rejoice?

Fiolsvith

31. The bright sickle that lies in Vidofnir's wings,
Thou in a bag shalt bear,
And to Sinmoera give, before she will think fit
To lend an arm for conflict.

Fjolsvith spake:

34. "Vithofnir²⁰ his name, | and now he shines
Like lightning on Mimameith's limbs;
And great is the trouble | with which he grieves
Both Surt and Sinmora."²¹

Svipdag spake:

35. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What call they the hounds, | that before the house
So fierce and angry are?"²²

Fjolsvith spake:

36. "Gif call they one, | and Geri the other,
If now the truth thou wouldst know;
Great they are, | and their might will grow,
Till the gods to death are doomed."²³

Svipdag spake:

37. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
May no man hope | the house to enter,
While the hungry hounds are sleeping?"

Fjolsvith spake:

38. "Together they sleep not, | for so was it fixed
When the guard to them was given;
One sleeps by night, | the next by day,
So no man may enter ever."

Svipdag spake:

39. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
Is there no meat | that men may give them,
And leap within while they eat?"

Fjolsvith spake:

40. "Two wing-joints there be | in Vithofnir's body,
If now the truth thou wouldst know;
That alone is the meat | that men may give them,
And leap within while they eat."

Svipdag spake:

41. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What weapon can send | Vithofnir to seek
The house of Hel below?"

Fjolsvith spake:

42. "Laevatein²⁴ is there, | that Lopt²⁵ with runes
Once made by the doors of death;
In Laegjarn's²⁶ chest | by Sinmora²⁷ lies it,
And nine locks fasten it firm."

Svipdag spake:

43. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
May a man come thence, | who thither goes,
And tries the sword to take?"

Fjolsvith spake:

44. "Thence may he come | who thither goes,
And tries the sword to take,
If with him he carries | what few can win,
To give to the goddess of gold."²⁸

Svipdag spake:

45. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What treasure is there | that men may take
To rejoice the giantess pale?"

Fjolsvith spake:

46. "The sickle²⁹ bright | in thy wallet bear,
Mid Vithofnir's feathers found;
To Sinmora give it, | and then shall she grant
That the weapon by thee be won."

Vindkald

32. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
What this hall is called, which is girt round
With a curious flickering flame?

Fiolsvith

33. Hyr it is called, and it will long
Tremble as on a lance's point.
This sumptuous house shall, for ages hence,
Be but from hearsay known.

Vindkald

34. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Which of the Æsir's sons has that constructed,
Which within the court I saw?

Fiolsvith

35. Uni and Iri, Bari and Ori,
Var and Vegdrasil,
Dorri and Uri, Delling and Atvard,
Lidskialf, Loki.

Vindkald

36. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
What that mount is called, on which I see
A splendid maiden stand?

Fiolsvith

37. Hyfiaberg 'tis called, and long has it a solace been
To the bowed-down and sorrowful:
Each woman becomes healthy,
Although a year's disease she have, if she can but ascend it.

Vindkald

38. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
How those maids are called, who sit at Menglod's knees
In harmony together?

Fiolsvith

39. Hlif the first is called, the second is Hlifthursa,
The third Thiodvarta,
Biort and Blid, Blidr, Frid,
Eir and Orboda.

Vindkald

40. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether they protect those who offer to them,
If it should be needful?

Fiolsvith

41. Every summer in which men offer to them,
At the holy place,
No pestilence so great shall come to the sons of men,
But they will free each from peril.

Vindkald

42. Tell me, Fiolsvith! that which I will ask thee,
And I desire to know:
Whether there is any man that may
In Menglod's soft arms sleep?

Fiolsvith

43. There is no man who may
In Menglod's soft arms sleep,
Save only Svipdag;
To him the sun-bright maid is for wife betrothed.

Vindkald

44. Set the doors open! Let the gate stand wide;
Here thou mayest Svipdag see;
But yet go learn if Menglod
Will accept my love.

Svipdag spake:

47. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What call they the hall, | encompassed here
With flickering magic flames?"

Fjolsvith spake:

48. "Lyr³⁰ is it called, | and long it shall
On the tip of a spear-point tremble;
Of the noble house | mankind has heard,
But more has it never known."

Svipdag spake:

49. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What one of the gods | has made so great
The hall I behold within?"

Fjolsvith spake:

50. "Uni and Iri, | Bari and Jari,
Var and Vegdrasil,
Dori and Ori, | Delling, and there
Was Loki, the fear of the folk."³¹

Svipdag spake:

51. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What call they the mountain | on which the maid
Is lying so lovely to see?"

Fjolsvith spake:

52. "Lyfjaberg³² is it, | and long shall it be
A joy to the sick and the sore;
For well shall grow | each woman who climbs it,
Though sick full long she has lain."

Svipdag spake:

53. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
What maidens are they | that at Mengloth's knees
Are sitting so gladly together?"

Fjolsvith spake:

54. "Hlif is one named, | Hlifthrasa another,
Thjothvara call they the third;
Bjort and Bleik, | Blith and Frith,
Eir and Aurbotha."³³

Svipdag spake:

55.³⁴ "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
Aid bring they to all | who offerings give,
If need be found therefor?"

Fjolsvith spake:

56. "Soon aid they all | who offerings give³⁵
On the holy altars high;
And if danger they see | for the sons of men,
Then each from ill do they guard."

Svipdag spake:

57. "Now answer me, Fjolsvith, | the question I ask,
For now the truth would I know:
Lives there the man | who in Mengloth's arms
So fair may seek to sleep?"

Fjolsvith spake:

58. "No man there is | who in Mengloth's arms
So fair may seek to sleep,
Save Svipdag alone, | for the sun-bright maid
Is destined his bride to be."

Svipdag spake:

59. "Fling back the gates! | make the gateway wide!
Here mayst thou Svipdag see!
Hence get thee to find | if gladness soon
Mengloth to me will give."

<p>Fiolsvith 45. Hear, Menglod! A man is hither come: Go and behold the stranger; The dogs rejoice; the house has itself opened. I think it must be Svipdag.</p> <p>Menglod 46. Fierce ravens shall, on the high gallows, Tear out thy eyes, if thou art lying, That hither from afar is come The youth unto my halls.</p> <p>47. Whence art thou come? Whence hast thou journeyed? How do thy kindred call thee? Of thy race and name I must have a token, If I was betrothed to thee.</p> <p>Svipdag 48. Svipdag I am named, Solbiart was my father named; Thence the winds on the cold ways drove me. Urd's decree may no one gainsay, However lightly uttered.</p> <p>Menglod 49. Welcome thou art: my will I have obtained; Greeting a kiss shall follow. A sight unlooked-for gladdens most persons, When one the other loves.</p> <p>50. Long have I sat on my loved hill, Day and night expecting thee. Now that is come to pass which I have hoped, That thou, dear youth, again to my halls art come.</p> <p>Svipdag 51. Longing I have undergone for thy love; And thou, for my affection. Now it is certain, That we shall pass our lives together.</p>	<p>Fjolsvith spake: 60. "Hearken, Mengloth, a man is come; Go thou the guest to see! The hounds are fawning, the house bursts open,-- Svipdag, methinks, is there."</p> <p>Mengloth spake: 61. "On the gallows high shall hungry ravens Soon thine eyes pluck out, If thou liest in saying that here at last The hero is come to my hall.</p> <p>62. "Whence camest thou hither? how camest thou here? What name do thy kinsmen call thee? Thy race and thy name as a sign must I know, That thy bride I am destined to be."</p> <p>Svipdag spake: 63. "Svipdag am I, and Solbjart's son;³⁶ Thence came I by wind-cold ways; With the words of Urth³⁷ shall no man war, Though unearned her gifts be given."</p> <p>Mengloth spake: 64. "Welcome thou art, for long have I waited; The welcoming kiss shalt thou win! For two who love is the longed-for meeting The greatest gladness of all.</p> <p>65. "Long have I sat on Lyfjaberg³⁸ here, Awaiting thee day by day; And now I have what I ever hoped, For here thou art come to my hall.</p> <p>66. "Alike we yearned; I longed for thee, And thou for my love hast longed; But now henceforth together we know Our lives to the end we shall live."</p>
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¹ [Thorpe transposes five stanzas here – compiler's note]

² Svipdag ("Swift Day"): the names of the speakers are lacking in the manuscripts.

³ The woman: Svipdag's stepmother, who is responsible for his search for Mengloth ("Necklace-Glad"). This name has suggested that Mengloth is really Frigg, possessor of the famous Brisings' necklace, or else Freyja (cf. *Lokasenna*, 20: note).

⁴ For this catalogue of charms (stanzas 6-14) cf. the *Ljothatal* (*Hovamol*, 147-165).

⁵ Rani and Rind: the manuscripts, have these words in inverse relation; I have followed Neckel's emendation. Rind was the giantess who became the mother of Vali, Othin's son, the one-night-old avenger of Baldr (cf. *Voluspo*, 33-34, and *Baldrs Draumar*, 11 and note). Rani is presumably Othin, who, according to a skaldic poem, won Rind by magic.

⁶ Urth: one of the three Norns, or Fates; Cf. *Voluspo*, 20.

⁷ Horn and Ruth: these two rivers, here used merely to symbolize all dangerous streams, are not included in the catalogue of rivers given in *Grimnismol*, 27-29, for which reason some editors have changed the names to Hron and Hrith.

⁸ This stanza is a close parallel to *Hovamol*, 150, and the fifth line may well be an interpolation from line 4 of that stanza.

⁹ A dead Christian woman: this passage has distressed many editors, who have sought to emend the text so as to make it mean simply "a dead witch." The fact seems to be, however, that this particular charm was composed at a time when Christians were regarded by all conservative pagans as emissaries of darkness. A dead woman's curse would naturally be more potent, whether she was Christian or otherwise, than a living one's. Presumably this charm is much older than the poem in which it here stands.

¹⁰ At this point Groa's song ends, and Svipdag, thus fortified, goes to seek Mengloth. All the link that is needed between the poems is approximately this: "Then Svipdag searched long Mengloth, and at last he came to a great house set all about with flames. And before the house there was a giant."

¹¹ Most editors have here begun a new series of stanza numbers, but if the *Grougaldr* and the *Fjolsvinnsmol* are to be considered as a single poem, it seems more reasonable to continue the stanza numbers consecutively. Bugge thinks a stanza has been lost before 17, including Fjolsvith's name, so that the "he" in line 1 might have something to refer to. However, just such a prose link as I have suggested in the note on stanza 16 would serve the purpose. Editors have suggested various rearrange merits in the lines of stanzas 17-19. The substance, however, is clear enough. The giant Fjolsvith ("Much-Wise"), the warder of the house in which Mengloth dwells, sees Svipdag coming and stops him with the customary threats. The assignment of the speeches in stanzas 17-20, in the absence of any indications in the manuscripts, is more or less guesswork.

¹² Vindkald ("Wind-Cold"), Varkald ("Cold of Early Spring") and Fjolkald ("Much Cold"): Svipdag apparently seeks to persuade Fjolsvith that he belongs to the frost giants.

¹³ Svafnrthorin: who he was, or what his name means, or who his son was, are all unknown.

¹⁴ Thrymgjol ("Loud-Clanging"): this gate, like the gate of the dead, shuts so fast as to trap those who attempt to use it (cf. *Sigurtharkvitha en skamma*, 68 and note).

¹⁵ It was made by the dwarfs, sons of Solblindi ("Sun-Blinded"), the traditional crafts men, who could not endure the light of day.

¹⁶ Gastropnir: "Quest-Crusher."

¹⁷ Leirbrimir's ("Clay-Giant's") limbs: a poetic circumlocution for "clay"; cf. the description of the making of earth from the body of the giant Ymir, *Vafthruthnismol*, 21.

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- ¹⁸ Mimameith ("Mimir's Tree"): the ash Yggdrasil, that overshadows the whole world. The well of Mimir was situated at its base; cf. *Voluspo*, 27-29.
- ¹⁹ Gering suggests that two stanzas have been lost between stanzas 31 and 32, but the giant's answer fits the question quite well enough. The fruit of Yggdrasil, when cooked, is here assumed to have the power of assuring safe childbirth.
- ²⁰ Vithofnir ("Tree-Snake"): apparently identical with either the cock Gollinkambi (cf. *Voluspo*, 43) or Fjalar (cf. *Voluspo*, 42), the former of which wakes the gods to battle, and the latter the giants.
- ²¹ Surt: the giant mentioned in *Voluspo*, 52, as ruler of the fire-world; here used to represent the giants in general, who are constantly in terror of the cock's eternal watchfulness. Sinmora: presumably Surt's wife, the giantess who possesses the weapon by which alone the cock Vithofnir may be slain.
- ²² The last two lines have been variously emended.
- ²³ Gif and Geri: both names signify "Greedy." The first part of line 3 is conjectural; the manuscripts indicate the word "eleven," which clearly fails to make sense.
- ²⁴ Laevetein ("Wounding Wand"): the manuscripts differ as to the form of this name. The suggestion that the reference is to the mistletoe with which Baldr was killed seems hardly reasonable.
- ²⁵ Lopt: Loki.
- ²⁶ Laegjarn ("Lover of Ill"): Loki; cf. *Voluspo*, 35, where the term appears as an adjective applied to Loki. This is Falk's emendation for the manuscripts' "Saegjarn," meaning "Sea Lover."
- ²⁷ Sinmora: cf. stanza 34.
- ²⁸ Goddess of gold: poetic circumlocution for "woman," here meaning Sinmora.
- ²⁹ Sickle: i.e., tail feather. With this the circle of impossibilities is completed. To get past the dogs, they must be fed with the wing-joints of the cock Vithofnir; the cock can be killed only with the sword in Sinmora's possession, and Sinmora will give up the sword only in return for the tail feather of the cock.
- ³⁰ Lyr ("Heat-Holding"): just what the spear-point reference means is not altogether clear. Presumably it refers to the way in which the glowing brightness of the lofty hall makes it seem to quiver and turn in the air, but the tradition, never baffled by physical laws, may have actually balanced the whole building on a single point to add to the difficulties of entrance.
- ³¹ Loki, the one god named, was the builder of the hall, with the aid of the nine dwarfs. Jari, Dori, and Ori appear in the *Voluspo* catalogue of the dwarfs (stanzas 13 and 15); Delling appears in *Hovamol*, 161, and *Vafthruthnismol*, 25, in the latter case, however, the name quite possibly referring to someone else. The other dwarfs' names do not appear elsewhere. The manuscripts differ as to the forms of many of these names.
- ³² Lyfjaberg ("Hill of Healing"): the manuscripts vary as to this name; I have followed Bugge's suggestion. This stanza implies that Mengloth is a goddess of healing, and hence, perhaps, an hypostasis of Frigg, as already intimated by her name (cf. stanza 3, note). In stanza 54 Eir appears as one of Mengloth's handmaidens, and Eir, according to Snorri (*Gylfaginning*, 35) is herself the Norse Hygeia. Compare this stanza with stanza 32.
- ³³ The manuscripts and editions show many variations in these names. They may be approximately rendered thus: Helper, Help-Breather, Folk-Guardian, Shining, White, Blithe, Peaceful, Kindly (?), and Gold-Giver.
- ³⁴ One of the manuscripts omits stanzas 55 and 56.
- ³⁵ The first line is based on a conjectural emendation.
- ³⁶ Solbjart ("Sun-Bright"): not elsewhere mentioned.
- ³⁷ The words of Urth: i.e., the decrees of fate; cf. stanza 7.
- ³⁸ Lyfjaberg cf. stanza 52 and note.