Roberta Frank

Málsháttakvæði: A Norse Poem from Medieval Orkney

is silent.
what any one person says can be denied.
.....only deceives somewhat less.
I intend to bring old sayings together.
Most people take pleasure in something.
This nonsense shows my good cheer.
It is then as if one gathers pickings.

I have not gone in for lampoons.
Full well would I have had excuse for that.
I can compose more rudely than you'd expect.
Everyone seems to know it.
I would not be robbed of my patrimony,
even if I should always speak bluntly.
One has to row first toward the nearest ness.
I would have some pedigree for that.

The world learns all that three people know. They behave worse who break sworn pledges. I'm not aiming that at any one person. Many in turn have experienced its truth. Angry words shall be found here. I have the right to speak mouthfuls about that—she rather managed to look after herself, the wise-eyed woman—how she treated me.

Men should give rest to their wrath.
Often a very little thing occasions strife.
A dog is shaped for barking.
I intend to make my speech lighthearted.
Something worse had been in my mind.
It was almost like the pain of a boil.
The living man always rejoices in a cow.
It is clear that I am cheering up now.

It takes very little to amuse the young.
Life seems dreary to one alone.
To love another's child is to cherish a wolf.
Desperately would the blind wish to see.

People say a lord's word is precious. Dragons often rise up on their tail. A prince should be especially brave. A frog can croak in the marshes.

One shall have a prince for glory.

We ought to hear of a bird of prey from far off.

Spears give strength to a jarl.

Outer skerries are washed by waves.

Many offer harm to another.

Snakes crawl from their slough in spring.

He behaves well who lets it pass by.

A bear and his kind have long nights.

Bjarki had a fierce corn of courage [=heart]. Starkaðr felled a great troop. (He was not gentle in repose.) Hrómundr seemed bold and cunning. (No one made him give way.) Eljárnir was loyal and brave. He conquered the elephant in the phalanx. That test of manhood seemed very tough.

They determined to face death well. Brandingi slept at last in hell. Mardoll's weeping was glittering. That person gladdens who is often happy. Ásmundr accustomed Gnóð to the sea. Þjazi's own speech was gold. Niðjungr scraped a horn from the mound. This is exceedingly old lore now.

That was a shock about Frigg's son.
He was reckoned from a great family.
Hermóðr wanted to extend his life.
Éljúðnir had swallowed up Baldr.
They all wept for him.
Their laughter-ban [=grief] grew.
The story about him is very well known.
No need for me to harp on it.

To each his own pain seems the sorest. It takes two to arrange a reconciliation. Often a mediator is brought in as a third.

Equally trustworthy must he be to both sides. No one passes sentence on himself.
(I suppose such will happen to me now.)
Though all the troop of men go bristling,
No one allows that he caused it first.

Poetry has to be fitted with refrains
(I have an abrupt manner in this verse)
else it shall seem a rigmarole,
almost as if I were grabbing at crumbs.
It wasn't a plague in the old days.
Still, the Lappish girl drove Haraldr out of his mind.
To him she seemed bright as the sun.
Many a man has experience of such now.

Men say the ship's sailyards are short. The heart of magnates seems grey. The tongue plays with the aching tooth. One scarcely walks on ice in spring. Very few are sufficient in themselves. It helps not though the slow hasten. Each man could gain stature from his company. I recognize fully how sorrow goes.

One vies in strength least against the sea. Sorli burst from great longing.
At times coastal waters resound in a calm. It hardly matters that I prevail but little.
To many a man wealth seems good enough. Of short sharpness is the soft scythe.
The whole poem shall be really weird.
A king's morning is always long.

Men often let things be hastily seen.
He whose hand is generous prospers.
Very many a man is too slow to calm down.
We judge counsels as they turn out.
It wasn't a plague in the old days.
Still, the Lappish girl drove Haraldr out of his mind.
To him she seemed bright as the sun.
Many a man has experience of such now.

A single man seems to himself rich everywhere. Many a one speaks about the conduct of another. We seek longest after the flawless.
Peaceable company seems the best.
Everything beyond the mean seems short-lived.
Not much is worse than a troll.
Nothing spoils the talk of a wise man.
I have not heard that [a polar bear freezes].

No one needs to fear threats. Rather often does something touch a sore foot.

A busybody conducts another's suit.

At home each man is something of a king.

In no way do I speak about it the less. Words travel as soon as they leave the mouth.

All seems hardly as it is to those men afflicted by eye-disease.

Not only in the beautiful is there gain.

That shall be found the longer it is tested.

It wasn't a plague in the old days.

Still, the Lappish girl drove Haraldr out of his mind.

To him she seemed bright as the sun.

Many a man has experience of such now.

It seems best to live with resources.
The vixen proved cunning to the old ewe.
Many tricks she knew for herself.
So indeed Rannveig showed herself to me.
He behaves badly who betrays another.
One's lot is not known until vengeance ends.
The glory of the wedding feast seems quickly won.
Exceedingly long is every man the same.

Hair's flaws [from a poor cut] seem of short duration. We call the name of an expedition 'glorious'.

I scarcely declare the one who warns to be at fault. Men there are who end up high and dry. Misfortune is quick in its preparations.

Snowstorms seem ugly to many.

No one avoids all sudden gusts.

People always ask about conclusions.

Some men are so blinded by love

that they seem to heed very little.
So it is said in a love-song:
it has deceived many wise men.
It wasn't a plague in the old days.
Still, the Lappish girl drove Haraldr out of his mind.
To him she seemed bright as the sun.
Many a man has experience of such now.

None puts his love up for sale.
Very often sleet makes for cold weather.
Memories of the dead fade fast.
One should buy a lean horse.
Woe seems tangible enough.
Friendships are unequal then.
A fetter was laid on Fenrir.
I was told it was hugely strong.

The good man should be guileless.
Gizurr proved guilty of slander.
He wanted to incite kings against each other.
I have no delight in gloom.
I would like to be able to avoid snares.
I think the wary man seldom stumbles.
He behaves well who tends his own.
Black-flecked is my poem.

The more powerful always offers advice.
Valiant men give raw meat to eagles.
Only up is the young man's path.
No person is at once fully grown.
There is expectation of a fall from an old tree.
More seems good than may be.
The blemish of another is more easily seen.
No one goes beyond his fated day.

No one bemoans another's misfortune.
(I never rein in my mouth.)
I hear tell that the world is turning.
Only some, I think, will believe me.
Life is difficult for him who poorly understands.
One needs not lament anyone.
The thought has thus lodged itself in my mind:
With long-lasting storms shall the earth be laid waste.

Seldom is a doomed man's ice-hole found frozen. Women are chosen at drinking parties. That has been clear to me for a long time. Many a one has little in his power. It is related how a noseless person languishes. Now comes something that no one expects. It were far better that I should be silent. Each gets what he deserves in the end.

The badly behaved never loses his touch. First one, then another, gets the short stick. Unequal are the mouthfuls of a blind man. We call grief bad for the complexion. An oak has what is scraped from others. Not much is slyer than a fox. A torrent always up-ends things. Easily grasped are the crimes of a hog.

The gold-serpent has for itself a burning-hot den. The sun shines brightest in a cloudless sky. Glass seems wondrously transparent. The wave falls roaring over the skerry. All rivers yearn to run to the sea. Nothing is worse for a person than longing. I strongly advise prior caution. Most will spare themselves something.

What has passed can be related.
He does better who soothes another.
I know not for certain what can happen.
It is easiest to lead astray a foolish man.
One can scarcely trust the deceitful.
One should turn the better toward oneseif.
One shall console the man who has suffered sorrow.
Exceedingly much is decreed about most.

They search in my mouth for words.
The chatter is well known to me.
Who shall possess Óðinn's mead [= the poem]
seems unclear to the race of men.
That inquiry will be of no use.
I very much have a mind for 'refuse'.
Not at all was this 'release' poor.

Now each who wants it shall have it.

I have thrown together without rudder as I wished . . .

Pinnur Jónsson's normalized fext

- ett blegt holl der: den sellen fom ert samen (flutte her in at cakter gemen ele i einner voll gesom seit gripler er von hendi på.
- 2. Elekt hets med filmtom fank, fullvel, attak til pera enert, gyrtig kenn ek eften værst vita pykkok þat medrinn hverry etalit væri mar okki ör tett jafnam þótt ett kvæðu söski, 20. værðe fyrst til eve meda ;

nokkut mila" live til bes a

- A. This paper all hat's jude muon vide, have befo vide, or tryggiom.
- Gki er j * til cins mans
- fines has but desset blottly hernise out muce hit it, he head at some of prilativel and heat of sof heat of some of prilativel and heat of soft sylvange desse had from for all
- 4. Bi thylda mana reith pide, roughlith homes opt a parent gagarre or slight, but roops at all gagar or slight pide for tall your bolds more versu i have. The but of the room pid not seen keeping figuration of the language language with marks he, language language and graduant not.
- 6. Allibit er ung i manne gomen. eduar pykkir daußirt saman, attenta barn er sem ülf al üji. öblüss verest blinde at ati.
- oblics of the blinde of sia; die lite mean debtins orth deckarnie et., opt i sport, oblinge et ild eighter et ke, op a kann i mo um legoke.
- 6 Fylls that til frigbur hefs, fressit efget hangt til gest. Ödder genge fangt til gest. Ödder som for frem þregtar fræri til fra og frem for, til fræri til fræri fræri til fræri fræri til fræri fræ
- 7. Sjarki itti bugatbun har, heriti Atij Buykatbun mart, etkit sar hann fariften begri, Brömendr påtti garpe ok ologer, ökal bolm er olina å bug. Elfereri var den at huge fillereri var den at funge falkstreg, heft tå manuraum hatt.

- 8. Bena feithest fuir hitse vet, Brandingi svef loke i hel, Mardoliar ver strainer crate, glebr så mann er opt en beter, Asmendr tambi Gndo vir gjelle, gulli melli Frant elett, Nikimper skof af haugi lacen; heldt ern nå minni foru.
- 9. Friggier þeiti mign af egni, sá vær taldr ár mista kyni. Hermotir viðil mista aldr, Eljátinfr vann religina Beldr, ell greva þem eglir hann, aukit var þei a hidrar bæm, teyrinkum er fri hinnar eggi, hvet þeif ok ef stillet af þem.
- 10. Sitt mein bytkis omast hveim, sättargyrö er æitur tveim; oddannste færkt opt enn þriði, juleinne skal -4 hværa 1-5; angi of downte själlin tilk fallkt ettak mi hrada mikt, ettak mi bræde mikt, ettak na bræde mikt, e

ened look by walde fyret.

- 11. Stoffam varfir at olssta brag, stuffligt beft å kvæði lag, ella enn það þrjákja þela, þrenig amr sam eð hinda mula, þrenig amr sam eð hinda mula. Bint var þaf forðum frald, flunau gal þó erðam Horald. Einuau þátt eðiljett að, ellæ sæmt erða meggun m.
- 42. Skips 1448 mann okummar 167.
- atten jehte hugeing grår, imgan kjör vilt innan der, rautin er gerigt 2 in af vin; ujik för av sår artim eine, systi tie, hått skyndi seine, referst mertit af pengi liver, pyrra þektir sinn kro ferr.
- 12 Att of deilie ist v. s., Sprit spakt af gildri vr. Sundum pick i logal 16, Hita verr. at riksak 6; ausgum byktir falleutt f6, framaskamar vi som deigt 18, kvesift skul me'r lyngion att, kommune mongica er lener å kommune mongica er lener å
- 14. Dr. Sae' kida bragnar opi, bregör at peim, er britar kept, allmarge vr. til orinn at schark, svå kollum vår efö sam gvinsk. Ekkil var þet forðuna fuald, Fionan graf pö æröna frænd, binum fottit solltjert at, alliss örmal værð mörgunu nd.

- 15. Anhier bykide sine see hvar, anners to die marge of far, sugramus arum vor lengt 6
- hindrey jekkir besta seeli; skammer pykkin ödin oli, ekki mari er verra on iroli, etgi spillir bession kiali, hadrat ek spirit at bersa keli.
- 16. Ling perf at her back hot, belift kaust opt vid stran fit, hhistorn forr und anner rekt neckvi riber er beim brer, arckvi riber er beim brer, orga bla et und at str, orden fire boger munden fire.
- 17. Varla rýnisk alt sem er Jium John, er hespir dror, elei at eins er i figen finge, fundit mun jat er nyat cr
- Pinian gat há mönn facald, Pinian gat há mönn Harald, hánum þátti rálhjort sá, ritka demi terör mergum nú.
- 12. Efuum þytkir bezt at han, brigstik repreist gemin fra, marjar kumi hon singðir nigsrá spakel grifek Bannvein mist fils þár sið attann segur seju vat, dör he indum fyrir hæddenny fyrkir hruðsuns
- belge's lengt or hour our aunit 19. Lifthe hyblica strammas
- skreatigt kyllum nefult fiver, trauti hellak þenn valda er
- verte menn beir er oppligen, ogipt von vi umbel segel, siin hikkje myrean his, eugi of the vi olum rolumjainna appria menn at intern.
- 20. Arthirds to read the amit, at hydrig ments of man agent was of man agent to the form of man agent to the Elsi var let forbun fraidfinen get he crima Fraidfinen get he crima Fraidfinen get he crima fraidfinen get he crima fraidfinen held softhjart su.
- 21. Tabit léte engir falt, olkopi verbr i kreggi uvalt, austrie driepa minjan mest, magnan skyldi knapa kret; well picktir vilkture vet vintangin een minjen på, far-halde verb å Fouri lagtr, fiktur verb ikt vonkter engir engir.

12. Grandvarr skyldi ern góbi n. ör.

Chare vart at righ sate, cia vildi joftum semme skil er mer at störn gaman; kanna vildak sjå vilt saveram, visildan hygg at gygyvi verein, val halb hinn, er sike of slit, vartfisikkelt er kvæli mitt

23. Johan segle can rilly rps, relative mean gent cancer to yellow the results of the relative results of the relative results of the relative rela

its ling knettr of armer mein, (stdri hett at remni sole) beimt beetk aug tat sont muni sole) beimt beetk aug tat sont muni stor bygg at mer hett erfiet eente prines ille kenn, togen parl at lijdra mane, pannig befr mer legek i lund, henreltram stat erbe sound.

Atldan hillick fein volch fischen ijosin verda at oldram krein lensi hele hat ljol fyr nefe, litian koet å maegr mod sto; ogt er fel, hve medans nark, nå verdr sumt hat mangt sed verdr sumt hat mangt verde.

(mari betr et presidt pokte) het bede hvorr er verör er loks

28. Prýtra þann er verr heir vælt vælts kann á ýmsa halt, missafair 'ra blæds manne

hitar, to lit kelium ver ilt ill liter; etk heft jute at steam sieft, ekki mart er slovin en roje, jamen verer at affet stalar, og konvar bro netti salar. 27. Gullorme ü ser brencheitt höl, hjartasi skinn i hefði sól, undrum þykkir gagnæsti gler, glymjandi felle hronn ef sker; allar grinask ár í sjá. ski er manni væra en þið, týst munk ess tyrra væra, lieste mun sis til nokkurs spora.

28. Golo må þers er gangit befr gorir sá betr er annan svelk, veltkat týst hvat verða kann, vilia er dælst of heireskan

file fum me trault of true:
til sin skyld con betre min,
hugge skal pame brom helt
boott,
boltt mjer er at fie-lø kvelit.

M. Ones or icitat mee i munn, mangin verte ose heyrinkuna, (Vegjor björ hverr ciga myni dejat þykkir lýða kynlig, eyril man giða afrétt skeða, alkuljek er svác innd til hreða, þeggi ver sjá aflans in.

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