

Listen, I'll tell the loveliest of dreams,
what I dreamt in the dark of night
after reason-bearers lay at rest.
It seemed I saw a wondrous tree
led aloft, wound in light,
the brightest of beams. That beacon was
all covered with gold. Gems stood
fair at the ground's surface; likewise there were five
up at the crossbeam. All beheld there the Angel of the Lord,
fair through eternal decree. There was no felon's gallows there,
but holy spirits beheld him,
people of earth and all this glorious creation.

Rare was this victory-beam, and I stained in sins,
mauled by misdeeds. I saw glory's tree,
graced with garments, shine with joy,
girded with gold. Gems had
worthily covered the tree of the wild.
Yet through that gold I could glimpse
the old war of wretched ones, for it first began
to bleed on its right side. I was all driven with sorrows;
afraid I was of the fair vision. I saw that eager beacon
change clothes and colors. Sometimes it was soaked with liquid,
drenched with a flow of blood. Sometimes it was adorned with treasures.

Lying a long while I nevertheless
beheld sorrowing the Savior's tree
until I heard it utter words,
begin to speak, the best of woods:

"It was long ago, it yet lives in my mind,
that I was felled in a forest's end,
removed from my root. Rough enemies there seized me,
made me there into a marvel, ordered me to raise up their felons.
Bullies bore me there on their shoulders until they set me on a hill.
Enough enemies fastened me there. I saw then mankind's Master
hurry with great eagerness to climb on me.

I dare not there and then bend or burst
against the Lord's word. Then I saw the earth's
surface tremble. I could have felled all those fiends, but I stood fast.
"Then the young hero ungirded himself, he who was God Almighty,
strong and stern. He ascended the wretched gallows,
mighty in the sight of many, when he wanted to redeem mankind.
I trembled when the hero hugged me. I nevertheless dared not bow to earth,
fall to the ground's surface, but I had to stand fast.

I was raised up a cross; I raised up a powerful King,
the Lord of the heavens. I dared not lower myself.
They pierced me with dark nails; then my wounds opened wide,
gaping gashes. I dared not injure any of them.
They mocked us both together. I was all dripping with blood,
smeared from that man's side when he gave up his spirit.

I have suffered much on that hill,
evil events: I saw the God of hosts
sorely stretch out. Darkness covered up
with clouds the Creator's corpse,
the shining brightness. A shadow went forth,
wan under the clouds. All creation wept,
spoke the king's fall: Christ was on the cross.

"But eager ones came there from afar
to that Prince. I perceived it all.
Sorely was I driven with sorrows, yet I bowed down into the warriors' hands,
humble, with great zeal. They took there the almighty God,
raised him out of that heavy torment. Then the troops forsook me,
standing soaked in blood: I was all wounded with arrows.
They laid down the limb-weary one, stood about at his body's head.

They beheld there heaven's Lord, and he rested himself awhile,
weary after the great war. Then they began to work him a grave,
the warriors in the slayer's sight. They carved it from bright stone;
they set in it the works of victories. Then they began to sing a woeful song,
wretched in the eventide. Then they wished to journey again,
weary ones, away from the famous Lord; he rested then in a very small band.

Yet we stood steady a good while,
weeping there until a voice went up
of warriors. The corpse went cold,
the fair life-house. Then someone began to fell us
all to earth: that was a fearsome fate!
He covered us in a deep pit, but the Lord's companions,
his friends, found me there,
girded me with gold and silver.

“Now you may hear, beloved hero,
how I had to abide the deeds of bullies,
sorrowful cares. The time has now come
that people on this plain far and wide
and all this wondrous creation worship me,
pray to this sign. On me God's Son
suffered a time; thus glorious I now tower
under the heavens, and I may heal
all and some of those in awe of me.

Once I was turned into the hardest of torments,
loathsome to all, before I opened up
life's way to them, to those wielding speech.

“Hear me! Then glory's prince honored me
over all trees of the wood, heaven's Warden,
just as he did his mother, Mary herself;
the almighty God gave her honor
for all people over all other women.

“Now I beseech you, my beloved hero,
that you proclaim this dream to the people,
reveal with words that it is wonder's tree
on which for mankind's many sins
and Adam's deeds of old almighty God suffered.

There he partook of death, yet with his great power
the Lord rose again to restore mankind.

Then he went up to heaven. He will come here
to this middle earth to seek mankind
on Doomsday, the dear Lord himself,
almighty God, his angels with him,
and he will then judge, he who wields judgment,
all and some, according to their earnings,
which earlier they found in this fleeting life.

Nor may anyone be unafraid there
of the word that the Wielder says.
He will ask before the multitude where that man might be
who wished for the Lord's name to know
bitter death, just as he earlier did on that beam.
But they will then be afraid, and few will think
what they will start to say to Christ.

Nor is there any need for one to be afraid,
who before bore in breast the best of beams,
but through that cross each soul shall seek
a kingdom away from the world's ways,
he who wishes to dwell with the Wielder."

Then I prayed to the beam in a blithe mood,
with great zeal, there where I was all alone,
in a small company. My spirit was
pushed toward an outward path. I felt
many pangs of longing. It is now my life's hope
that I will find the victory-wood
alone more often than other men,
worship it well. My will for that
is great in my spirit, and my safety is
right in that cross. I have few friends
powerful on earth, since they have departed
from the world's joys, sought wonder's King,
and live now in heaven with the high Father,
dwell in glory. And every day

I look for that time when the Lord's cross,
which I once beheld here on earth,
will fetch me in this fleeting life
and bring me where the bliss is great,
joy in heaven, where the Lord's hosts are
seated at the banquet. Endless bliss is there.
It will set me where forever I will
dwell in wonders, taste well
happiness with the holy. May the Lord be my friend,
he who earlier suffered here on earth,
on this gallows tree for our trespasses.

He redeemed us and returned our lives,
gave us a heavenly home. Hope was renewed
among blessings with bliss for those who suffered burning there.
The Son, mighty and successful, was victorious
in that quest, when he came with many,
a host of spirits into God's glorious kingdom,
the almighty ruler, to the bliss of angels
and all the saints who earlier dwelt in glory
in heaven, when their Creator came,
almighty Lord, back to the land of his home.¹

¹ Bernard McGinn, ed., [*Anglo-Saxon Spirituality: Selected Writings*](#), trans. Robert Boenig, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2000), 259–263.