
SONG OF THE SHIELD WALL

(Six hundred years of Saxon history in 3:10)

Hasten, oh sea-steed, over the swan road,
Foamy-necked ship o'er the froth of the sea.
For Hengest has called us from Gotland and Frisia,
To Vortigern's country, his army to be.

We'll take our pay there in sweeter than silver,
We'll take our plunder in richer than gold,
For Hengest has promised us land for the fighting,
Land for the sons of the Saxons to hold!

Hasten, oh fyrdmen, down to the river,
Dragon ships come on the inflowing tide,
The linden-wood shield and the old spear of ash wood
Are needed again by the cold waterside.

Draw up the shield wall, O shoulder-companions,
Later whenever our story is told,
They'll say that we died holding what we call dearest,
Land that the sons of the Saxons will hold.

Hasten, oh huscarls, north to the Danelaw,
Harold Hardrada's come over the sea.
His longships he's laden with Berserks from Norway,
To claim Canute's crown and our master to be.

Bitter he'll find there the bite of our spearpoints,
Hard-ruling Northmen too strong to die old,
We'll grant him six feet, plus as much as he's taller,
of land that the sons of the Saxons will hold.

Make haste, son of Godwin, southward from Stamford,
Triumph is sweet and your men have fought hard,
But William the Bastard has landed at Pevensey,
Burning the land you have promised to guard.

Draw up the spears on a hilltop at Hastings,
Fight till the sun drops and evening grows cold,
And die with the last of your Saxons around you,
Holding the land you were given to hold.

Words: Malkin Grey
Music: Peregrynne Windrider

RAVEN BANNER

Sigurd, the Jarl of the Orkney Isles,
Has called to his banner a viking band,
And sailed to Dublin to make himself
King of the Irish lands.

But Crowns are never so quickly won,
The Norns, they well know--
The King of the Irish blocks our way.
We must to battle go.

The raven banner of the Orkney Jarl
Brings luck in battle, but the bearer dies.
Two men have fallen 'neath its wings today,
But still the raven flies.

The Jarl tells a third man to take it up;
The third man answers "No!"
"The devil's your own, take it up yourself,
"And back to battle go."

"'Tis fitting the beggar should bear the bag,"
Replies the Jarl, "And I'll do so here."
He fought with the banner tied 'round his waist
And fell to an Irish spear.

He died and the Irish broke our line.
We had no chance but flight.
But I'm not hurried, it's a long way home.
We won't get there tonight.

The Norns have woven a bloody web,
A tapestry made of guts and bone,
And parceled it out to the Orkney host--
Our day in Ireland's done.

The grey wolf howls and the raven soars
Above the arrow's flight.
And Odin is waiting beyond the fray
For some of us tonight.

Words: Malkin Grey
Music: Peregrynne Windrider

KNIGHT'S LEAP

A Legend of Altenahr

Now the foemen are burning the gate, men of mine,
And the water is spent and gone?
Then bring me a cup of the red Ahr-wine,
I'll never drink but this one.

And bring my harness, and saddle my horse,
And lead him 'round by the door;
He must take such a leap tonight, perforce,
As a horse never took before.

(Chorus)

I have fought my fight, I've lived my life,
I have drunk my share of wine;
From Trieste to Cologne 'twas never a knight
Led a merrier life than mine!

Well, I've lived in the saddle for years two-score,
And if I must die on a tree
This old saddle-bow that bore me of yore
Is the only timber for me.

Now, to show to Bishop, to Burgher, to Priest
How the Altenahr hawk can die,
If they smoke the old falcon out of his nest,
He will take to his wings and fly.

CHORUS

So he harnessed himself in the pale moonlight
And he mounted his horse at the door.
Then he drank such a cup of the red Ahr-wine
As a man never drank before.

Then he spurred his old war-horse, held him tight
And leaped him over the wall
Out over the cliff, out into the night
Three hundred feet of fall.

CHORUS

He was found next morning in the glen below
With not one bone in him whole.
Say a mass or a prayer, good travellers all,
For such a bold rider's soul!

CHORUS

Words: Charles Kingsley
Music: Leslie Fish

PAVEL'S SONG

(Tune: The Minstrel Boy)

Iosivich to the war has gone;
On the Pennsic field you will find him.
His groin protection he has girded on
And decorum slung behind him.

"Oh, taste my steel and die," he cries,
As he hacks and stabs and charges;
For twenty wounded spearmen make
One hell of a juicy target!

Oh, Pavel fought and the Tuchux fell
'Neath his weapons bloody and fearsome.
They spy a wren on a tabard of green
And they flee in fear before him.

But do they flee for fear of death?
Or do they fear dishonor?
More likely still, I think they fear
The odor of his armor!

Words: Syr Conn MacNeill

THE MINSTREL BOY

(traditional)

The Minstrel boy to the war has gone,
In the ranks of death you will find him.
His father's sword he has girded on
And his wild harp slung behind him.

"Land of song," said the warrior bard,
"Tho' all the world betrays thee,
One sword at least thy rights shall guard;
One faithful harp shall praise thee."

The Minstrel fell, but the foeman's chain
Could not bring that proud soul under;
The harp he lov'd ne'er spoke again,
For he tore its chords asunder;

He said, "No chains shall sully thee,
Thou soul of love and bravery!
Thy songs were made for the pure and free,
They shall never sound in slavery."

WARRIOR'S WYRD

Picked up a sword when I was young
And I will die before I'm old,
Raised as a warrior, fate was my father,
Death was my mother bathed in blood.

Followed the banner to the fray
And there I fought throughout the day.
Eagles did circle there, as wolves' feasts we prepared;
Wounded, though then I did not die.

I've heard the death screams as men go.
I've seen the blood in rivers flow.
I've heard the surgeon's song, and I do know 'ere long,
One day too slow to dodge I'll be.

One day I'll look up to the sky,
And see the lightning flash on high.
Dark clouds come rolling in, then I will know my end;
Singing, I'll go to meet my fate.
When I am gone, no tears for me.

Let there, instead, be revelry.
As all the sagas say, sing heroes' deeds that day,
Fill all the horns and drain them dry.

All of my life, I've hoped one thing.
All of my deeds the skalds do sing.
For when a warrior's gone, if you do sing his song
Truly the warrior never dies.

BATTLE OF MALDEN

Here must we hold, so harken to my counsel.
Felled is our lord, slain by foemen on the field.
Now we must honor the oaths we made in mead hall;
Now we must shoulder the burden of his shield.

Great were his gifts, of gold and noble gemstones.
High were the halls where the heroes boasted so.
He was our lord, and loath am I to leave him,
Vow to avenge him by vanquishing the foe.

(Chorus)

For our hands shall be the harder,
And our will shall be the wiser,
And our hearts shall grow bolder,
Tho' our strength must end.
Come and follow me to glory,
So that when they tell our story,
We shall not be forgotten in the halls of men.

I will not flee, but further will I follow,
Boldly to battle with broadsword in my hand.
More than my life was the love I bore for Byrhtnoth.
Fierce will I fight now, and so defend this land.

Come I from kindred of honor and of courage.
Ne'er shall they say that I nithing was at war.
Stand with me steadfast, staunch against the Vikings.
Wield ye your weapons like warriors of yore.

CHORUS

We stand undaunted, the last of the defenders.
Stouthearted men who can strike a mighty blow.
We shall encourage each other in the warplay.
Let them advance now, for we shall lay them low.

Death is our doom, so let us die with honor.
All that lives after is what the bards do say.
Fight to be worthy of fame in the future.
Let them remember the deeds we do this day.

CHORUS

STEEL-SHOD DANCE

I battle for the lady in blue, O
I carry her veil on my lance.
I face a very rough crew, O,
But, God I love the steel-shod dance.

(Chorus)

So bring on your destriers tall
Bring on your polished plate;
Bring on the best of the chivalry here,
I've a war lust to sate.

The banners of the nobles swing round, O
The wind whips them out with a crack;
They make the very same sound, O,
As my first opponent's back.

CHORUS

A new challenger bears down, O
His lance settled firm in the rest.
I put him to the ground on his backside, O
And turn to a sterner test.

CHORUS

We gather for the grand melee, O
A field full of armored knights;
We trample through the fading day, O
"Twas never more chivalrous might.

CHORUS

I live for the thundering hooves, O
I live for the crowd's blood-roar;
For the chivalry and the honour of
Our little practice wars.

CHORUS

Andrew Lyon of Wollenwood

HOTSPUR

Squire, bring my armor, my sword, and my destrier,
I've raised an army to break Henry's power.
South to the Humber we've marched to the Severn
With Douglas of Scotland, to join with Glendower.

Ready your weapons and don warlike harness.
The king rides to greet us at Shrewsbury town.
He'll pay what he owes me or fight on the morrow;
The blue lion of Percy will bloody the ground.

Hal, prince of Wales, has brought forth an army,
To halt us he's planning; he'll bar not to me.
Yon rides his father, a king made by Percy,
His host in the thousands, a hard fight will be.

So let loose your cloutyards, my stout Cheshire yeomen;
The hiss of you bowstrings is soft as a sigh.
Now king's knights you've halted, so up roar the horsemen.
We charge for the center, brave Douglas and I.

Lay low a sargeant, and then slay his master,
Rend through the armor, and hew clear a way.
There by the banner, a king rides before me.
I swear by my honor, 'tis his final day.

But prince Hal has broken my right wing of battle,
And he's 'fore his father, a'whirlin around.
Now one of his yeomen has sent me an arrow,
the blue lion of Percy is pulled to the ground.

(softly)

Squire, bring my armor, my sword, and my destrier,
I'll live forever to spite Bolinbroke.
Know then of Hotspur, who died by the Severn,
And list what was heard, when lord Percy spoke:

Ready your weapons and don warlike harness,
The king rides to greet us at Shrewsbury town.
He'll pay what he owes me, or fight on the morrow;
The blue lion of Percy will bloody the ground.

Andrew Lyon of Wolvenwood

A GRAZING MACE

A grazing mace, how sweet the blow
That killed a wretch like me.
I once was up but now I'm down.
A grazing mace killed me.

My knight has promised help for me
He'll save my ass for sure.
He will my shield wall anchor be
As long as life endure.

That mace has slain ten thousand foes
All sweating in the sun.
I'd no more grace to duck that mace
I was ten thousand one.

A grazing mace, how sweet the blow
That killed a wretch like me.
I once was up but now I'm down.
A grazing mace killed me.

first verse-unknown, other verses Jenna of Southwind

NON NOBIS

(the Henry V version)

Non nobis, Domine, Domine,
Non nobis, Domine,
Sed nomini, sed nomini, tuo da gloriam.

(repeat)

Words: Psalm 115:1

Tune: Patrick Doyle