

Master Stonnehew's Saga

I ask to be heard
Here Stonnehew I laud

an ode I devise,
sing boldly his praise.

New-found with the Welsh
In Madoc's first mead-hall

this Viking and scald-man,
he conquered completely.

He also did vanquish
His tentacled saga

both *hiti* and sea-beast,
long winded, triumphant.

First crafter in metal
Bent iron to purpose

his *hjalm* for the war-band,
grym-visaged, his head-piece.

His magicks would fashion
His word-fame enlarged it

the dread *humarr klō* hand,
to full-body armour.

All weapons were ready,
His Dread-sword unlimbered

defending kin's home-halls,
this, foul fire-wyrm slayer.

In Ymir's Vale he strode forth,
To save his Knight's person,

full heedless of Thor's wrath,
drawn forth from dread Freyr's tears.

At forge-side in Yorvik,
To craft the fine *silfr*,

he rang the hard-hammer,
to fashion the Danegeld.

And ever the warrior
Shield-locked with wild Loki,

some called Steinharr Bludaxe,
on *all* fields of battle.

In final pitched life-fights
Risked all at the hazard,

this hearth-mate and father,
his home-hall defending.

Beside him, his life-mate,
In life's final chapter,

his lady, his heart's blood,
His steadfast shield-maiden.

So now, let us praise him
His place among heroes

at Bifrost's last crossing,
at Valhalla's mead-feast.

Ædwardus fecit

12-30-14, A.S. XLIX

With love to a Squire-Brother gone on before us, Master Stonnehew Houtsson of Red Oak by Whitby, formerly of Thingwauld

Notes

Anglo-Saxon style poetry is alliterative style rather than a rhyming one; that is, the structure is based on repeating consonant sounds. Lines are divided into two half-lines separated by a slight pause (often shown either as an exaggerated space or two lines).

For more information, download the Anglo Saxon Poetry Guide located here:

<http://www.gemyndeseld.net/stories-by-the-hearth.html>

*n.b. This verse borrows from **Egil's Saga**, the 9th century Icelandic tale of Egil Skallgrímsson's odyssey from Norway to Iceland. The first two lines are a reworking of two lines from Chapter 60, and employ the skaldic meter known as Runnhunt.*

2nd stanza: set-up for the third, speaking of Madoc's first event, a revel at Emmanuel Episcopal on Sahmain in 1976. There were two dozen or so in attendance. The two pictures I sent along of Stonehew in furs and face-paint are from that event.



3rd stanza: in the first Madoc Bardic Circle, Stonehew launched into his tale of his vanquishing of the Kraken, a tale which grew in the telling. And then grew some more. And then, grew a bit more. And still a bit more..... The hit reference is to the moment in the evening when someone observed that it was good on Sahmain to jump a candle flame, so that demons would not follow you. It was suggested that we could put a candle upon the floor, when Stonehew opined, "Well, you *could* do it that way.....", whereupon a few stalwarts proceeded to jump the candle still on the table.



4th stanza: the helm referred to here was the first crafted in Madoc. Its cow-catcher visor can be glimpsed in one of the pictures sent along, as can his second helm, complete with nasal and horns, in a second black and white.



5th stanza: *humarr klo* is 'lobster claw', the first gauntlet crafted in Madoc, and a mickle fine club in a pinch, at 5 or so pounds..... You can see the armourer wearing it in my favorite Houston picture of those sent along....



6th stanza: reference here to a ribald encounter at a late-night party at our old Lumpkin St. keep, this in the days of us upstairs, Dylan and Orlando downstairs, and a tiresome neighbor nearby, who would receive comeuppance from a wrath Stonnehew. Details? Ask someone who was there.....<G>.....

7th stanza: reference to Giant's Dance, an event in eastern Tennessee on June 1, 1991. Friday had seen a frog-strangler of a downpour all along that portion of the Southern Appalachians, and Stonnehew and Orlando had arrived on site in the wee small hours, pitching their tent right across the drainage swale for that part of the holler. He summoned the Duc from a bubbly slumber by whispering "Your garb....it's in danger!"

8th stanza: While in York, he took the opportunity to hand-strike several pennies in silver, one of which he gifted to me. It is among my most precious possessions.

9th stanza: A salute to his wild heart and battle frenzy, whether on the SCA Field of Honour, a martial arts dojo, a skirmish line with the 42nd Georgia, or in the fight of his life with cancer.

10th stanza: His greatest fight, his final fight.

11th stanza: At the end, his Lady and love was with him.

1st and 12th stanzas frame the piece, and call for raised horns and voices in Stonnehew's memory.