

## Easy Old Norse, from Snorri Sturluson's *Gylfaginning*, chapter 49: Hermóðr rides to Hel

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(For translation and an MP3 of Hildur Jónsdóttir reading the text out, see <http://www.asnc.cam.ac.uk/spokenword/ONword.htm>).

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| <p>En þat er at segja frá Hermóði at hann reið níu nætr dökkva dala ok djúpa svá at hann sá ekki fyrr en hann kom til árinna Gjallar ok reið á Gjallar brúna. Hon er þokð lýsigulli. Móðguðr er nefnd mæsr sú er gætir brúarinnar. Hon spurði hann at nafni eða ætt ok sagði at hinn fyrra dag riðu um brúna fimm fylki dauðra manna,</p>  | <p><i>en</i> 'but, and'; <i>þat</i> 'that, it'; <i>er</i> 'is'; <i>at segja</i> 'to say'; <i>frá</i> 'from, about'; <i>Hermóði</i> dative of <i>Hermóðr</i>, one of the gods; <i>at</i> 'that'; <i>hann</i> 'he, him'; <i>reið</i> 'rode' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>ríða</i>); <i>níu</i> 'nine'; <i>nætr</i> 'nights' (accusative plural of <i>nótt</i>); <i>dökkva</i> 'dark' (accusative plural of <i>dökk</i>); <i>dala</i> 'valleys' (accusative plural of <i>dalr</i>); <i>ok</i> 'and'; <i>djúpa</i> 'deep' (accusative plural of <i>djúpr</i>); <i>svá at</i> 'so that'; <i>sá</i> 'saw' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>sjá</i>); <i>ekki</i> 'not'; <i>fyrr en</i> 'before'; <i>kom</i> 'came' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>koma</i>); <i>til</i> 'to'; <i>árinna</i> 'the river' (genitive [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>á in</i>); <i>Gjallar</i> genitive of <i>Gjöll</i>, the river separating the world of the living from the dead; <i>á</i> 'on'; <i>brúna</i> 'the bridge' (accusative singular of <i>brú n</i>). <i>Hon</i> 'she'; <i>þokð</i> 'roofed' (past participle from <i>þekja</i> 'to roof, thatch'); <i>lýsigulli</i> '(with) shining gold' (dative of <i>lýsigull</i> 'shining gold'); <i>Móðguðr</i> a personal name; <i>nefnd</i> 'named' (past participle of <i>nefna</i> 'to name'); <i>mæsr sú er</i> 'that maiden who'; <i>gætir</i> 'guards' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>gæta</i>); <i>brúarinnar</i> 'the bridge' (genitive singular [<i>gæta</i> takes the genitive], of <i>brú n</i>). <i>Spurði</i> 'asked' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> singular of <i>spyrja</i>); <i>hann at nafni</i> 'him about [his] name'; <i>eða</i> 'or'; <i>ætt</i> 'lineage'; <i>sagði</i> 'said' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> singular of <i>segja</i>); <i>hinn fyrra dag</i> 'the day before'; <i>riðu</i> 'rode' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> plural of <i>ríða</i>); <i>um</i> 'around, across'; <i>fimm</i> 'five', <i>fylki</i> 'battalions' (nominative plural of <i>fylki</i>); <i>dauðra manna</i> 'of dead people' (genitive plural of <i>dauðr maðr</i> 'dead person')</p>   |
| <p>"En eigi dynr brúin minnr undir einum þér ok eigi hefir þú lit dauðra manna. Hví ríðr þú hér á Helveg?"</p>   | <p><i>eigi</i> 'no, none, not'; <i>dynr</i> 'resound' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> singular of <i>dynja</i>); <i>brú n</i> 'the bridge'; <i>minnr</i> 'less'; <i>undir</i> 'under'; <i>einum þér</i> 'you alone' (dative singular [<i>undir</i> takes the dative] of <i>einn þú</i>); <i>hefir</i> 'has' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>þú</i> 'you' (singular); <i>lit</i> 'appearance' (accusative of <i>lit</i>). <i>Hví</i> 'why'; <i>ríðr</i> 'ride' (present 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular of <i>ríða</i>); <i>hér</i> 'here'; <i>Helveg</i> accusative of <i>Helveg</i> 'the Hel-road'.</p>  |
| <p>Hann svarar at "ek skal ríða til Heljar at leita Baldrs. Eða hvárt hefir þú nakkvat sét Baldr á Helvegi?"</p>   | <p><i>svavar</i> at 'replies that' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>svara</i>); <i>ek</i> 'I'; <i>skal</i> 'must' (present 1<sup>st</sup> person singular of <i>skulu</i>); <i>Heljar</i> genitive [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Hel</i> 'Hell/the Goddess Hel'; <i>at leita</i> 'to look for'; <i>Baldrs</i> 'Baldr's', genitive [<i>leita</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Baldr</i>, one of the gods; <i>hvárt</i> 'whether; interrogative particle'; <i>nakkvat</i> 'anything'; <i>sét</i> 'seen' (past participle of <i>sjá</i> 'see'); <i>Baldr</i> accusative of <i>Baldr</i>; <i>Helvegi</i> dative [<i>á</i> takes the dative] of <i>Helveg</i>.</p>  |
| <p>En hon sagði at Baldr hafði þar riðit um Gjallar brú, "en niðr ok norðr liggir Helvegr."</p>  | <p><i>hafði</i> 'had' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>þar</i> 'there'; <i>riðit</i> 'ridden' (past participle of <i>ríða</i>); <i>niðr</i> 'downwards'; <i>norðr</i> 'northwards'; <i>liggir</i> 'lies' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>liggja</i>).</p>  |
| <p>Þá reið Hermóðr þar til er hann kom at Helgrindum. Þá sté hann af hestinum ok gyrði hann fast, steig upp ok keyrði hann sporum. En hestrinn hljóp svá hart ok yfir grindina at hann kom hvergi nær. Þá reið Hermóðr heim til hallarinnar ok steig af hesti, gekk inn í höllina, sá þar sitja í öndugi Baldr bróður sinn, ok dvalðisk Hermóðr þar um nóttina. En at morni þá beiddisk Hermóðr af Helju at Baldr skyldi ríða heim með honum ok sagði hversu mikill grátr var með Ásum. En Hel sagði at þat skyldi svá reyna</p> | <p><i>Þá</i> 'then'; <i>er</i> 'where'; <i>at</i> 'to'; <i>Helgrindum</i> dative plural of <i>Helgrindr</i> 'the Hell-gates'. <i>Sté</i> 'stepped' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>af</i> 'off, from'; <i>hesti num</i> 'the horse' (dative singular of <i>hestri inn</i>); <i>gyrði</i> 'tighten the saddle on a horse' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>gyrða</i>); <i>fast</i> 'firmly'; <i>steig upp</i> 'stepped up' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>keyrði</i> 'drove' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>keyra</i>); <i>sporum</i> 'with spurs' (dative plural of <i>spori</i>). <i>Hestri inn</i> 'the horse'; <i>hljóp</i> 'leaped' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>hlaupa</i>); <i>hart</i> 'hard, forcefully'; <i>yfir</i> 'over'; <i>grind ina</i> 'the gate' (accusative singular of <i>grind in</i>); <i>hvergi</i> 'never, nowhere'; <i>nær</i> 'near'. <i>Heim</i> 'home, homewards'; <i>hallar innar</i> 'the hall' (genitive singular [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>høll in</i>); <i>steig</i> 'stepped' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>stíga</i>); <i>gekk</i> 'walked' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>ganga</i>); <i>inn i</i> 'into'; <i>høll ina</i> 'the hall' (accusative singular of <i>høll in</i>); <i>sitja i</i> 'sit in'; <i>öndugi</i> 'seat of honour' (dative [<i>i</i> usually takes the dative] of <i>öndugi</i>); <i>bróður</i> 'brother'; <i>sinn</i> 'his (own)'; <i>dvalðisk</i> 'stayed' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>dveljask</i>); <i>um nótt ina</i> 'for the night' (accusative of <i>nótt in</i>). <i>At morni</i> 'in the morning' (dative of <i>morgunn</i>); <i>beiddisk</i> 'requested' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>beiðask</i>); <i>Helju</i> dative [<i>af</i> takes the dative] of <i>Hel</i>, the name of a goddess; <i>skyldi</i> 'must' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjunctive from <i>skulu</i>); <i>með</i> 'with, among'; <i>honum</i> 'him' (dative [<i>með</i> takes the dative] singular of <i>hann</i>); <i>hversu</i> 'how'; <i>mikill</i> 'great'; <i>grátr</i> 'weeping'; <i>var</i> 'was' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> singular from <i>vera</i>); <i>Ásum</i> dative plural [<i>með</i> takes the dative] of <i>Ás</i> '(pagan) god'. <i>Reyna</i> 'test, prove';</p> |

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| <p>hvárt Baldr var svá ástsæll sem sagt er,</p>  | <p><i>hvárt</i> 'whether'; <i>ástsæll</i> 'beloved'; <i>sem</i> 'as'; <i>sagt</i> 'said' (past participle of <i>segja</i>); <i>er</i> 'is'.</p>   |
| <p>"Ok ef allir hlutir í heiminum, kykvir ok dauðir, gráta hann, þá skal hann fara til Ása aptr, en haldask með Helju ef nakkvarr mælir við eða vill eigi gráta."</p>  | <p><i>Ef</i> 'if'; <i>allir</i> 'all' (plural of <i>allr</i>); <i>hlutir</i> 'things'; <i>heimi num</i> 'the world(s)' (dative plural of <i>heimr</i>); <i>kykvir</i> 'alive' (plural of <i>kykr</i>); <i>dauðir</i> 'dead' (plural of <i>dauðr</i>); <i>gráta</i> 'weep (for)' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>gráta</i>); <i>fara</i> 'travel'; <i>Ása</i> genitive plural [<i>til</i> takes the genitive] of <i>Ás</i> 'pagan god'; <i>aptr</i> 'back'; <i>haldask</i> 'remain, be kept'; <i>nakkvarr</i> 'any'; <i>mælir</i> 'speaks' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>mæla</i>); <i>við</i> 'against'; <i>vill</i> 'desires' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> singular verb from <i>vilja</i>)</p>   |
| <p>Þá stóð Hermóðr upp, en Baldr leiðir hann út ór hollinni ok tók hringinn Draupni ok sendi Óðni til minja, en Nanna sendi Frigg ripti ok enn fleiri gjafar; Fullu fingrgull. Þá reið Hermóðr aptr leið sína ok kom í Ásgarð ok sagði ǫll tíðindi þau er hann hafði sét ok heyrtr.</p>  | <p><i>Stóð</i> 'stood' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>standa</i>); <i>upp</i> 'up'; <i>leiðir</i> 'leads' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>leiða</i>); <i>út</i> 'out'; <i>ór</i> 'out from'; <i>holl inni</i> 'the hall' (dative [<i>ór</i> takes the dative] of <i>holl in</i>); <i>tók</i> 'took' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>taka</i>); <i>hring inn</i> 'the arm-ring' (accusative of <i>hringr inn</i>); <i>Draupni</i> accusative singular of Draupnir, the name of an arm-ring; <i>sendi</i> 'sent' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular from <i>senda</i>); <i>Óðni</i> dative singular of Óðinn, the name of a god (meaning 'to Óðinn'); <i>til minja</i> 'as a reminder' (genitive plural of plural noun <i>minjar</i>); <i>Nanna Baldr's</i> wife; <i>Frigg Óðin's</i> wife (dative of <i>Frigg</i>); <i>ripti</i> 'linen' (accusative of <i>ripti</i>); <i>enn</i> 'still, yet'; <i>fleiri gjafar</i> 'more gifts' (genitive singular of <i>gjǫf</i>); <i>Fullu</i> dative of Fulla, a goddess; <i>fingrgull</i> 'gold ring' (accusative of <i>fingrgull</i>); <i>Leið</i> 'way, journey' (accusative of <i>leið</i>); <i>sína</i> 'his'; <i>í Ásgarð</i> 'into Ásgarðr'; <i>ǫll tíðindi þau</i> 'all those tidings'; <i>er</i> 'which'; <i>sét</i> 'seen' (past participle of <i>sjá</i>); <i>heyrtr</i> 'heard' (past participle of <i>heyra</i>)</p>  |
| <p>Því næst sendu Æsir um allan heim ǫrindreka at biðja at Baldr væri grátinn ór Helju. En allir gerðu þat, menninir ok kykvendin ok jǫrðin ok steinarnir ok tré ok allr málmr, svá sem þú munt sét hafa at þessir hlutir gráta þá er þeir koma ór frosti ok í hita. Þá er sendimenn fóru heim ok hǫfðu vel rekit sín eyrindi, finna þeir í helli nokkvorum hvar gýgr sat. Hon nefndisk þökk. Þeir biðja hana gráta Baldr ór Helju. Hon segir:</p> | <p><i>Því næst</i> 'next'; <i>sendu</i> 'sent' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>senda</i>); <i>Æsir</i> plural of <i>Ás</i> 'pagan god'; <i>um allan heim</i> 'around the whole world' (accusative singular of <i>allr heimr</i>); <i>ǫrindreka</i> 'messengers' (accusative plural of <i>ǫrindreki</i>); <i>biðja</i> 'request'; <i>væri</i> 'might be' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjunctive of <i>vera</i>); <i>grátinn</i> 'wept' (past participle of <i>gráta</i>); <i>Gerðu</i> 'did' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>gera</i>); <i>menni nir</i> 'the people' (plural of <i>maðr inn</i>); <i>kykvendi n</i> 'the living'; <i>jǫrð in</i> 'the earth'; <i>steinar nir</i> 'the stones' (plural of <i>steinn inn</i>); <i>tré</i> 'wood'; <i>allr</i> 'all'; <i>málmr</i> 'metal'; <i>svá sem þú munt sét hafa</i> 'just as you will have seen'; <i>þessir</i> 'these' (plural of <i>þetta</i>); <i>hlutir</i> 'things'; <i>þá er</i> 'when'; <i>þeir</i> 'they'; <i>koma</i> 'come' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural from <i>koma</i>); <i>frosti</i> 'frost' (dative [<i>ór</i> takes the dative] of <i>frost</i>); <i>hita</i> 'heat' (accusative of <i>hiti</i>); <i>Sendimenn</i> 'messengers' (plural of <i>sendimaðr</i>); <i>fóru</i> 'travelled' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>fara</i>); <i>hǫfðu vel rekit</i> 'had fulfilled well'; <i>sín</i> 'their'; <i>eyrindi</i> 'errand' (accusative of <i>eyrindi</i>); <i>finna</i> 'find' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>finna</i>); <i>helli nokkvorum</i> 'a certain cave' (dative of <i>hellir nokkvorr</i>); <i>hvar</i> 'where'; <i>gýgr</i> 'female troll, witch'; <i>sat</i> 'sat' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>sitja</i>); <i>Nefndisk</i> 'was named' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> singular of <i>nefna</i>); <i>þökk</i> personal name but as a common noun meaning 'thanks'; <i>Hana</i> 'her' (accusative singular of <i>hon</i>); <i>Segir</i> 'says' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>segja</i>)</p> |
| <p>"Þökk mun gráta þurrum tárur Baldrs bálfarar. Kyks né dauðs nautka ek karls sonar; haldi Hel því er hefir."</p>   | <p><i>Mun</i> 'will' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>munu</i>); <i>þurrum</i> 'dry' (dative plural of <i>þurr</i>); <i>tárum</i> 'tears' (dative plural of <i>tár</i>); <i>bálfarar</i> 'cremation (literally 'fire-journey')' (genitive of <i>bálfǫr</i>); <i>Kyks</i> 'alive' (genitive of <i>kykr</i>, agreeing with <i>sonar</i>); <i>dauðs</i> 'dead' (genitive of <i>dauðr</i>, agreeing with <i>sonar</i>); <i>naut k a</i> 'I did not enjoy, I did not get any profit from' (special weird poetic verb form from <i>njóta</i>); <i>karls</i> 'man's' (genitive of <i>karl</i>); <i>sonar</i> 'son' (genitive [<i>njóta</i> takes the genitive] of <i>sonr</i>); <i>haldi</i> 'may hold' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjunctive of <i>halda</i>); <i>því er</i> 'that which'.</p>   |
| <p>En þess geta menn at þar hafi verit Loki Laufeyjarson er flest hefir illt gert með Ásum.</p>  | <p><i>Þess</i> 'about that' (genitive singular of <i>sá</i> 'that'); <i>geta</i> 'reckon' (present 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural of <i>geta</i>); <i>hafi</i> 'would have' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular subjunctive of <i>hafa</i>); <i>verit</i> 'been' (past participle of <i>vera</i>); <i>er</i> 'who'; <i>flest</i> 'most'; <i>hefir</i> 'has' (past 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of <i>hafa</i>); <i>illt</i> 'evil' (substantive adjective from <i>illr</i> 'bad'); <i>gert</i> 'done' (past participle from <i>gera</i>).</p>  |