THE LAY OF LEITHIAN

Bilbo writes: This poem, based on the most cherished of all tales of the Elder Days, at least among the Dúnedain and the Eldar, can be found in three copies in the library at Rivendell. Alas, none of these survived the fall of Fornost unscathed. The last few cantos of the poem are preserved only in epitomes, although many details of the Lay’s lost parts are preserved in the Quenta Silmarillion and elsewhere. The story was especially cherished in the North Kingdom, for reasons that one might guess at: the long friendship of Elrond, the great-grandson of the principals, with the Dúnedain of the North is probably chief among these, but also a kinship of terrain; the fells of Eriador and the waters of Lake Evendim can be described in terms not unlike the pine forests of Dorthonion and the mountain lake of Aeluin. In the years since the fall of Arthedain, the chief Dûnadan and his men have no doubt felt oft akin to the Twelve Bëoring companions of Barahir. The ring of Barahir itself, the most ancient heirloom of the Elder Days left to men in Middle-Earth, was nearly the sole surviving treasure of the Northern Line. The shards of Narsil too, wrought by Telchar of Nogrod, call out to the knife Angrist which that otherwise mysterious dwarf also made, with which the Silmaril was cut from the Iron Crown.

In spite of its popularity in the North Kingdom, it should not be confused with the poem in the ann-thennath mode that Aragorn shared with Frodo and his companions in the dell under Weathertop. That version of the tale is part of a purely Elvish oral tradition (for the elves do not commit their poetry to writing) that Aragorn must have learnt directly of Elrond in his youth. I have heard Elrond recite it, but I could never attempt to reproduce it.

There is apparently no tradition, nor even much speculation, about the authorship of the poem. Dírhavel, who wrote the equally cherished Narn I Chîn Hûrn, is not associated with this work. Although it is certainly of comparable importance, it is radically different in style and sensibility. The age of the poem is equally uncertain. Scholiasts of the Dúnedain claim scholarship on the poem going all the way back to before the Downfall, and internal evidence dating sections to before fall of Thangorodrim. I don’t consider the evidence for or against these claims conclusive, but there certainly seem to be sections written in the Third Age in Middle-Earth and not before.

In the manuscript I consider most reliable, that of Fornost, the title is written out, in the Common Speech (which is to say that I did not have to translate it), as follows:
The
GEST
of
BEREN son of BARAHIR
and
LÚTHIEN the FAY
called
TINÚVIEL the NIGHTINGALE
or the
LAY OF LEITHIAN
Release from Bondage

I should say a few words about the three divergent manuscripts from which this translation is compiled, as each is incomplete in different fashions. The Fornost codex appears to be the fullest rendering, but also the most poorly preserved. Not only the final cantos, but large stretches of the middle of the poem are missing from the MS. I have based my numbering of the cantos on this version however, which had one more than the other two—devoting more attention to the earliest part of the story.

The manuscript from Cardolan is more complete, although less compelling than the Fornost version. It contains some unusual dialect traditions: calling Sauron “Thû,” for instance.

The roughest and most corrupt text is certainly that from the fortress at Weathertop, but in it are also preserved a number of fragments not present in either of the others, including a tiny piece of verse from the final canto.

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1 The word "Leithian" would appear to be connected to Lúthien, but the loremasters in Rivendell say not so. It is a word unattested elsewhere, but it does seem connected to the stem leth- 'set free', and with leithia 'release'. The "bondage" of the subtitle is unclear. ~BB.

In the South Kingdom, this particular work was lost, but the story was known in several versions, including the Tale of Tinúviel, one of the “Lost Tales” of Dol Amroth. Lúthien is much more often referred to by her nickname of Tinúviel, “The Nightingale” in the South Kingdom. — F
I
A king there was in days of old:
ere Men yet walked upon the mould
his power was reared in caverns' shade,
his hand was over glen and glade.
Of leaves his crown, his mantle green,
his silver lances long and keen;
the starlight in his shield was caught,
erel moon was made or sun was wrought.
In after-days, when to the shore
of Middle-earth from Valinor
the Elven-hosts in might returned,
and banners flew and beacons burned,
when kings of Eldamar went by
in strength of war, beneath the sky
then still his silver trumpets blew
when sun was young and moon was new.
Afar then in Beleriand,
in Doriath's beleaguered land,
King Thingol sat on guarded throne
in many-pillared halls of stone:
there beryl, pearl, and opal pale,
and metal wrought like fishes' mail,
buckler and corslet, axe and sword,
and gleaming spears were laid in hoard:
all these he had and counted small,
for clearer than all wealth in hall,
and fairer than are born to. Men,
a daughter had he, Lúthien.

Such lissom limbs no more shall run
on the green earth beneath the sun;
so fair a maid no more shall be
from dawn to dusk, from sun to sea.
Her robe was blue as summer skies,
but grey as evening were her eyes;
her mantle sewn with lilies fair,
but dark as shadow was her hair.
Her feet were swift as bird on wing,
her laughter merry as the spring;
the slender willow the bowing reed,
the fragrance of a flowering mead,
the light upon the leaves of trees,
the voice of water, more than these
her beauty was and blissfulness,
her glory and her loveliness.

She dwelt in the enchanted land
while elven-might yet held in hand
the woven woods of Doriath:
none ever thither found the path
unbidden, none the forest-eaves
dared pass, or stir the listening leaves.
To North there lay a land of dread, Dungorthin where all ways were dead in hills of shadow, bleak and cold; beyond was Deadly Nightshade's hold in Taur-na-Fuin's fastness grim, where sun was sick and moon was dim. To South the wide earth unexplored; to West the ancient Ocean roared, unsailed and shoreless, wide and wild; to East in peaks of blue were piled, in silence folded, mist-enfurled, the mountains of the outer world.

Thus Thingol in his dolven hall amid the Thousand Caverns tall of Menegroth as king abode: to him there led no mortal road. Beside him sat his deathless queen, fair Melian, and wove unseen nets of enchantment around his throne, and spells were laid on tree and stone: sharp was his sword and high his helm, the king of beech, and oak and elm. from dawn to dusk, from sun to sea. When grass was green and leaves were long, when finch and mavis sang their song, there under bough and under sun
in shadow and in light would run
fair Lúthien the elven-maid,
dancing in dell and grassy glade.
her laughter merry as the spring;

When sky was clear and stars were keen,
then Daeron² with his fingers lean,
as daylight melted into eve,
a trembling music sweet would weave
on flutes of silver, thin and clear
or Lúthien, the maiden dear.
while elven-might yet held in hand
There mirth there was and voices bright;
there eve was peace and morn was light;
there jewel gleamed and silver wan
so and red gold on white fingers shone,
To North there lay a land of dread,
and elanor and niphredil
bloomed in the grass unfading still,
while the endless years of Elven-land
rolled over far Beleriand,
until a day of doom befell,
as still the elven-harpers tell.

Of Daeron, Thingol’s Minstrel

² In legends of the Elder Days, Daeron of Doriath, is credited with the invention of the Runes that are called in Elvish Angerthas. He was also accounted the most gifted bard of the First Age (see Canto IV) ~BB
II
Far in the Northern hills of stone
in caverns black there was a throne
by flame encircled; there the smoke
in coiling columns rose to choke
the breath of life, and there in deep
and gasping dungeons lost would creep
to hopeless death all those who strayed
by doom beneath that ghastly shade.

A king there sat, most dark and fell
of all that under heaven dwell.
Than earth or sea, than moon or star
more ancient was he, mightier far
in mind abysmal than the thought
of Eldar or of Men, and wrought
of strength primeval; ere the stone
was hewn to build the world, alone
he walked in darkness, fierce and dire,
burned, as he wielded it, by fire.
He 'twas that laid in ruin black
the Blessed Realm and fled then back
to Middle-earth anew to build
beneath the mountains mansions filled
with misbegotten slaves of hate:
death's shadow brooded at his gate.
His hosts he armed with spears of steel
and brands of flame, and at their heel
the wolf walked and the serpent crept
with lidless eyes. Now forth they leapt,
his ruinous legions, kindling war
in field and frith and woodland hoar.
Where long the golden elanor
had gleamed amid the grass they bore
their banners black, where finch had sung
and harpers silver harps had wrung
now dark the ravens wheeled and cried
amid the reek, and far and wide
the swords of Morgoth dripped with red
above the hewn and trampled dead.
Slowly his shadow like a cloud
rolled from the North, and on the proud
that would not yield his vengeance fell;
to death or thraldom under hell
all things he doomed: the Northern land
lay cowed beneath his ghastly hand.
But still there lived in hiding cold
Beor's son, Barahir the bold,
of land bereaved and lordship shorn
who once a prince of Men was born,
and now an outlaw lurked and lay
in the hard heath and woodland grey.³

Twelve men beside him still there went,
still faithful when all hope was spent.
Their names are yet in elven-song
remembered, though the years are long
since doughty Dagnir and Ragnor,
Radhruin, Dairuin and Gildor,
Gorlim Unhappy, and Urthel,
and Arthad and Hathaldir fell;
since the black shaft with venomed wound
took Belegund and Baragund,
the mighty sons of Bregolas;⁴
since he whose doom and deeds surpass
all tales of Men was laid on bier,
fair Beren son of Barahir.
For these it was, the chosen men
of Bëor's house, who in the fen
of reedy Serech stood at bay

³The preceding passage describes, in poetic and allusive terms, the *Dagor Bragollach*, or Battle of Sudden Flame. This was the fourth of the great Battles of Beleriand (though in our day each of these battles might have been called a War) and the first to end in serious defeat for the Elves and their allies, the Edain. Dorthonion, which had been held by Elven princes of the house of Finarfin, and by men of the house of Bëor the Old, was overrun by the forces of Morgoth. The events of that battle form a recurring backdrop to the Lay. See also *Quenta Silmarillion*. ~BB

⁴Belegund and Baragund were the fathers of Rían (the wife of Huor and mother of Tuor of Gondolin) and of Morwen Eledhwen (wife to Húrin Thalion, and mother of Túrin Turambar and Nienor Níniel). ~BB
about King Finrod in the day
of his defeat, and with their swords
thus saved of all the Elven-lords
the fairest; and his love they earned.
And he escaping south, returned
to Nargothrond his mighty realm,
where still he wore his crowned helm;
but they to their northern homeland rode,
dauntless and few, and there abode
unconquered still, defying fate,
pursued by Morgoth's sleepless hate.

Such deeds of daring there they wrought
that soon the hunters that them sought
at rumor of their coming fled.
Though price was set upon each head
to match the weregild of a king,
no soldier could to Morgoth bring
news even of their hidden lair;
for where the highland brown and bare
above the darkling pines arose
of steep Dorthonion to the snows
and barren mountain-winds, there lay
a tarn of water, blue by day,
by night a mirror of dark glass
for stars of Elbereth that pass
above the world into the West.
Once hallowed, still that place was blest:
no shadow of Morgoth, and no evil thing
yet thither came; a whispering ring
of slender birches silver-grey
stooped on its margin, round it lay
a lonely moor, and the bare bones
of ancient Earth like standing stones
thrust through the heather and the whin;
and there by houseless Aeluin
the hunted lord and faithful men
under the grey stones made their den.

Gorlim Unhappy, Angrim's son,
as the tale tells, of these was one
most fierce and hopeless. He to wife,
while fair was the fortune of his life,
took the white maiden Eilinel:
dear love they had ere evil fell.
To war he rode; from war returned
to find his fields and homestead burned,
his house forsaken roofless stood,
empty amid the leafless wood;
and Eilinel, white Eilinel,
was taken whither none could tell,
to death or thraldom far away.
Black was the shadow of that day
for ever on his heart, and doubt
still gnawed him as he went about in wilderness wandring, or at night oft sleepless, thinking that she might ere evil came have timely fled into the woods: she was not dead, she lived, she would return again to seek him, and would deem him slain. Therefore at whiles he left the lair, and secretly, alone, would peril dare, and come to his old house at night, broken and cold, without fire or light, and naught but grief renewed would gain, watching and waiting there in vain.

In vain, or worse—for many spies had Morgoth, many lurking eyes well used to pierce the deepest dark; and Gorlim's coming they would mark and would report. There came a day when once more Gorlim crept that way, down the deserted weedy lane at dusk of autumn sad with rain and cold wind whining. Lo! a light at window fluttering in the night amazed he saw; and drawing near, between faint hope and sudden fear, he looked within. 'Twas Eilinel!
Though changed she was, he knew her well. With grief and hunger she was worn, her tresses tangled, raiment torn; her gentle eyes with tears were dim, as soft she wept: 'Gorlim, Gorlim! Thou canst not have forsaken me. Then slain, alas! thou slain must be! And I must linger cold, alone, and loveless as a barren stone!'

One cry he gave — and then the light blew out, and in the wind of night wolves howled; and on his shoulder fell suddenly the griping hands of hell. There Morgoth's servants fast him caught and he was cruelly bound, and brought to Sauron captain of the host,\(^5\) the lord of werewolf and of ghost, most foul and fell of all who knelt at Morgoth's throne. In might he dwelt on Gaurhoth Isle;\(^6\) but now had ridden

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\(^5\) In the Weathertop and Cardolan MSS, this part of the story is briefer, and Gorlim is captured not by Sauron, but by Morgoth himself. \(\sim BB\)

\(^6\) This location, formerly a fortress of the House of Finarfin called Tol Sirion, had been captured by Sauron in the aftermath of the Battle of Sudden Flame. *Gaurhoth* is the Sindarin for Werewolf. These creatures of wolffish shape but manlike intelligence were particularly associated with Sauron. It may be that he was involved in the dark magics that created them, which might then have led to his first being called a Necromancer. Altogether nasty. \(\sim BB\)
with strength abroad, by Morgoth bidden
to find the rebel Barahir.
He sat in dark encampment near,
and thither his butchers dragged their prey.
There now in anguish Gorlim lay:
with bond on neck, on hand and foot,
to bitter torment he was put,
to break his will and him constrain
to buy with treason end of pain.
But naught to them would he reveal
of Barahir, nor break the seal
of faith that on his tongue was laid;
until at last a pause was made,
and one came softly to his stake,
a darkling form that stooped, and spake
to him of Eilinel his wife.

'Wouldst thou,' he said, 'forsake thy life,
who with 'few words might win release
for her, and thee, and go in peace,
and dwell together far from war,
friends of the King? What wouldst thou more?'
And Gorlim, now long worn with pain,
yearning to see his wife again
(whom well he weened was also caught,
in Sauron’s net), allowed the thought
to grow, and faltered in his troth.
Then straight, half willing and half loath,
they brought him to the seat of stone
where Sauron sat. He stood alone
before that dark and dreadful face,
and Sauron said: 'Come, mortal base!
What do I hear? That thou wouldst dare
to barter with me? Well, speak fair!
What is thy price?' And Gorlim low
bowed down his head, and with great woe,
word on slow word, at last implored
that merciless and faithless lord
that he might free depart, and might
again find Eilinel the White,
and dwell with her, and cease from war
against the King. He craved no more.
Then Sauron smiled, and said: 'Thou thrall!
The price thou askest is but small
for treachery and shame so great!
I grant it surely! Well, I wait:
Come! Speak now swiftly and speak true!'
Then Gorlim wavered, and he drew
half back; but Sauron's daunting eye
there held him, and he dared not lie:
as he began, so must he wend
he all must answer as he could,
betray his lord and brotherhood,
and cease, and fall upon his face.
Then Sauron laughed aloud. 'Thou base,
thou cringing worm! Stand up, and hear me! And now drink the cup that I have sweetly blent for thee! Thou fool: a phantom thou didst see that I, I Sauron, made to snare thy lovesick wits. Naught else was there. Cold 'tis with Sauron's wraiths to wed! Thy Eilinel! She is long since dead, food of worms less low than thou. And yet thy boon I grant thee now: to Eilinel thou soon shalt go, and lie in her bed, no more to know of war- or manhood. Have thy pay!' And Gorlim then they dragged away, and cruelly slew him; and at last in the dank mould his body cast, where Eilinel long since had laid in the burned woods by butchers slain. Thus Gorlim died an evil death, and cursed himself with dying breath, and Barahir at last was caught in Morgoth's snare; for set at naught by treason was the ancient grace that guarded long that lonely place, Tarn Aeluin: now all laid bare were secret paths and hidden lair.

The traitor Gorlim is himself betrayed
Dark from the North now blew the cloud;
the winds of autumn cold and loud
hissed in the heather; sad and grey
Aeluin's mournful water lay.
'Son Beren', then said Barahir,
'Thou knowst the rumour that we hear
of strength from the Gaurhoth that is sent
of will defeated, broken faith,
against us; and our food nigh spent.

On thee the lot falls by our law
to go forth now alone to draw
what help thou canst from the hidden few
that feed us still, and what is new
to learn. Good fortune go with thee!
In speed return, for grudgingly
we spare thee from our brotherhood,
so small: and Gorlim in the wood
is long astray or dead. Farewell!
As Beren went, still like a knell
resounded in his heart that word,
the last of his father that he heard.

Through moor and fen, by tree and briar
he wandered far: he saw the fire
of Sauron's camp, he heard the howl
of hunting Orc and wolf a-prowl,
and turning back, for long the way
benighted in the forest lay.
In weariness he then must sleep,
fain in a badger-hole to creep,
and yet he heard (or dreamed it so)
nearby a marching legion go
with clink of mail and clash of shields
up towards the stony mountain-fields.
in haste beneath a cairn of stones;
He slipped then into darkness down,
until, as man that waters ·drown
strives upwards gasping, it seemed to him
he rose through slime beside the brim
of sullen pool beneath dead trees.
Their livid boughs in a cold breeze
trembled, and all their black leaves, stirred:
each leaf a black and croaking bird,
whose neb a gout of blood let fall.
He shuddered, struggling thence to crawl
through winding weeds, when far away
he saw a shadow faint and grey
gliding across the dreary lake.
Slowly it came, and softly spake:
'Gorlim I was, but now a wraith
traitor betrayed. Go! Stay not here!
Awaken, son of Barahir,
and haste! For Morgoth's fingers close upon thy father's throat; he knows your trysts, your paths, your secret lair.'

Then he revealed the devil's snare in which he fell, and failed; and last begging forgiveness, wept, and passed out into darkness. Beren woke, leapt up as one by sudden stroke with fire of anger filled. His bow and sword he seized, and like the roe hotfoot o'er rock and heath he sped before the dawn. Ere day was dead to Aeluin at last he came, as the red sun westward sank in flame; but Aeluin was red with blood, red were the stones and trampled mud. Black in the birches sat a-row the raven and the carrion crow; wet were their nebs, and dark the meat that dripped beneath their gripping feet. One croaked: 'Ha, ha, he comes too late!' 'Ha, ha!' they answered, 'ha! too late!'

There Beren laid his father's bones no graven rune nor word he wrote o'er Barahir, but thrice he smote the topmost stone, and thrice aloud he cried his name. 'Thy death', he vowed,
'I will avenge. Yea, though my fate should lead at last to Angband's gate.' And then he turned, and did not weep: too dark his heart, the wound too deep.

Out into night, as cold as stone, loveless, friendless, he strode alone. Of hunter's lore he had no need the trail to find. With little heed his ruthless foe, secure and proud marched north away with blowing loud of brazen horns their lord to greet, trampling the earth with grinding feet. Behind them bold but wary went now Beren, swift as hound on scent, until beside a darkling well, where Rivil rises from the fell down into Serech's reeds to flow, he found the slayers, found his foe. From hiding on the hillside near he marked them all: though less than fear, too many for his sword and bow to slay alone. Then, crawling low as snake in heath, he nearer crept. There many weary with marching slept, but captains, sprawling on the grass, drank and from hand to hand let pass
their booty, grudging each small thing raped from dead bodies. One a ring held up, and laughed: 'Now, mates,' he cried 'here's mine! And I'll not be denied, though few be like it in the land. For I 'twas wrenched it from the hand of that same Barahir I slew, the robber-knave. If tales be true, he had it of some elvish lord, for the rogue-service of his sword. No help it gave to him- he's dead. They're parlous, elvish rings, 'tis said; still for the gold I'll keep it, yea and so eke out my niggard pay. Old Sauron bade me bring it back, and yet, methinks, he has no lack of weightier treasures in his hoard: the greater the greedier the lord! So mark ye, mates, ye all shall swear the hand of Barahir was bare!', And as he spoke an arrow sped from tree behind, and forward dead choking he fell with barb in throat; with leering face the earth he smote. Forth, then as wolfhound grim there leapt Beren among them. Two he swept aside with sword; caught up the ring;
slew one who grasped him; with a spring back into shadow passed, and fled before their yells of wrath and dread of ambush in the valley rang. Then after him like wolves they sprang, howling and cursing, gnashing teeth, hewing and bursting through the heath, shooting wild arrows, sheaf on sheaf, at trembling shade or shaken leaf. In fateful hour was Beren born: he laughed at dart and wailing horn; fleetest of foot of living men, tireless on fell and light on fen, elf-wise in wood, he passed away, defended by his hauberk grey of dwarvish craft in Nogrod made, where hammers rang in cavern's shade.

As fearless Beren was renowned: when men most hardy upon ground were reckoned, folk would speak his name, foretelling that his after-fame would even golden Hador pass or Barahir and Bregolas; but sorrow now his heart had wrought to fierce despair, no more he fought in hope of life or joy or praise,
but seeking so to use his days
only that Morgoth deep should feel
the sting of his avenging steel,
eré death he found and end of pain:
his only fear was thralldom's chain.
Danger he sought and death pursued,
and thus escaped the doom he wooed,
and deeds of breathless daring wrought
alone, of which the rumour brought
new hope to many a broken man.
They whispered 'Beren', and began
in secret swords to whet, and soft
by shrouded hearths at evening oft
songs they would sing of Beren's bow,
of Dagmor his sword: how he would go
silent to camps and slay the chief,
or trapped in his hiding past belief
would slip away, and under night
by mist or moon, or by the light
of open day would come again.
Of hunters hunted, slayers slain
they sang, of Gorgol the Butcher hewn,
of ambush in Ladros, fire in Drûn,
of thirty in one battle dead,
of wolves that yelped like curs and fled,
yea, Sauron himself with wound in hand.
Thus one alone filled all that land
with fear and death for Morgoth's folk;
his comrades were the beech and oak
who failed him not, and wary things
with fur and fell and feathered wings
that silent wander, or dwell alone
in hill and wild and waste of stone
watched o'er his ways; his faithful friends.

Yet seldom well an outlaw ends;
and Morgoth was a king more strong
than all the world has since in song
recorded: dark athwart the land
reached out the shadow of his hand,
at each recoil returned again;
two more were sent for one foe slain.
New hope was cowed, all rebels killed;
quenched were the fires, the songs were stilled,
tree felled, heath burned, and through the waste
marched the black host of Orcs in haste.

Almost they closed their ring of steel
round Beren; hard upon his heel
now trod their spies; within their hedge
of all aid shorn, upon the edge
of death at bay he stood aghast
and knew that he must die at last,
or flee the land of Barahir.
his land beloved. Beside the mere beneath a heap of nameless stones must crumble those once mighty bones, forsaken by both son and kin, bewailed by reeds of Aeluin.

In winter's night the houseless North he left behind, and stealing forth the leaguer of his watchful foe he passed — a shadow on the snow, a swirl of wind, and he was gone, the ruin of Dorthonion, Tarn Aeluin and its water wan, never again to look upon.
No more shall hidden bowstring sing, no more his shaven arrows wing, no more his hunted head shall lie upon the heath beneath the sky.
The Northern stars, whose silver fire of old Men named the Burning Briar, were set behind his back, and shone o'er land forsaken: he was gone.

Southward he turned, and south away his long and lonely journey lay, while ever loomed before his path the dreadful peaks of Gorgoroth.
Never had foot of man most bold
yet trod those mountains steep and cold,
nor climbed upon their sudden brink,
whence, sickened, eyes must turn and shrink
to see their southward cliffs fall sheer
in rocky pinnacle and pier.
down into shadows that were laid
before the sun and moon were made.
In valleys woven with deceit
and washed with waters bitter-sweet
dark magic lurked in gulf and glen;
but out away beyond the ken
of mortal sight the eagle's eye
from dizzy towers that pierced the sky
might grey and gleaming see afar,
as sheen on water under star,
Beleriand, Beleriand,
the borders of the Elven-land.
There long ago in Elder-days ere voice was heard or trod were ways, the haunt of silent shadows stood in starlit dusk Nan Elmoth wood. In Elder-days that long are gone a light amid the shadows shone, a voice was in the silence heard: the sudden singing of a bird. There Melian came, the Lady grey, and dark and long her tresses lay beneath her silver girdle-seat and down unto her silver feet. The nightingales with her she brought, to whom their song herself she taught, who sweet upon her gleaming hands had sung in the immortal lands. Thence wayward wandering on a time from Lórien she dared to climb the everlasting mountain-wall of Valinor; at whose feet fall the surges of the Shadowy Sea. Out away she went then free, to gardens of Valar no more returning, but on mortal shore, a glimmer ere the dawn she strayed, singing her spells from glade to glade.
A bird in dim Nan Elmoth wood trilled, and to listen Thingol stood amazed; then far away he heard a voice more fair than fairest bird, a voice as crystal clear of note as thread of silver glass remote. Of folk and kin no more he thought; of errand that the Eldar brought from Cuiviénen far away, of lands beyond the Seas that lay no more he recked, forgetting all, drawn only by that distant call till deep in dim Nan Elmoth wood lost and beyond recall he stood. And there he saw her, fair and fay: Ar-Melian, the Lady grey, as silent as the windless trees, standing with mist about her knees, and in her face remote the light of Lórien glimmered in the night. No word she spoke; but pace by pace, a halting shadow, towards her face forth walked the silver-mantled king, tall Elu Thingol. In the ring of waiting trees he took her hand. One moment face to face they stand alone, beneath the wheeling sky,
while starlit years on earth go by
and in Nan Elmoth wood the trees
grow dark and tall. The murmuring seas
rising and falling on the shore
and Ulmo's horn he heeds no more.
But long his people sought in vain
their lord, till Ulmo called again,
and then in grief they marched away,
leaving the woods. To havens grey
upon the western shore, the last
long shore of mortal lands, they passed,
and thence were borne beyond the Sea
in Aman, the Blessed Realm, to be
by evergreen Ezellohar
in Valinor, in Eldamar.

Thus Thingol sailed not on the seas
but dwelt amid the land of trees,
and Melian he loved, divine,
whose voice was potent as the wine
the Valar drink in golden halls
where flower blooms and fountain falls;
but when she sang it was a spell,
and no flower stirred nor fountain fell.
A king and queen thus lived they long,
and Doriath was filled with song,
and all the Elves that missed their way
and never found the western bay,
the gleaming walls of their long home
by the grey seas and the white foam,
who never trod the golden land
where the towers of the Valar stand,
all these were gathered in their realm
beneath the beech and oak and elm.

In later days, when Morgoth fled
from wrath and raised once more his head
and Iron Crown, his mighty seat
beneath the smoking mountain's feet
founded and fortified anew,
then slowly dread and darkness grew:
the Shadow of the North that all
the Folk of Earth would hold in thrall.
The lords of Men to knee he brings,
the kingdoms of the Exiled Kings
assails with ever-mounting war:
in their last havens by the shore
they dwell, or strongholds walled with fear
defend upon his borders drear,
till each one falls. Yet reign there still
in Doriath beyond his will
the Grey King and immortal Queen.
No evil in their realm is seen;
no power their might can yet surpass:
there still is laughter and green grass,
there leaves are lit by the white sun,
and many marvels are begun.

There went now in the Guarded Realm
beneath the beech, beneath the elm,
there lightfoot ran now on the green
the daughter of the king and queen:
of Arda’s eldest children born
in beauty of their elven-morn
and only child ordained by birth
to walk in raiment of the Earth
from Those descended who began
before the world of Elf and Man.7

Beyond the bounds of Arda far
still shone the Legions, star on star,
memorials of their labour long,
achievement of Vision and of Song;
and when beneath their ancient light
on Earth below was cloudless night,
music in Doriath awoke,
and there beneath the branching oak,

7 This statement about the uniqueness of Lúthien, as an earthly child of an unearthly mother
— for Melian was indeed (according to all tradition at least) one of the Ainur who existed from
before creation itself—underscores the cosmic dimensions of what might seem at first to be a
simple fairy-story of a love and a quest. ~BB
or seated on the beech-leaves brown,  
Daeron the dark with ferny crown  
played on his pipes with elvish art  
unbearable by mortal heart.

   No other player has there been,  
no other lips or fingers seen  
so skilled, 'tis said in elven-lore,  
save Maglor son of Fëanor,  
forgotten harper, singer doomed,  
who young when Laurelin yet bloomed  
to endless lamentation passed  
and in the tombless sea was cast.\(^8\)

But Daeron in his heart's delight  
yet lived and played by starlit night,  
until one summer-eve befell,  
as still the elven harpers tell.  
Then merrily his piping trilled:

\(^8\)The Weathertop manuscript here presents a slightly different ranking.

   Such players have there only been  
thrice in all Elvenesse, I ween:  
Tinflang Gelion who still the moon  
enchants on summer nights of June  
and kindles the pale firstling star;  
and he who harps upon the far  
forgotten beaches and dark shores  
where western foam for ever roars,  
Maglor whose voice is like the sea;  
and Daeron, mightiest of the three.

The figure of Tinflang, I am told by the Elves and by a Dúnedain friend, is a mannish invention,  
part of the Númenorean tradition that sought to transform the Eldar from august to merely charming or "magical." I am at a loss to explain the apparently fluctuating estimations of the skills of Maglor and Daeron. Also, in other works, Maglor is not said to have drowned, but (as in the variant text) to wander alone by the shores of the sea. –BB
the grass was soft, the wind was stilled,  
the twilight lingered faint and cool  
in shadow-shapes upon the pool!  
beneath the boughs of sleeping trees  
standing silent. About their knees  
a mist of hemlocks glimmered pale,  
and ghostly moths on lace-wings frail  
grew to and fro. Beside the mere  
quickening, rippling, rising clear  
the piping called. Then forth she came,  
as sheer and sudden as a flame  
of peerless white the shadows cleaving,  
her maiden-bower on white feet leaving;  
and as when summer stars arise  
radiant into darkened skies,  
her living light on all was cast  
in fleeting silver as she passed.  
There now she stepped with elven pace,  
bending and swaying in her grace,  
as half-reluctant; then began  
to dance, to dance: in mazes ran  
bewildering, and a mist of white  
was wreathed about her whirling flight.  
Wind-ripples on the water flashed,  
and trembling leaf and flower were plashed  
with diamond-clews, as ever fleet  
and fleeter went her winged feet.

The dancing of Lúthien  
to the piping of Daeron
Her long hair as a cloud was streaming about her arms uplifted gleaming, as slow above the trees the Moon in glory of the plenilune arose, and on the open glade its light serene and clear was laid. Then suddenly her feet were stilled, and through the woven wood there thrilled, half wordless, half in elven-tongue, her voice upraised in blissful song that once of nightingales she learned and in her living joy had turned to heart-enthraling loveliness, unmarred, immortal, sorrowless.

Ir Ithil ammen Eruchín menel-vîr síla díriel si loth a galadh lasto dîn! A Hîr Annûn Gílthoniel, le linnon im Tinúviel!9

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9 Why exactly my uncle chose to leave the song of Lúthien untranslated, I cannot with certainly say. Here is my own rendering: “The Moon, for us children of the One, sky-jewel, shines watching/ now flower and tree listen silently/ O Lady of the West, Star-kindler/ To you I Sing, The Nightingale.” If my own rendering is any indication, perhaps he felt it was impossible to capture in the Common Speech. It is interesting that Lúthien names herself “Nightingale” before Beren does, though it is generally assumed that it was he who bestowed that name upon her.
O elven-fairest Lúthien
what wonder moved thy dances then?
That night what doom of Elvenesse
enchanted did thy voice possess?
Such marvel shall there no more be
on Earth or west beyond the Sea,
at dusk or dawn, by night or noon
or neath the mirror of the moon!
On Neldoreth was laid a spell;
the piping into silence fell,
for Daeron cast his flute away,
unheeded on the grass it lay,
in wonder bound as stone he stood
heart-broken in the listening wood.
And still she sang above the night,
as light returning into light
upsoaring from the world below
when suddenly there came a slow
dull tread of heavy feet on leaves,
and from the darkness on the eaves
of the bright glade a shape came out
with hands agrope, as if in doubt
or blind, and as it stumbling passed
under the moon a shadow cast
bended and darkling. Then from on high
as lark falls headlong from the sky
the song of Lúthien fell and ceased;
but Daeron from the spell released
awoke to fear, and cried in woe:
'Flee Lúthien, ah Lúthien go!
An evil walks the wood! Away!'
Then forth he fled in his dismay
ever calling her to follow him,
until far off his cry was dim
'Ah flee, ah flee now, Lúthien!'
But silent stood she in the glen
unmoved, who never fear had known,
as slender moonlit flower alone,
seeing that shape with shagged hair
and shadow long that halted there.
Then sudden she vanished like a dream
in dark oblivion, a gleam
in hurrying clouds, for she had leapt
among the hemlocks tall, and crept
under a mighty plant with leaves
all long and dark, whose stem in sheaves
upheld an hundred umbels fair;
and her white arms and shoulders bare
her raiment pale, and in her hair
the wild white roses glimmering there,
all lay like spattered moonlight hoar
in gleaming pools upon the floor.
Then stared he wild in dumbness bound
at silent trees, deserted ground;
he blindly groped across the glade
to the dark trees' encircling shade,
and, while she watched with veiled eyes,
touched her soft arm in sweet surprise.
Like startled moth from deathlike sleep
in sunless nook or bushes deep
she darted swift, and to and fro
with cunning that elvish dancers know
about the trunks of trees she twined
a path fantastic. Far behind
enchanted, wildered and forlorn
Beren came blundering, bruised and torn:
Esgalduin the elven-stream,
in which amid tree-shadows gleam
the stars, flowed strong before his feet.  
Some secret way she found, and fleet
passed over and was seen no more,
and left him forsaken on the shore.

'Darkly the sundering flood rolls past!

10 In the Cardolan codex version there is this passage which sets out to contrast the pure
vision which Beren has of Lúthien with the horrors he has just experienced crossing the
Mountains of Terror and dreadful valley of Dungortheb:

Forwandered, wayworn, gaunt was he
his body sick and heart gone cold,
grey in his hair, his youth turned old;
for those that tread that lonely way
a price of woe and anguish pay.
And now his heart was headed and slain
with a new life and with new pain.
He gazed, and as he gazed her hair
within its cloudy web did snare
the silver moonbeams sifting white
between the leaves, and glinting bright
the tremulous starlight of the skies
was caught and mirrored in her eyes.
Then all his journey's lonely fire,
the hunger and the haggard care,
the awful mountains' stones he stained
with blood of weary feet, and gained
only a land of ghosts, and fear
in dark ravines imprisoned sheer-
there mighty spiders wove their webs,
old creatures foul with birdlike nebs
that span their traps in dizzy air,
and filled it with clinging black despair,
and there they lived, and the sucked bones
lay white beneath on the dank stones
now all these horrors like a cloud
faded from mind. The waters loud
falling from pineclad heights no more
he heard, those waters grey and fiore
that bittersweet he drank and filled
his mind with madness - all was stilled.
He recked not now the burning road,
the paths demented where he strode
endlessly ... and ever new
horizons stretched before his view
as each blue ridge with bleeding feet
was climbed, and down he went to meet
battle with creatures old and strong
and monsters in the dark, and long,
long watches in the haunted night
while evil shapes with baleful light
in clustered eyes did crawl and snuff
beneath his tree - not half enough
the price he deemed to come at last
to that pale moon when day had passed,
to those clear stars of Elvenesse,
the hearts-ease and the loveliness.
To this my long way comes at last-
a hunger and a loneliness,
enchanted waters pitiless.'

A summer waned, an autumn glowed,
and Beren in the woods abode,
as wild and wary as a faun
that sudden wakes at rustling dawn,
and flits from shade to shade, and flees
the brightness of the sun, yet sees
all stealthy movements in the wood.
The murmurous warmth in weathers good,
the hum of many wings, the call
of many a bird, the pattering fall
of sudden rain upon the trees,
the windy tide in leafy seas,
the creaking of the boughs, he heard;
but not the song of sweetest bird
brought joy, or comfort to his heart,
a wanderer dumb who dwelt apart;
who sought unceasing and in vain
to hear and see those things again:
a song more fair than nightingale,
a wonder in the moonlight pale.

An autumn waned, a winter laid
the withered leaves in grove and glade;  
the beeches bare were gaunt and grey,  
and red their leaves beneath them lay.  
From cavern pale the moist moon eyes  
the white mists that from earth arise  
to hide the morrow's sun and drip  
all the grey day from each twig's tip  
By dawn and dusk he seeks her still;  
by noon and night in valleys chill,  
nor hears a sound but the slow beat  
on sodden leaves of his own feet.

The wind of winter winds his horn;  
the misty veil is rent and torn.  
The wind dies; the starry choirs  
leap in the silent sky to fires,  
whose light comes bitter-cold and sheer  
through domes of frozen crystal clear.

A sparkle through the darkling trees,  
a piercing glint of light he sees,  
and there she dances all alone  
upon a treeless knoll of stone!

Her mantle blue with jewels white  
c caught all the rays of frosted light.  
She shone with cold and wintry flame,
as dancing down the hill she came,
and passed his watchful silent gaze,
a glimmer as of stars ablaze.
And snowdrops sprang beneath her feet,
and one bird, sudden, late and sweet,
shrilled as she wayward passed along.
A frozen brook to bubbling song
awoke and laughed; but Beren stood
still bound enchanted in the wood.
Her starlight faded and the night
closed o'er the snowdrops glimmering white.
Thereafter on a hillock green
he saw far off the elven-sheen
of shining limb and jewel bright
often and oft on moonlit night;
and Daeron's pipe awoke once more,
and soft she sang as once before.
Then nigh he stole beneath the trees,
and heartache mingled with hearts-ease.
A night there was when winter died;
then all alone she sang and cried
and danced until the dawn of spring,
and chanted some wild magic thing
that stirred him, till it sudden broke
the bonds that held him, and he woke
to madness sweet and brave despair.
He flung his arms to the night air,
and out he danced unheeding, fleet, enchanted, with enchanted feet. He sped towards the hillock green, the lissom limbs, the dancing sheen; he leapt upon the grassy hill his arms with loveliness to fill: his arms were empty, and she fled; away, away her white feet sped. But as she went he swiftly came and called her with the tender name of nightingales in elvish tongue that all the woods now sudden rung: 'Tinúviel! Tinúviel!' And clear his voice was as a bell; its echoes wove, a binding spell: 'Tinúviel! Tinúviel!' His voice such love and longing filled one moment stood she, fear was stilled; one moment only; like a flame he leaped towards her as she stayed and caught and kissed that elven maid. As love there woke in sweet surprise the starlight trembled in her eyes. A! Lúthien! A! Lúthien! more fair than any child of Men; O! loveliest maid of Elvenesse, what madness does thee now possess!
A! lissom limbs and shadowy hair
and chaplet of white snowdrops there;
O! starry diadem and white
pale hands beneath the pale moonlight!
She left his arms and slipped-away
just at the breaking of the day.
He lay upon the leafy mould,
his face upon earth's bosom cold,
aswoon in overwhelming bliss,
enchanted of an elvish kiss,
seeing within his darkened eyes
the light that for no darkness dies,
the loveliness that doth not fade,
though all in ashes cold be laid.
Then folded in the mists of sleep
he sank into abysses deep,
drowned in an overwhelming grief
for parting after meeting brief;
a shadow and a fragrance fair
lingered, and waned, and was not there.
Forsaken, barren, bare as stone,
the daylight found him cold, alone.
'Where art thou gone? The day is bare,
the sunlight dark, and cold the air!
Tinúviel, where went thy feet?
O wayward star! O maiden sweet!
O flower of Elfland all too fair
for mortal heart! The woods are bare!
The woods are bare!' he rose and cried.
Ere spring was born, the spring hath died!
And wandering in path and mind
he groped as one gone sudden blind,
who seeks to grasp the hidden light
with faltering hands in more than night.

And thus in anguish Beren paid
for that great doom upon him laid,
the deathless love of Lúthien,
too fair for love of mortal Men;
and in his doom was Lúthien snared,
the deathless, in his dying shared;
and Fate them forged a binding chain
of living love and mortal pain.

Beyond all hope her feet returned
at eve, when in the sky there burned
the flame of stars; and in her eyes
there trembled the starlight of the skies,
and from her hair the fragrance fell
of elvenflowers in elven-dell.

Thus Lúthien, whom no pursuit,
no snare, no dart that hunters shoot,
might hope to win or hold, she came
at the sweet calling of her name;
and thus in his her slender hand
was linked in far Beleriand;
in hour enchanted long ago
her arms about his neck did go,
and gently down she drew to rest
his weary head upon her breast.

A! Lúthien, Tinúviel,
why wentest thou to darkling dell
with shining eyes and dancing pace,
the twilight glimmering in thy face?
Each day before the end of eve
she sought her love, nor would him leave,
until the stars were dimmed, and day
came glimmering eastward silver-grey.
Then trembling-veiled she would appear
and dance before him, half in fear;
there flitting just before his feet
she gently chid with laughter sweet:
'Come! dance now, Beren, dance with me!
For fain thy dancing I would see.
Come! thou must woo with nimbler feet,
than those who walk where mountains meet
the bitter skies beyond this realm
of marvelous moonlit beech and elm.'

In Doriath Beren long ago
new art and lore he learned to know;
his limbs were freed; his eyes alight,
kindled with a new enchanted sight;
and to her dancing feet his feet
attuned went dancing free and fleet;
his laughter welled as from a spring
of music, and his voice would sing
as voices of those in Doriath
where paved with flowers are floor and path.
The year thus on to summer rolled,
from spring to a summertime of gold.

Thus fleeting fast their short hour flies,
while Daeron watches with fiery eyes,
haunting the gloom of tangled trees
all day, until at night he sees
in the fickle moon their moving feet,
two lovers linked in dancing sweet,
two shadows shimmering on the green
where lonely-dancing maid had been.

'Hateful art thou, O Land of Trees!
May fear and silence on thee seize!
My flute shall fall from idle hand
and mirth shall leave Beleriand;
music shall perish and voices fail
and trees stand dumb in dell and dale!'
It seems the very birds sing low; 
murmurless Esgalduin doth flow; 
the leaves scarce whisper on the trees, 
and soundless beat the wings of bees!

This Lúthien heard, and there the queen 
her sudden glances saw unseen. 
But Thingol marveled, and he sent 
for Daeron the piper, ere he went 
and sat upon his mounded seat— 
his grassy throne by the grey feet 
of the Queen of Beeches, Hirilorn, 
upon whose triple piers were borne 
the mightiest vault of leaf and bough 
from world's beginning until now. 
She stood above Esgalduin's shore, 
where long slopes fell beside the door, 
the guarded gates, the portals stark 
of the Thousand echoing Caverns dark.

There Thingol sat and heard no sound 
save far off footsteps on the ground; 
no flute, no voice, no song of bird, 
no choirs of windy leaves there stirred; 
and Daeron coming no word spoke, 
silent amid the woodland folk. 
Then Thingol said: 'O Daeron wise, 
with wary ears and watchful eyes,
who all that passes in this land
dost ever heed and understand,
what omen doth this silence bear?
What horn afar upon the air,
What summons do the woods await?
Mayhap Lord Tauron\textsuperscript{11} from his gate and tree propped, the forest-lord,
rides his wild stallion golden-shod
amid his green-clad hunters proud,
leaving his deer and friths divine
emerald forests? Some faint sign of great onset may have come
upon the Western wind, and dumb
the woods now listen for a chase that here once more shall thundering race
beneath the trees of Ennorath.\textsuperscript{12}
Would it were so! An age now hath gone by since Nahar\textsuperscript{13} trod this earth in days of our peace and ancient mirth,
erel rebel lords of Eldamar
pursuing Morgoth from afar brought war and ruin to the North.

\textsuperscript{11} Tauron is the Sindarin name for that Vala usually known as Oromë the Hunter. According to the Quentas and the Annals, Thingol had journeyed to Valinor with Oromë as one of the three ambassadors of the Eldar. ~BB

\textsuperscript{12} A rare poetic name for Middle-earth. ~BB

\textsuperscript{13} Lord Oromë’s immortal horse. ~BB
Doth Tauron to their aid come forth?
But if not he, who comes or what?'
And Daeron said: 'He cometh not!
No feet divine shall leave that shore
where the Outer Seas' last surges roar,
till many things be come to pass,
and many evils wrought. Alas!
the guest is here. The woods are still,
but wait not; for a marvel chill
them holds at the strange deeds they see,
though king sees not—yet queen, maybe,
can guess, and maiden doubtless knows
who ever now beside her goes.
beneath the shade of mortal trees.'
'Whither thy riddle points is plain'
the king in anger said, 'but deign
to make it plainer! Who is he
that earns my wrath? How walks he free
within my woods amid my folk,
a stranger to both beech and oak?'
But Daeron looked on Lúthien's face
and faltered, seeing his disgrace
in those clear eyes. He spoke no more,
and silent Thingol's anger bore.
Then Lúthien stepped lightly forth:
'Far in the mountain-leaguered North,
my father,' said she, 'lies the land
that groans beneath King Morgoth's hand. Thence came one hither, bent and worn in wars and travail, who had sworn undying hatred of that king; the last of Bëor's sons, they sing, and even hither far and deep within thy woods the echoes creep through the wild mountain-passes cold, the last of Bëor's house to hold a sword unconquered, neck unbowed, a heart by evil power uncowed. No evil needst thou think or fear of Beren son of Barahir! If aught thou hast to say to him, then swear to hurt not flesh nor limb, and I will lead him to thy hall, a son of kings, no mortal thrall.'

Then long King Thingol looked on her while hand nor foot nor tongue did stir, and Melian, silent, unamazed, on Lúthien and Thingol gazed. 'No blade nor chain his limbs shall mar' the king then swore. 'He wanders far, and news, mayhap, he hath for me, and words I have for him, maybe!' Now Thingol bade them all depart save Daeron, whom he called: 'What art,
what wizardry of Northern mist
hath this illcomer brought us? List!
Tonight go thou by secret path,
who knowest all wide Doriath,
and watch Lúthien—O daughter mine,
what madness doth thy heart entwine,
what web from Morgoth's dreadful halls
hath caught thy feet and thee enthralled!—
that she bid not this Beren flee
back whence he came. I would him see!
Take with thee woodland archers wise.
Let naught beguile your hearts or eyes!'

Thus Daeron heavyhearted did,
and the woods were filled with watchers hid;
yet needless, for Lúthien that night
led Beren by the golden light
of mounting moon unto the shore
and bridge before her father's door;
and the white light silent looked within
the waiting portals yawning dim.

Downward with gentle hand she led
through corridors of carven dread
whose turns were lit by lanterns hung
or flames from torches that were flung
on dragons hewn in the cold stone
with jewelled eyes and teeth of bone.
Then sudden, deep beneath the earth
the silences with silver mirth
were shaken and the rocks were ringing,
the birds of Melian were singing;
and wide the ways of shadow spread
as into archèd halls she led
Beren in wonder. There a light
like day immortal and like night
of stars unclouded, shone and gleamed.
A vault of topless trees it seemed,
whose trunks of carven stone there stood
like towers of an enchanted wood
in magic fast for ever bound,
bearing a roof whose branches wound
in endless tracery of green
lit by some leaf-emprisoned sheen
of moon and sun, and wrought of gems,
and each leaf hung on golden stems.

Lo! there amid immortal flowers
the nightingales in shining bowers
sang o'er the head of Melian,
while water for ever dripped and ran
from fountains in the rocky floor.
There Thingol sat. His crown he wore
of green and silver, and round his chair
a host in gleaming armor fair.
Then Beren looked upon the king and stood amazed; and swift a ring of elvish weapons hemmed him round.
Then Beren looked upon the ground, for Melian's gaze had sought his face, and dazed there drooped he in that place, and when the king spake deep and slow:
'Who art thou stumblest hither? Know that none unbidden seek this throne and ever leave these halls of stone!'
no word he answered, filled with dread.
But Lúthien answered in his stead: 'Behold, my father, one who came pursued by hatred like a flame! Lo! Beren son of Barahir! What need hath he thy wrath to fear, foe of our foes, without a friend, whose knees to Morgoth do not bend?'

'Let Beren answer!' Thingol said 'What wouldst thou here? What hither led thy wandering feet, O mortal wild? How hast thou Lúthien beguiled or darest thus to walk this wood unasked, in secret? Reason good 'twere best declare now if thou may, or never again see light of day!'
Then Beren looked in Lúthien's eyes and saw a light of starry skies, and thence was slowly drawn his gaze to Melian's face. As from a maze of wonder dumb he woke; his heart the bonds of awe there burst apart and filled with the fearless pride of old; in his glance now gleamed an anger cold. 'My feet hath fate, O king,' he said, 'here over the mountains bleeding led, and what I sought not I have found, and love it is hath here me bound. Thy dearest treasure I desire; nor rocks nor steel nor Morgoth's fire nor all the power of Elvenesse shall keep that gem I would possess. For fairer than are born to Men A daughter hast thou, Lúthien.'

Silence then fell upon the hall; like graven stone there stood they all, save one who cast her eyes aground, and one who laughed with bitter sound. Daeron the piper leant there pale against a pillar. His fingers frail there touched a flute that whispered not; his eyes were dark; his heart was hot.
'Death is the guerdon thou hast earned, O base born mortal, who hast learned in Morgoth's realm to spy and lurk like Orcs that do his evil work!' 'Death!' echoed Daeron fierce and low, but Lúthien trembling gasped in woe. 'And death,' said Thingol, 'thou shouldst taste, had I not sworn an oath in haste “that blade nor chain thy flesh should mar.” Yet captive bound by never a bar, unchained, unfettered, shalt thou be in lightless labyrinth endlessly that coils about my halls profound by magic bewildered and enwound; there wandering in hopelessness, thou shalt learn the power of Elvenesse!' 'That may not be!' Lo! Beren spake, and through the king's words coldly brake. 'What are thy mazes but a chain wherein the captive blind is slain? Twist not thy oaths, O elvish king, like faithless Morgoth! By this ring—the token of a lasting bond that Felagund of Nargothrond once swore in love to Barahir, who sheltered him with shield and spear and saved him from pursuing foe
on Northern battlefields long ago—
death thou canst give unearned to me,
but names I will not take from thee
of baseborn, spy, or Morgoth's thrall!
Are these the ways of Thingol's hall?'
Proud are the words, and all there turned
to see the jewels green that burned
in Beren's ring. These Noldor set
as eyes of serpents twined that met
beneath a golden crown of flowers,
that one upholds and one devours:
the badge that Finarfin made of yore
and Felagund his son now bore.
His anger was chilled, \(^{14}\) but little less,
and dark thoughts Thingol did possess,
though Melian the pale leant to his side
and whispered: 'O king, forgo thy pride!
Such is my counsel. Not by thee
shall Beren be slain, for far and free
from these deep halls his fate doth lead,
yet wound with thine. O king, take heed!'
But Thingol looked on Lúthien.
'Fairest of Elves! Unhappy Men,

\(^{14}\) Few, if any, other Noldorin tokens could have given Thingol pause at such a moment. His dislike and anger towards the house of Fëanor, and even that of Fingolfin, (because of the Kinslaying of Alqualondë) are the stuff of legend. However, he owned that children of Finarfin were his own close kin, and alone of all the Noldor, they were welcome in Menegroth. ~BB.
children of little lords and kings
mortal and frail, these fading things,
shall they then look with love on thee?'
his heart within him thought.

'I see
thy ring,' he said, 'O mighty man!
But to win the child of Melian
a father's deeds shall not avail,
nor thy proud words at which I quail.
A treasure dear I too desire,
but rocks and steel and Morgoth's fire
from all the powers of Elvenesse
do keep the jewel I would possess.
Yet bonds like these I hear thee say
affright thee not. Now go thy way!
Bring me one shining Silmaril
from Morgoth's crown, then if she will,
may Lúthien set her hand in thine;
then shalt thou have this jewel of mine.'

Then Thingol's warriors loud and long
they laughed; for wide renown in song
had Fëanor's gems o'er land and sea,
the peerless Silmarils; and three
alone he made and kindled slow
in the land of the Valar long ago,
and there in Tûn of their own light
they shone like marvelous stars at night,
in great Noldorin hoards of Tûn,
while Glingal flowered and Belthil's bloom
yet lit the land beyond the shore
where the Shadowy Seas' last surges roar,
er Morgoth stole them and the Gnomes
seeking their glory left their homes,
er sorrows fell on Elves and Men,
er Beren was or Lúthien,\textsuperscript{15}
er Fëanor's sons in madness swore
their dreadful oath. But now no more
their beauty was seen, save shining clear
in Morgoth's dungeons vast and drear.
His iron crown they must adorn,
and gleam 'bove Orcs and slaves forlorn,
treasured in Hell above all wealth,
more than his eyes; and might nor stealth
could touch them, or even gaze too long
upon their magic. Throng on throng
of Orcs with reddened scimitars
encircled him, and mighty bars
and everlasting gates and walls,
who wore them now amidst his thralls.

\textsuperscript{15} This statement, at least, is a poetic fiction. According to the Grey Annals, Lúthien was born more than 3000 sun-years before ever meeting Beren, and long before the Noldor left Valinor. Indeed, if the Grey Annals and those of Aman can be relied on and reconciled, Lúthien was older than her cousin by marriage, Finarfin son of Finwē, and therefore significantly older than his own children: Finrod, Angrod, Aegnor, Orodreth and Galadriel. \textit{\textsuperscript{BB}}
Then Beren laughed more loud than they in bitterness, and thus did say:
'For little price do elven-kings their daughters sell—for gems and rings and things of gold! If such thy will, thy bidding I will now fulfill. On Beren son of Barahir thou hast not looked the last, I fear. Farewell, Tinúviel, starlit maiden! Ere the pale winter pass snowladen, I will return, not thee to buy with any jewel in Elvenesse, but to find my love in loveliness, a flower that grows beneath the sky.'
Bowing before Melian and the king he turned, and thrust aside the ring of guards about him, and was gone, and his footsteps faded one by one in the dark corridors.

'A guileful oath thou sworest, father! Thou hast both to blade and chain his flesh now doomed in Morgoth's dungeons deep entombed,' said Lúthien, and welling tears sprang in her eyes, and hideous fears clutched at her heart. All looked away, and later remembered the sad day
whereafter Lúthien no more sang.
Then clear in the silence the cold words rang
of Melian: 'Counsel cunning-wise,
O king!' she said 'Yet if mine eyes
lose not their power, 'twere well for thee
that Beren failed his errantry.
Well for thee, but for thy child
a dark doom and a wandering wild.'

'I sell not to Men those whom I love'
said Thingol, 'whom all things above
I cherish; and if hope there were
that Beren should ever living fare
to the Thousand Caves once more, I swear
he should not ever have seen the air
or light of heaven's stars again.'
But Melian smiles, and there was pain
as of far knowledge in her eyes;
for such is the sorrow of the wise.\footnote{The whole latter part of this canto, from the moment that Thingol names his price, is underscored with a tragic awareness that this demand (and Beren's ultimately successful fulfillment of it) will prove the undoing of both Thingol and his kingdom. §fb§}
VI  
So days drew on from the mournful day; the curse of silence no more lay on Doriath, though Daeron's flute and Lúthien's singing both were mute. The murmurs soft awake once more about the woods, the waters roar past the great gates of Thingol's halls; but no dancing step of Lúthien falls on turf or leaf. For she forlorn, where stumbled once, where bruised and torn, with longing on him like a dream, had Beren sat by the shrouded stream Esgalduin the dark and strong, she sat and mourned in a low song: 'Endless roll the waters past! To this my love hath come at last, enchanted waters pitiless, a heartache and a loneliness.'

The summer turns. In branches tall she hears the pattering raindrops fall, the windy tide in leafy seas, the creaking of the countless trees; and longs unceasing and in vain to hear one calling once again the tender name that nightingales
were called of old. Echo fails.
'Tinúviel! Tinúviel!'
the memory is like a knell,
a faint and far-off tolling bell:
'Tinúviel! Tinúviel!'

'O mother Melian, tell to me
some part of what thy dark eyes see!
Tell of thy magic where his feet
are wandering! What foes him meet?
O mother, tell me, lives he still
treading the desert and the hill?
Do sun and moon above him shine,
do the rains fall on him, mother mine?'

'Nay, Lúthien my child, I fear
he lives indeed in bondage drear.
The Lord of Wolves hath prisons dark,
chains and enchantments cruel and stark,
there trapped and bound and languishing
now Beren dreams that thou dost sing.'

'Then I alone must go to him
and dare the dread in dungeons dim;
for none there be that will him aid
in all the world, save elven-maid
whose only skill were joy and song,
and both have failed and left her long.'
Then nought said Melian thereto,
though wild the words. She wept anew,
and ran through the woods like hunted deer
with her hair streaming and eyes of fear.
Daeron she found with ferny crown
silently sitting on beech-leaves brown.
On the earth she cast her at his side.
'O Daeron, Daeron, my tears,' she cried,
'now pity for our old days' sake!
Make me a music for heart's ache,
for heart's despair, and for heart's dread,
for light gone dark and laughter dead!'

'But for music dead there is no note,'
Daeron answered, and at his throat
his fingers clutched. Yet his pipe he took,
and sadly trembling the music shook;
and all things stayed while that piping went
wailing in the hollows, and there intent
they listened, their business and mirth,
their hearts' gladness and the light of earth
forgotten; and bird-voices failed
while Daeron's flute in Doriath wailed.
Lúthien wept not for very pain,
and when he ceased she spoke again:
'My friend, I have a need of friends,
as he who a long dark journey wends,
and fears the road, yet dare not turn
and look back where the candles burn
in windows he has left. The night
in front, he doubts to find the light
that far beyond the hills he seeks.'
And thus of Melian's words she speaks,
and of her doom and her desire
to climb the mountains, and the fire
and ruin of the Northern realm
to dare, a maiden without helm
or sword, or strength of hardy limb,
where magic founders and grows dim.
His aid she sought to guide her forth
and find the pathways to the North,
if he would not for love of her
go by her side a wanderer.

'Wherefore,' said he, 'should Daeron go
into direst peril earth doth know
for the sake of mortal who did steal
his laughter and joy? No love I feel
for Beren son of Barahir;
nor weep for him in dungeons drear,
who in this wood have chains enow,
heavy and dark. But thee, I vow,
I will defend from perils fell
and deadly wandering into hell.'
No more they spake that day, and she perceived not his meaning. Sorrowfully she thanked him, and she left him there. A tree she climbed, till the bright air above the woods her dark hair blew, and straining afar her eyes could view the outline grey and faint and low of dizzy towers where the clouds go, the southern faces mounting sheer in rocky pinnacle and pier of Shadowy Mountains pale and cold; and wide the lands before them rolled. But straightway Daeron sought the king and told him his daughter's pondering, and how her madness might her lead to ruin, unless the king gave heed. Thingol was wroth, and yet amazed; in wonder and half fear he gazed on Daeron, and said: 'True hast thou been. Now ever shall love be us between, while Doriath lasts; within this realm thou art a prince of beech and elm!' He sent for Lúthien, and said: 'O maiden fair, what hath thee led to ponder madness and despair to wander to ruin, and to fare
from Doriath against my will, 
stealing like a wild thing men would kill\textsuperscript{17} 
into the emptiness outside?'
'The wisdom, father,' she replied;\textsuperscript{18}
nor would she promise to forget, 
nor would she vow for love or threat 
her folly to forsake and meek 
in Doriath her father's will to seek. 
This only vowed she, if go she must, 
that none but herself would she now trust, 
no folk of her father's would persuade 
to break his will or lend her aid; 
if go she must, she would go alone 
and friendless dare the walls of stone.

In angry love and half in fear 
Thingol took counsel his most dear 
to guard and keep. He would not bind 
in caverns deep and intertwined 
sweet Lúthien, his lovely maid, 
who robbed of air must wane and fade,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Bother! Line does not scan. Revise. \textsuperscript{BB}
  \item It is unclear what Lúthien might mean by :”The wisdom” here. The poet does not make her elaborate her response to Thingol in the way we might expect. The scholiasts of Arnor have left long debates on this passage. The most popular suppositions are that “wisdom” here represents a kind of foreknowledge: either that of Lúthien’s mother Melian, or a gift given to Lúthien herself. Another popular theory is that lines are missing from the poem. \textsuperscript{BB}
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
who ever must look upon the sky
and see the sun and moon go by.
But close unto his mounded seat
and grassy throne there ran the feet
of Hirilorn, the beechen queen.
Upon her triple boles were seen
no break or branch, until aloft
in a green glimmer, distant, soft,
the mightiest vault of leaf and bough
from world's beginning until now
was flung above Esgalduin's shores
and the long slopes to Thingol's doors.

Grey was the rind of pillars tall
and silken-smooth, and far and small
to squirrels' eyes were those who went
at her grey feet upon the bent.
Now Thingol made men in the beech,
in that great tree, as far as reach
their longest ladders, there to build
an airy house; and as he willed
a little dwelling of fair wood
was made, and veiled in leaves it stood
above the first branches. Corners three
it had and windows faint to see,
and by three shafts of Hirilorn
in the corners standing was upborne.
There Lúthien was bidden dwell,
until she was wiser and the spell
of madness left her. Up she clomb
the long ladders to her new home
among the leaves, among the birds;
she sang no song, she spoke no words.
White glimmering in the tree she rose,
and her little door they heard her close.
The ladders were taken and no more
her feet might tread Esgalduin's shore.

Thither at whiles they climbed and brought
all things she needed or besought;
but death was his, whoso should dare
a ladder leave, or creeping there
should set one by the tree at night
a guard was held from dusk to light
about the grey feet of Hirilorn
and Lúthien in prison and forlorn.
There Daeron grieving often stood
in sorrow for the captive of the wood,
and melodies made upon his flute
leaning against a grey tree-root.
Lúthien would from her windows stare
and see him far under piping there,
and she forgave his betraying word
for the music and the grief she heard,
and only Daeron would she let
across her threshold foot to set.

Yet long the hours when she must sit and see the sunbeams dance and flit in beechen leaves, or watch the stars peep on clear nights between the bars of beechen branches. And one night just ere the changing of the light a dream there came, from the West, maybe, or Melian's magic. She dreamed that she heard Beren's voice o'er hill and fell 'Tinúviel' call, 'Tinúviel.' And her heart answered: 'Let me be gone to seek him no others think upon!' She woke and saw the moonlight pale through the slim leaves. It trembled frail upon her arms, as these she spread and there in longing bowed her head, and yearned for freedom and escape.

Now Lúthien doth her counsel shape; and Melian's daughter of deep lore knew many things, yea, magics more than then or now know elven-maids that glint and shimmer in the glades. She pondered long, while the moon sank and faded, and the starlight shrunk, and the dawn opened. At last a smile
on her face flickered. She mused a while, and watched the morning sunlight grow, then called to those that walked below. And when one climbed to her she prayed that he would in the dark pools wade of cold Esgalduin, water clear, the clearest water cold and sheer to draw for her. 'At middle night,' she said, 'in bowl of silver white it must be drawn and brought to me with no word spoken, silently. Another she begged to bring her wine, in a jar of gold where flowers twine 'and singing let him come to me at high noon, singing merrily.' Again she spake: 'Now go, I pray, to Melian the queen, and say: "thy daughter many a weary hour slow passing watches in her bower; a spinning-wheel she begs thee send."' Then Daeron she called: 'I prithee, friend, climb up and talk to Lúthien!' And sitting at her window then, she said: 'My Daeron, thou hast craft, beside thy music, many a shaft and many a tool of carven wood to fashion with cunning. It were good,
if thou wouldst make a little loom
to stand in the corner of my room.
My idle fingers would spin and weave
a pattern of colors, of morn and eve,
of sun and moon and changing light
amid the beech-leaves waving bright.
'This Daeron did and asked her then:
'O Lúthien, O Lúthien,
What wilt thou weave? What wilt thou spin?'
'A marvelous thread, and wind therein
a potent magic, and a spell
I will weave within my web that hell
nor all the powers of Dread shall break.'
Then Daeron wondered, but he spake
no word to Thingol, though his heart
feared the dark purpose of her art.

And Lúthien now was left alone.
A magic song to Men unknown
she sang, and singing then the wine
with water mingled three times nine;
and as in golden jar they lay
she sang a song of growth and day;
and as they lay in silver white
another song she sang, of night,
and darkness without end, of height
uplifted to the stars, and flight
and freedom. And all names of things tallest and longest on earth she sings: the locks of the Longbeard dwarves;\textsuperscript{19} the tail of Draugluin the werewolf pale; the body of Glaurung the great drake; the vast upsoaring peaks that quake above the fires in Angband's gloom; the chain Angainor that ere Doom for Morgoth, the just Valar wrought of steel and torment. Names she sought, and sang of Glend the sword of Nan; of Gilim the giant of Eruman;\textsuperscript{20} and last and longest named she then the endless hair of Uinen, the Lady of the Sea, that lies

\textsuperscript{19} The Longbeard dwarves, Durin's folk, were probably not directly known to the Men or Elves of Beleriand, most of whose knowledge of dwarves was of the Firebeards and Broadbeams of the Blue Mountains. Some scholiasts say that this argues for a definite second age authorship for the poem. But although direct contact is unlikely, indirect trade with Moria, funneled through Nogrod and Belegost, probably meant that the cultures of Beleriand were aware of Khâzad-Dûm. If anything this makes the reference here more plausible, since anyone actually acquainted with the Longbeards knows that their beards are not as unnaturally long as Lúthien's incantation suggests. ~BB

\textsuperscript{20} Not all of the things referenced in Lúthien's incantation are still known of by the wise, and some may be poetic inventions. Draugluin the werewolf appears later in the Lay. Glaurung is remembered mainly as the father of all dragons and the chief antagonist of the Narn I Chîn Húrin. Angainor, here described as the eventual fetter of Morgoth, is elsewhere described as already existing, having been used to chain him during his long captivity in Valinor. Nan, his sword Glend, and the giant Gilim are all otherwise unknown. Eruman, apparent home of Gilim, is an archaic name for Araman, the desolate northeastern coasts of the Undying Lands, outside the Pélori mountains. ~BB
through all the waters under skies.\textsuperscript{21}

Then did she lave her head and sing
a theme of sleep and slumbering,
profound and fathomless and dark
as Lúthien's shadowy hair was dark each
thread was more slender and more fine
than threads of twilight that entwine
in filmy web the fading grass
and closing flowers as day doth pass.

Now long and longer grew her hair,
and fell to her feet, and wandered there
like pools of shadow on the ground.
Then Lúthien in a slumber drowned
was laid upon her bed and slept,
till morning through the windows crept
thinly and faint. And then she woke,
and the room was filled as with a smoke
and with an evening mist, and deep
she lay thereunder drowsed in sleep.
Behold! her hair from windows blew
in morning airs, and darkly grew
waving about the pillars grey
of Hirilorn at break of day.

\textsuperscript{21} Uinen, according to the traditions of the Dúnedain and the teaching of the Elves, is one of
the greatest of the Maiar—the lesser order of Ainur who were before the world. Her spouse is
Ossë of the waves. Uinen, unlike her tempestuous husband, is associated with calm seas. She
is said to calm Ossë's storms with her hair. So, like Lúthien's cloak which she is making,
Uinen's hair is not only long but soothing in character. ~BB
Then groping she found her little shears, and cut the hair about her ears, and close she cropped it to her head, enchanted tresses, thread by thread. Thereafter grew they slow once more, yet darker than their wont before. And now was her labour but begun: long was she spinning, long she spun; and though with elvish skill she wrought, long was her weaving. If men sought to call her, crying from below, 'Nothing I need,' she answered, 'go! I would keep my bed, and only sleep I now desire, who waking weep.'

Then Daeron feared, and in amaze he called from under; but three days she answered not. Of cloudy hair she wove a web like misty air of moonless night, and thereof made a robe as fluttering-dark as shade beneath great trees, a magic dress that all was drenched with drowsiness, enchanted with a mightier spell than Melian's raiment in that dell wherein of yore did Thingol roam.
beneath the dark and starry dome
that hung above the dawning world.
And now this robe she round her furled,
and veiled her garments shimmering white;
her mantle blue with jewels bright
like crystal stars, the lilies gold,
were wrapped and hid; and down there rolled
dim dreams and faint oblivious sleep
falling about her, to softly creep
through all the air. Then swift she takes
the threads unused; of these she makes
a slender rope of twisted strands
yet long and stout, and with her hands
she makes it fast unto the shaft
of Hirilorn. Now, all her craft
and labour ended, looks she forth
from her little window facing North.

Already the sunlight in the trees
is drooping red, and dusk she sees
come softly along the ground below,
and now she murmurs soft and slow.
Now chanting clearer down she cast
her long hair, till it reached at last
from her window to the darkling ground.
Men far beneath her heard the sound;
but the slumbrous strand now swung and swayed
above her guards. Their talking stayed, they listened to her voice and fell suddenly beneath a binding spell.

Now clad as in a cloud she hung; now down her roped hair she swung as light as squirrel, and away, away, she danced, and who could say what paths she took, whose elvish feet no impress made a-dancing fleet?
When Morgoth in that day of doom
had slain the Trees and filled with gloom
the shining land of Valinor,
there Fëanor and his sons then swore
the mighty oath upon the hill
of towered Tirion, that still
wrought wars and sorrow in the world.
From darkling seas the fogs unfurled.
their blinding shadows grey and cold
where Glingal once had bloomed with gold
and Belthil bore its silver flowers.
The mists were mantled round the towers
of the Elves' white city by the sea.
There countless torches fitfully
did start and twinkle, as the Gnomes
were gathered to their fading homes,
and thronged the long and winding stair
that led to the wide echoing square.

There Fëanor mourned his jewels divine,
the Silmarils he made. Like wine
his wild and potent words them fill;
a great host harkens deathly still.
But all he said both wild and wise,
half truth and half the fruit of lies
that Morgoth sowed in Valinor,
in other songs and other lore recorded is. He bade them flee from lands divine, to cross the sea, the pathless plains, the perilous shores where ice-infested water roars; to follow Morgoth to the unlit earth leaving their dwellings and olden mirth; to go back to the Outer Lands to wars and weeping. There their hands they joined in vows, those kinsmen seven, swearing beneath the stars of Heaven, by Varda the Holy that them wrought and bore them each with radiance fraught and set them in the deeps to flame. Timbrenting's holy height they name, whereon are built the timeless halls of Manwë Lord of Air. Who calls these names in witness may not break his oath, though earth and heaven shake.

Curufin, Celegorm the fair; Amrod and Amras were there, Caranthir dark, and Maedhros tall (whom after torment should befall), and Maglor the mighty who like the sea with deep voice sings yet mournfully. 'Be he friend or foe, or seed defiled
of Morgoth Bauglir, or mortal child
that in after days on earth shall dwell,
no law, nor love, nor league of hell,
not Valar's might, not moveless fate
shall him defend from wrath and hate
of Fëanor's sons, who takes or steals
or finding keeps the Silmarils,
the thrice-enchanted globes of light
that shine until the final night.'

The wars and wandering of the Gnomes
this tale tells not. Far from their homes
they fought and labored in the North.
Fingon daring alone went forth
and sought for Maedhros where he hung;
in torment terrible he swung
his wrist in band of forged steel,
from a sheer precipice where reel
the dizzy senses staring down
from Thangorodrim's stony crown.
The song of Fingon Elves yet sing,
captain of armies, Hithlum's king,
who fell at last in flame of swords
with his white banners and his lords.
They sing how Maedhros free he set,
and stayed the feud that slumbered yet
between the children proud of Finn.  

Now joined once more they hemmed him in,  
even great Morgoth, and their host  
beleaguered Angband, till they boast  
no Orc nor demon ever dare  
their leaguer break or past them fare.

Then days of solace woke on earth  
beneath the new-lit Sun, and mirth  
was heard in the Great Lands where Men,  
a young race, spread and wandered then.  
That was the time that songs do call  
the Siege of Angband, when like a wall  
the Noldor's swords did fence the earth  
from Morgoth's ruin, a time of birth,  
of blossoming, of flowers, of growth;  
but still there held the deathless oath,  
and still the Silmarils were deep  
in Angband's darkly-dolven keep.

An end there came, when fortune turned,  
and flames of Morgoth's vengeance burned,  
and all the might which he prepared  
in secret in his fastness flared  
and poured across the Thirsty Plain;

\[\text{22 This is the name, in Sindarin, of King Finwë of the Noldor, whom Morgoth murdered in Valinor when he stole the Silmarils. Normally his name in Westron would be given as “Finwë” but I need the rhyme!—BB}\]
and armies black were in his train.

The leaguer of Angband Morgoth broke; his enemies in fire and smoke were scattered, and the Orcs there slew and slew, until the blood like dew dripped from each cruel and crooked blade.

Then Barahir the bold did aid with mighty spear, with shield and men, Felagund wounded. To the fen escaping, there they bound their troth, and Felagund deeply swore an oath of friendship to his kin and seed, of love and succor in time of need. But there of Finarfin's sons four were Angrod slain and proud Aegnor. Felagund and Orodreth then gathered the remnant of their men, their maidens and their children fair forsaking war they made their lair and cavernous hold far in the south.

On Narog's towering bank its mouth was opened; which they hid and veiled and mighty doors, that unassailed till Túrin's day stood vast and grim, they built by trees o'ershadowed dim. And with them dwelt a long time there Curufin, and Celegorm the fair;
and a mighty folk grew neath their hands in Narog's secret halls and lands.\(^{23}\)

Thus Felagund in Nargothrond still reigned, a hidden king whose bond was sworn to Barahir the bold. And now his son through forests cold wandered alone as in a dream. Esgalduin's dark and shrouded stream he followed, till its waters frore were joined to Sirion, Sirion hoar pale silver water wide and free rolling in splendor to the sea.

Now Beren came unto the pools, wide shallow meres where Sirion cools his gathered tide beneath the stars, ere chafed and sundered by the bars of reedy banks a mighty fen he feeds and drenches, plunging then into vast chasms underground, where many miles his way is wound. Umbboth-Muilin, Twilight Meres,

\(^{23}\) According to the Grey Annals, Nargothrond was completed and occupied by the 102nd year of the First Age, whereas the poet here claims it was not established until after the Battle of Sudden Flame and the devastating losses of the house of Finarfin in the Vale of Sirion and in Dorthonion. These events took place in the 455th year of the First Age. The confusion of the poet may simply be a result of the change in the status of Nargothrond to sole kingdom of the house of Finarfin. ~BB
those great wide waters grey as tears
the Elves then named. Through driving rain
from thence across the Guarded Plain
the Hills of the Hunters Beren saw
with bare tops bitten bleak and raw
by western winds; but in the mist
of streaming rains that flashed and hissed
into the meres he knew there lay
beneath those hills the cloven way
of Narog, and the watchful halls
of Felagund beside the falls
of Ingwil tumbling from the wold.
An everlasting watch they hold,
the Elves of Nargothrond renowned,
and every hill is tower-crowned
where wardens sleepless peer and gaze
guarding the plain and all the ways
between Narog swift and Sirion pale;
and archers whose arrows never fail
there range the woods, and secret kill
all who creep thither against their will.

Yet now he thrusts into that land
bearing the gleaming ring on hand
of Felagund, and oft doth cry:
'Here comes no wandering Orc or spy,
but Beren son of Barahir
who once to Felagund was dear.'
So ere he reached the eastward shore of Narog, that doth foam and roar o'er boulders black, those archers green came round him. When the ring was seen they bowed before him, though his plight was poor and beggarly. Then by night they led him northward, for no ford nor bridge was built where Narog poured before the gates of Nargothrond, and friend nor foe might pass beyond.

To northward, where that stream yet young more slender flowed, below the tongue of foam-splashed land that Ginglith pens when her brief golden torrent ends and joins the Narog, there they wade. Now swiftest journey thence they made to Nargothrond's sheer terraces and dim gigantic palaces.

They came beneath a sickle moon to doors there darkly hung and hewn with posts and lintels of ponderous stone and timbers huge. Now open thrown were gaping gates, and in they strode where Felagund on throne abode.

Fair were the words of Narog's king to Beren, and his wandering
and all his feuds and bitter wars
recounted soon. Behind closed doors
they sat, while Beren told his tale
of Doriath; and words him fail
recalling Lúthien dancing fair
with wild white roses in her hair;
remembering her elven voice that rung
while stars in twilight round her hung.
He spake of Thingol's marvelous halls
by enchantment lit, where fountain falls
and ever the nightingale doth sing
to Melian and to her king.
The quest he told that Thingol laid
in scorn on him; how for love of maid
more fair than ever was born to Men,
of Tinúviel, of Lúthien,
he must essay the burning waste,
and doubtless death and torment taste.

This Felagund in wonder heard,
and heavily spake at last this word:
'It seems that Thingol doth desire
thy death. The everlasting fire
of those enchanted jewels all know
is cursed with an oath of endless woe,
and Fëanor's sons alone by right
are lords and masters of their light.
He cannot hope within his hoard
to keep this gem, nor is he lord
of all the folk of Elvenesse.
And yet thou say’st for nothing less
can thy return to Doriath
be purchased? Many a dreadful path
in sooth there lies before thy feet
and after Morgoth, still a fleet
untiring hate, as I know well,
would hunt thee from heaven unto hell.
Fëanor's sons would, if they could,
slay thee ere ever thou reached his wood
or laid in Thingol's lap that fire,
or gained at last thy sweet desire.
Lo! Celegorm and Curufin
here dwell this very realm within,
and yet though I, Finarfin's son,
am king, a mighty power have won
and many of their own folk lead.24
Friendship to me in every need
they yet have shown, but much I fear
that to Beren son of Barahir

24 Celegorm and Curufin’s lands, which had lain south of the Pass of Aglon and their eldest
brother’s fortress-town of Himring, were overrun in the Battle of Sudden Flame, and they and
a remnant of their folk had taken refuge in Nargothrond, after saving the life of Finrod’s last
surviving brother, Orodreth, covering his retreat from Tol Sirion. By the time of Beren’s arrival,
according to the Grey Annals, they and their folk had been in Nargothrond for nearly a
decade. ~BB
mercy or love they will not show
if once thy dreadful quest they know."

True words he spake. For when the king
to all his people told this thing,
and spake of the oath to Barahir,
and how that mortal shield and spear
had saved them from Morgoth and woe
on Northern battlefields long ago,
then many were kindled in their hearts
once more to battle. But up there starts
amid the throng, and loudly cries
for hearing, one with flaming eyes,
proud Celegorm with gleaming hair
and shining sword. Then all men stare
upon his stern unyielding face,
and a great hush falls upon that place.

"Be he friend or foe, or demon wild
of Morgoth, Elf, or mortal child,
or any that here on earth may dwell,
no law, nor love, nor league of hell,
no Vala’s might, no binding spell,
shall him defend from hatred fell
of Fëanor’s sons, whoso take or steal
or finding keep a Silmaril.
These we alone do claim by right,
our thrice enchanted jewels bright.'

Many wild and potent words he spoke, and as before in Tûn\textsuperscript{25} awoke his father's voice their hearts to fire, so now dark fear and brooding ire he cast on them, foreboding war of friend with friend; and pools of gore their minds imagined lying red in Nargothrond about the dead, did Narog's host with Beren go; or haply battle, ruin, and woe in Doriath where great Thingol reigned, if Fëanor's fatal jewel he gained. And even such as were most true to Felagund his oath did rue, and thought with terror and despair of seeking Morgoth in his lair with force or guile.

This Curufin when his brother ceased did then begin more to impress upon their minds; and such a spell he on them binds that never again till Túrin's day would Elves of Narog in array

\textsuperscript{25} This is an ancient mannish-Sindarin name for Tirion, the city of Noldor in the Calacirya of Eldamar. It derives from the elvish name for the hill on which the city stands, Túna.\textemdash BB
of open battle go to war.  
With secrecy, ambush, spies, and lore  
of wizardry, with silent leaguer  
of wild things wary, watchful, eager,  
of phantom hunters, venomed darts,  
and unseen stealthy creeping arts,  
with padding hatred that its prey  
with feet of velvet all the day  
followed remorseless out of sight  
and slew it unawares at night thus  
they defended Nargothrond,  
and forgot their kin and solemn bond  
for dread of Morgoth that the art  
of Curufin set within their heart.

So would they not that angry day  
King Finrod their liege lord obey,  
but sullen murmured that Finrod  
nor yet his house were as a god.  
Then Felagund took off his crown  
and at his feet he cast it down,  
the silver helm of Nargothrond:  
'Yours ye may break, but I my bond  
must keep, and kingdom here forsake.  
If hearts here were that did not quake,  
or to Finarfin's son were true,  
then I at least should find a few
to go with me, not like a poor rejected beggar scorn endure, turned from my gates to leave my town, my people, and my realm and crown!'

Hearing these words there swiftly stood beside him ten tried warriors good, men of his house who had ever fought wherever his banners had been brought. One stooped and lifted up his crown, and said: 'O king, to leave this town is now our fate, but not to lose thy rightful lordship. Thou shalt choose one to be steward in thy stead.'

Then Felagund upon the head of Orodreth set it: 'Brother mine, till I return this crown is thine.'

Then Celegorm no more would stay, and Curufin smiled and turned away.

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26 There are bitterly conflicting divisions among the loremasters of the Dúnedain as to the precise place of Orodreth in the House of Finarfin. There are fragmentary sources of great antiquity that suggest that Orodreth was in fact the grandson of Finarfin, through Finrod’s brother Angrod. Another tradition makes him the son of Finrod himself, although since most legends are clear that Finrod either had no wife, or that she refused to accompany him back to Middle-Earth, this seems less likely. Insofar as it is possible to get Elves to answer these sorts of questions, I have gathered that in reality Orodreth was indeed the son of Angrod. However, in nearly all the mannish texts, he is treated as Finrod’s youngest brother instead of as a nephew or a son. No matter which account is correct, by the time Finrod gave Orodreth his crown, the latter was the next-eldest male member of Finarfin’s house in Middle-Earth. ~BB
VIII
Thus twelve alone there ventured forth from Nargothrond, and to the North they turned their silent secret way, and vanished in the fading day. No trumpet sounds, no voice there sings, as robed in mail of cunning rings now blackened dark with helmets grey and sombre cloaks they steal away.

Far-journeying Narog's leaping course they followed till they found his source, the flickering falls, whose freshets sheer a glimmering goblet glassy-clear with crystal waters fill that shake and quiver down from Ivrin's lake, from Ivrin's mere that mirrors dim the pallid faces bare and grim of Shadowy Mountains neath the moon.

Now far beyond the realm immune from Orc and demon and the dread of Morgoth's might their ways had led. In woods o'ershadowed by the heights they watched and waited many nights, till on a time when hurrying cloud did moon and constellation shroud, and winds of autumn's wild beginning

The company of Finrod and Beren
soughed in the boughs, and leaves went spinning
down the dark eddies rustling soft,
they heard a murmur hoarsely waft
from far, a croaking laughter coming;
now louder; now they heard the drumming
of hideous stamping feet that tramp
the weary earth. Then many a lamp
of sullen red they saw draw near,
swinging, and glistening on spear
and scimitar. There hidden nigh
they saw a band of Orcs go by
with goblin-faces swart and foul.
Bats were about them, and the owl,
the ghostly forsaken night-bird cried
from trees above. The voices died,
the laughter like clash of stone and steel
passed and faded. At their heel
the Elves and Beren crept more soft
than foxes stealing through a croft
in search of prey. Thus to the camp
lit by flickering fire and lamp
they stole, and counted sitting there
full thirty Orcs in the red flare
of burning wood. Without a sound
they one by one stood silent round,
each in the shadow of a tree;
each slowly, grimly, secretly
bent then his bow and drew the string.

Hark! how they sudden twang and sing,
when Felagund lets forth a cry;
and twelve Orcs sudden fall and die.
Then forth they leap casting their bows.
Out their bright swords, and swift their blows!
The stricken Orcs now shriek and yell
as lost things deep in lightless hell.
Battle there is beneath the trees
bitter and swift; but no Orc flees;
there left their lives that wandering band
and stained no more the sorrowing land
with rape and murder. Yet no song
of joy, or triumph over wrong,
the Elves there sang. In peril sore
they were, for never alone to war
so small an Orc-band went, they knew.
Swiftly the raiment off they drew
and cast the corpses in a pit.
This desperate counsel had the wit
of Felagund for them devised:
as Orcs his comrades he disguised.

The poisoned spears, the bows of horn,
the crooked swords their foes had borne
they took; and loathing each him clad
in Angband's raiment foul and sad. They smeared their hands and faces fair with pigment dark; the matted hair all lank and black from goblin head they shore, and joined it thread by thread with Gnomish skill. As each one leers at each dismayed, about his ears he hangs it noisome, shuddering.

Then Felagund a spell did sing of changing and of shifting shape; their ears grew hideous, and agape their mouths did start, and like a fang each tooth became, as slow he sang. Their Gnomish raiment then they hid, and one by one behind him slid, behind a foul and goblin thing that once was elven-fair and king.

Northward they went; and Orcs they met who passed, nor did their going let, but hailed them in greeting; and more bold they grew as past the long miles rolled.

At length they came with weary feet beyond Beleriand. They found the fleet young waters, rippling, silver-pale of Sirion hurrying through that vale where Taur-na-Fuin, Deadly Night,
the trackless forest's pine-clad height,
falls dark forbidding slowly down
upon the east, while westward frown
the northward-bending Mountains grey
and bar the westering light of day.

An isled hill there stood alone
amid the valley, like a stone
rolled from the distant mountains vast
when giants in tumult hurtled past.
Around its feet the river looped
a stream divided, that had scooped
the hanging edges into caves.
There briefly shuddered Sirion's waves
and ran to other shores more clean.

An elven watchtower had it been,
and strong it was, and still was fair;
but now did grim with menace stare
one way to pale Beleriand,
the other to that mournful land
beyond the valley's northern mouth.
Thence could be glimpsed the fields of drouth,
the dusty dunes, the desert wide;
and further far could be descried
the brooding cloud that hangs and lowers
on Thangorodrim's thunderous towers.
Now in that hill was the abode of one most evil; and the road that from Beleriand thither came he watched with sleepless eyes of flame.  

From the North there led no other way, save east where the Gorge of Aglon lay, and that dark path of hurrying dread which only in need the Orcs would tread through Deadly Nightshade's awful gloom where Taur-na-Fuin's branches loom; and Aglon led to Doriath, and Fëanor's sons watched o'er that path.

Men called him Sauron, as a god in after days beneath his rod bewildered bowed to him, and made his ghastly temples in the shade. Not yet by Men enthralled adored, now was he Morgoth's mightiest lord, Master of Wolves, whose shivering howl for ever echoed in the hills, and foul

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27 This image of Sauron as "eyes of flame" is held by some scholars to mean that the Lay did not achieve its final form until the Third Age, since Sauron's form as a lidless eye was only assumed after the destruction of his body in the War of the Last Alliance. But this overlooks the fact that this form was not assumed, nor did the Eye become Sauron's mark, until the reoccupation of Mordor, in my own lifetime, and the poem is certainly far older than that!  

28 These last eight lines appear in the Weathertop codex, the most complete copy of the poem.

~BB
enchantments and dark sigaldry
did weave and wield. In glamoury
that necromancer held his hosts
of phantoms and of wandering ghosts,
of misbegotten or spell-wronged
monsters that about him thronged,
working his bidding dark and vile:
the werewolves of the Wizard's Isle. 29

From Thû their coming was not hid;
and though beneath the eaves they slid
of the forest's gloomy-hanging boughs,
he saw them afar, and wolves did rouse:
'Go! fetch me those sneaking Orcs,' he said,
that fare thus strangely, as if in dread,
and do not come, as all Orcs use
and are commanded, to bring me news
of all their deeds, to me, to Thû.'

29 Scholars of the Dúnedain have paid careful attention to this part of the poem, in order to
determine possible dates for the composition of the Lay as a whole. On the one hand, the poet
often prefers the ancient Edain's name for Sauron, "Thû," a corruption of his Sindarin name,
Gorthaur. This would suggest a relatively early date of composition, before Númenor became
too intimately engaged in the wars against Sauron—sometime before SA 1600, and adopted
his high-elven name in general use. On the other hand, the references to the widespread
practice of worshipping Thû-Sauron as a god (something which was done, eventually in
Númenor itself) and to Sauron's necromancy (with its implied connections to the Rings of
Power) suggest a later date of composition, perhaps even after the Downfall itself. The name
Thû is used most consistently in the Cardolan codex. In the Weathertop manuscript the form
Gorthû or Gorthaur also appears. Only the Fornost MS uses the name Sauron. ~BB
From his tower he gazed, and in him grew suspicion and a brooding thought, waiting, leering, till they were brought. Now ringed about with wolves they stand, and fear their doom. Alas! the land, the land of Narog left behind! Foreboding evil weights their mind, as downcast, halting, they must go and cross the stony bridge of woe to Wizard's Isle, and to the throne there fashioned of blood-darkened stone.

''Where have ye been? What have ye seen?''

''In Elvenesse; and tears and distress, the fire blowing and the blood flowing, these have we seen, there have we been. Thirty we slew and their bodies threw in a dark pit. The ravens sit and the owl cries where our swath lies.'''

''Come, tell me true, O Morgoth's thralls, what then in Elvenesse befalls?''

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30 These last seven lines (Sauron-Thû’s question, and the first reply) mark a passage where the Sindarin text goes into a completely different verse form, with complex parallel syntactic and metrical structures within each line. I have tried to represent that in Common Speech through the use of internal rhyme. ~BB
What of Nargothrond? Who reigneth there?
Into that realm did your feet dare?'

'Only its borders did we dare.
There reigns King Felagund the fair.'

'Then heard ye not that he is gone,
that Celegorm sits his throne upon?'

'That is not true! If he is gone,
then Orodreth sits his throne upon.'

'Sharp are your ears, swift have they got
tidings of realms ye entered not!
What are your names, O spearmen bold?
Who your captain, ye have not told.'

'Nereb and Dungalef and warriors ten,
so we are called, and dark our den
under the mountains. Over the waste
we march on an errand of need and haste.
Boldog the captain awaits us there
where fires from under smoke and flare.'

'Boldog, I heard, was lately slain
warring on the borders of that domain
where Robber Thingol and outlaw folk
cringe and crawl beneath elm and oak
in drear Doriath. Heard ye not then
of that pretty fay, of Lúthien?
Her body is very white and fair.
Morgoth would possess her in his lair.
Boldog he sent, but Boldog was slain:
strange ye were not in Boldog's train. 31

'Nereb looks fierce, his frown is grim.
Little Lúthien! What troubles him?
Why laughs he not to think of his lord
crushing a maiden in his hoard,
that foul should be what once was clean,
that dark should be where light has been?

‘Whom do ye serve, Light or Mirk?
Who is the maker of mightiest work?
Who is the king of earthly kings,
the greatest giver of gold and rings?
Who is the master of the wide earth?
Who despoiled them of their mirth,
the vain Valar? Repeat your vows,
Orcs of Bauglir! Don’t bend your brows!

31 This is the first of many references to the Orc-Captain Boldog. His movements in the poem,
always offstage, often provide critical motivation, distraction, or other causes for events in the
poem. Here, however, we are told by Thú that Boldog is already dead, but elsewhere it is said
that Boldog was sent forth to capture Lúthien, whom Morgoth knew to be at large outside the
confines of Doriath. However Lúthien does not contrive to leave Doriath until after she knows
Beren to be a prisoner on the Isle of Werewolves. It’s a tangled mess and no mistake. Probably
the poet’s invention in any case; there is no mention of Boldog or his expedition in the
Quentas or the Annals. ~BB

101
Death to light, to law, to love!
Cursed be moon and stars above!
May darkness everlasting old
that waits outside in surges cold
drown Manwë, Varda, and the sun!
May all in hatred be begun,
and all in evil ended be,
in the moaning of the endless Sea!

But no true Man nor Elf yet free
would ever speak that blasphemy,
and Beren muttered: 'Who is Thû
to hinder work that is to do?
Him we serve not, nor to him owe
obeisance, and we now would go.'

Sauron laughed: 'Patience! Not long
shall ye abide. But first a song
I will sing to you, to ears intent.'
Then his flaming eyes he on them bent,
and darkness black fell round them all.
Only they saw as through a pall
of eddying smoke those eyes profound
in which their senses choked and drowned.

He chanted a song of wizardry,
of piercing, opening, of treachery,
revealing, uncovering, betraying
Suddenly Finrod there a-swaying
sang in answer a song of staying,
resisting, battling against power,
of secrets kept, strength like a tower,
and trust unbroken, freedom, escape;
of changing and of shifting shape,
of snares eluded, broken traps,
the prison opening, the chain that snaps.

Backwards and forwards swayed their song.
Reeling and foundering, as ever more strong
Thû's chanting swelled, Felagund fought,
and all the magic and might he brought
of Elvenesse into his words.
Softly in the gloom they heard the birds
singing afar in Nargothrond,
the sighing of the sea beyond,
beyond the western world, on sand,
on sand of pearls in Elvenland.

Then the gloom gathered: darkness growing
in Eldamar, the red blood flowing
beside the sea, where Noldor slew
the Foamriders, and stealing drew
their white ships with their white sails
from lamplit havens. The wind wails. The wolf howls. The ravens flee. The ice mutters in the mouths of the Sea. The captives sad in Angband mourn. Thunder rumbles, the fires burn, a vast smoke gushes out, a moan and Finrod swoons before the throne.

Behold! they are in their own fair shape, fair-skinned, bright-eyed. No longer gape Orc-like their mouths; and now they stand betrayed into the wizard's hand. Thus came they unhappy into woe, to dungeons no hope nor glimmer know, where chained in chains that eat the flesh and woven in webs of strangling mesh they lay forgotten, in despair.

Yet not all unavailing were the spells of Felagund; for Thû neither their names nor purpose knew. These much he pondered and bethought, and in their woeful chains them sought,

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32 The Foamriders is an old Westron name for the third kindred of the Elves, the Teleri. The poet here borrowed a rare and poetic high-elven name for those Teleri who lingered by the sea in the Uttermost West, the "Solosimpi" or "Shoreland Pipers." "Foamriders" scanned better. ~BB
and threatened all with dreadful death, if one would not with traitor's breath reveal this knowledge. Wolves should come and slow devour them one by one before the others' eyes, and last should one alone be left aghast, then in a place of horror, hung with anguish should his limbs be wrung, in the bowels of the earth be slow endlessly, cruelly, put to woe and torment, till he all declared.

Even as he threatened, so it fared. From time to time in the eyeless dark two eyes would grow, and they would hark to frightful cries, and then a sound of rending, a slavering on the ground, and blood flowing they would smell. But none would yield, and none would tell.
Hounds there were in Valinor with silver collars. Hart and boar, the fox and hare and nimble roe there in the forests green did go. Oromë was the lord divine of all those woods. The potent wine went in his halls and hunting song. The Elves anew have named him long Tauron, the one whose horns did blow over the mountains long ago; who alone of Valar loved the world before the banners were unfurled of Moon and Sun; and shod with gold were his great horses. Hounds untold baying in woods beyond the West of race immortal he possessed: grey and limber, black and strong, white with silken coats and long, brown and brindled, swift and true as arrow from a bow of yew; their voices like the deeptoned bells that ring in Valmar's citadels, their eyes like living jewels, their teeth like ruel-bone. As sword from sheath they flashed and fled from leash to scent for Tauron's joy and merriment.
In Tauron's friths and pastures green
had Huan once a young whelp been.
He grew the swiftest of the swift,
and Oromë gave him as a gift
to Celegorm, who loved to follow
the Vala's horn o'er hill and hollow.

Alone of hounds of the Land of Light,
when sons of Fëanor took to flight
and came into the North, he stayed
beside his master. Every raid
and every foray wild he shared,
and into mortal battle dared.
Often he saved his elvish lord
from Orc and wolf and leaping sword.
A wolf-hound, tireless, grey and fierce
he grew; his gleaming eyes would pierce
all shadows and all mist, the scent
moons old he found through fen and bent,
through rustling leaves and dusty sand;
all paths of wide Beleriand
he knew. But wolves, he loved them best;
he loved to find their throats and wrest
their snarling lives and evil breath.
Sauron's wolfpacks him feared as Death.

No wizardry, nor spell, nor dart,
no fang, nor venom devil's art
could brew had harmed him; for his weird was woven. Yet he little feared that fate decreed and known to all: before the mightiest he should fall, before the mightiest wolf alone that ever was whelped in cave of stone.

Hark! afar in Nargothrond, far over Sirion and beyond, there are dim cries and horns blowing, and barking hounds through the trees going. The hunt is up, the woods are stirred. Who rides to-day? Ye have not heard that Celegorm and Curufin have loosed their dogs? With merry din they mounted ere the sun arose, and took their spears and took their bows. The wolves of Thû of late have dared both far and wide. Their eyes have glared by night across the roaring stream of Narog. Doth their master dream, perchance, of plots and counsels deep, of secrets that the Elf-lords keep, of movements in the Eldar's realm and errands under beech and elm?

Curufin spake: 'Good brother mine,
I like it not. What dark design
doth this portend? These evil things,
we swift must end their wanderings!
And more, 'twould please my heart full well
to hunt a while and wolves to fell.'
And then he leaned and whispered low
that Orodreth was a dullard slow;
long time it was since the king had gone,
and rumor or tidings came there none.

'At least thy profit it would be
to know whether dead he is or free;
to gather thy men and thy array.
"I go to hunt" then thou wilt say,
and men will think that Narog's good
ever thou heedest. But in the wood
things may be learned; and if by grace,
by some blind fortune he retrace
his footsteps mad, and if he bear
a Silmaril—I need declare
no more in words; but one by right
is thine (and ours), the jewel of light;
another may be won—a throne.
The eldest blood our house doth own.'

Celegorm listened. Nought he said,
but forth a mighty host he led;
and Huan leaped at the glad sounds,
the chief and captain of his hounds.

Three days they ride by holt and hill
the wolves of Thû to hunt and kill,
and many a head and fell of grey
they take, and many drive away,
till nigh to the borders in the West
of Doriath awhile they rest.

There were dim cries and horns blowing,
and barking dogs through the woods going.
The hunt was up. The woods were stirred,
and one there fled like startled bird,
and fear was in her dancing feet.
She knew not who the woods did beat.
Far from her home, forwandered, pale,
she flitted ghostlike through the vale;
ever her heart bade her up and on,
but her limbs were worn, her eyes were wan.
The eyes of Huan saw a shade
wavering, darting down a glade
like a mist of evening snared by day
and basting fearfully away.
He bayed, and sprang with sinewy limb
to chase the shy thing strange and dim.
On terror's wings, like a butterfly
pursued by a sweeping bird on high,
she fluttered hither, darted there,
now poised, now flying through the air—in vain. At last against a tree she leaned and panted. Up leaped he. No word of magic gasped with woe, no elvish mystery she did know or had entwined in raiment dark availed against that hunter stark, whose old immortal race and kind no spells could ever turn or bind. Huan alone that she ever met she never in enchantment set nor bound with spells. But loveliness and gentle voice and pale distress and eyes like starlight dimmed with tears tamed him that death nor monster fears.

Lightly he lifted her, light he bore his trembling burden. Never before had Celegorm beheld such prey: 'What hast thou brought, good Huan say! Dark-elvish maid, or wraith, or fay? Not such to hunt we came today.'

'Tis Lúthien of Doriath,' the maiden spake. 'A wandering path far from the Wood-Elves' sunny glades she sadly winds, where courage fades
and hope grows faint.' And as she spoke down she let slip her shadowy cloak, and there she stood in silver and white. Her starry jewels twinkled bright in the risen sun like morning dew; the lilies gold on mantle blue gleamed and glistened. Who could gaze on that fair face without amaze? Long did Curufin look and stare. The perfume of her flower-twined hair, her lissom limbs, her elvish face, smote to his heart, and in that place enchained he stood. 'O maiden royal, O lady fair, wherefore in toil and lonely journey dost thou go? What tidings dread of war and woe In Doriath have betid? Come tell! For fortune thee hath guided well; friends thou hast found,' said Celegorm, and gazed upon her elvish form.

In his heart him thought her tale unsaid he knew in part, but nought she read of guile upon his smiling face.

'Who are ye then, the lordly chase that follow in this perilous wood?' she asked; and answer seeming-good
they gave. 'Thy servants, lady sweet, lords of Nargothrond thee greet, and beg that thou wouldst with them go back to their hills, forgetting woe a season, seeking hope and rest. And now to hear thy tale were best.'

So Lúthien tells of Beren's deeds in northern lands, how fate him leads to Doriath, of Thingol's ire, the dreadful errand that her sire decreed for Beren. Sign nor word the brothers gave that aught they heard that touched them near. Of her escape and the marvelous mantle she did shape she lightly tells, but words her fail recalling sunlight in the vale, moonlight, starlight in Doriath, ere Beren took the perilous path.

'Need, too, my lords, there is of haste! No time in ease and rest to waste. For days are gone now since the queen, Melian whose heart hath vision keen, looking afar me said in fear that Beren lived in bondage drear. The Lord of Wolves hath prisons dark, chains and enchantments cruel and stark.
and there entrapped and languishing
doth Beren lie— if direr thing
hath not brought death or wish for death.'
then gasping woe bereft her breath.

To Celegorm said Curufin
apart and low: 'Now news we win
of Felagund, and now we know
why Sauron’s creatures prowling go',
and other whispered counsels spake,
and showed him what answer he should make.

'Lady,' said Celegorm, 'thou seest
we go a-hunting roaming beast,
and though our host is great and bold,
'tis ill prepared the wizard's hold
and island fortress to assault.
Deem not our hearts or wills at fault.
Lo! here our chase we now forsake
and home our swiftest road we take,
counsel and aid there to devise
for Beren that in anguish lies.'

To Nargothrond they with them bore
Lúthien, whose heart misgave her sore.
Delay she feared; each moment pressed
upon her spirit, yet she guessed
they rode not as swiftly as they might.
Ahead leaped Huan day and night, and ever looking back his thought was troubled. What his master sought, and why he rode not like the fire, why Curufin looked with hot desire on Lúthien, he pondered deep, and felt some evil shadow creep of ancient curse o'er Elvenesse. His heart was torn for the distress of Beren bold, and Lúthien dear, and Felagund who knew no fear.

In Nargothrond the torches flared and feast and music were prepared. Lúthien feasted not but wept. Her ways were trammelled; closely kept she might not fly. Her magic cloak was hidden, and no prayer she spoke was heeded, nor did answer find her eager questions. Out of mind, it seemed, were those afar that pined in anguish and in dungeons blind in prison and in misery. Too late she knew their treachery. It was not hid in Nargothrond that Fëanor's sons her held in bond, who Beren heeded not, and who
had little cause to wrest from Thû
the king they loved not and whose quest
old vows of hatred in their breast
had roused from sleep. Orodreth knew
the purpose dark they would pursue:
King Felagund to leave to die,
and with King Thingol's blood ally
the house of Fëanor by force
or treaty. But to stay their course
he had no power, for all his folk
the brothers had yet beneath their yoke,
and all yet listened to their word.
Orodreth's counsel no man heard;
their shame they crushed, and would not heed
the tale of Felagund's dire need.

At Lúthien's feet there day by day
and at night beside her couch would stay
Huan the hound of Nargothrond;
and words she spoke to him soft and fond:
'O Huan, Huan, swiftest hound
that ever ran on mortal ground,
what evil doth thy lords possess
to heed no tears nor my distress?
Once Barahir all men above
good hounds did cherish and did love;
once Beren in the friendless North,
when outlaw wild he wandered forth,
had friends unfailing among things
with fur and fell and feathered wings,
and among the spirits that in stone
in mountains old and wastes alone
still dwell. But now nor Elf nor Man,
none save the child of Melian,
remembers him who Morgoth fought
and never to thralldom base was brought.'

Nought said Huan; but Curufin
thereafter never near might win
to Lúthien, nor touch that maid,
but shrank from Huan's fangs afraid.

Then on a night when autumn damp
was swathed about the glimmering lamp
of the wan moon, and fitful stars
were flying seen between the bars
of racing cloud, when winter's horn
already wound in trees forlorn,
lo! Huan was gone. Then Lúthien lay
fearing new wrong, till just ere day,
when all is dead and breathless still
and shapeless fears the sleepless fill,
a shadow came along the wall.
Then something let there softly fall
her magic cloak beside her couch.
Trembling she saw the great hound crouch
beside her, heard a deep voice swell
as from a tower a far slow bell.

Thus Huan spake, who never before
had uttered words, and but twice more
did speak in elven tongue again:
'Lady beloved, whom all Men,
whom Elvenesse, and whom all things
with fur and fell and feathered wings
should serve and love—arise! away!
Put on thy cloak! Before the day
comes over Nargothrond we fly
to Northern perils, thou and I.'
And ere he ceased he counsel wrought
for achievement of the thing they sought.
There Lúthien listened in amaze,
and softly on Huan did she gaze.
Her arms about his neck she cast in
friendship that to death should last.

Huan aids Lúthien in escaping Nargothrond
In Wizard's Isle still lay forgot,
enmeshed and tortured in that grot
cold, evil, doorless, without light,
and blank-eyed stared at endless night
two comrades. Now alone they were.
The others lived no more, but bare
their broken bones would lie and tell
how ten had served their master well.

To Felagund then Beren said:
“T’were little loss if I were dead,
and I am minded all to tell,
and thus, perchance, from this dark hell
thy life to loose. I set thee free
from thine old oath, for more for me
hast thou endured than e'er was earned.’

’Ah! Beren, Beren hast not learned
that promises of Morgoth's folk
are frail as breath. From this dark yoke
of pain shall neither ever go,
whether he learn our names or no,
by Sauron’s will. Nay more, I think
yet deeper of torment we should drink,
knew he that son of Barahir
and Felagund were captive here,
and even worse if he should know  
'the dreadful errand we did go.'

A devil's laugh they ringing heard  
within their pit. 'True, true the word  
I hear you speak,' a voice then said.  
"Twere little loss if he were dead,  
the outlaw mortal. But the king,  
the Elf undying, many a thing  
no man could suffer may endure.  
Perchance, when what these walls immure  
of dreadful anguish thy folk learn,  
their king to ransom they will yearn  
with gold and gem and high hearts cowed;  
or maybe Celegorm the proud  
will deem a rival's prison cheap,  
and crown and gold himself will keep.  
Perchance, the errand I shall know,  
er all is done, that ye did go.  
The wolf is hungry, the hour is nigh;  
no more need Beren wait to die.'

The slow time passed. Then in the gloom  
two eyes there glowed. He saw his doom,  
Beren, silent, as his bonds he strained  
beyond his mortal might enchained.  
Lo! sudden there was rending sound
of chains that parted and unwound,  
of meshes broken. Forth there leaped  
upon the wolvish thing that crept  
in shadow faithful Felagund,  
careless of fang or venomed wound.  
There in the dark they wrestled slow,  
remorseless, snarling, to and fro,  
teeth in flesh, gripe on throat,  
fingers locked in shaggy coat,  
surning Beren who there lying  
heard the werewolf gasping, dying.  
Then a voice he heard: 'Farewell!  
On earth I need no longer dwell,  
friend and comrade, Beren bold.  
My heart is burst, my limbs are cold.  
Here all my power I have spent  
to break my bonds, and dreadful rent  
of poisoned teeth is in my breast.  
I now must go to my long rest  
in Aman, there beyond the shore  
of Eldamar for ever more  
in memory to dwell.' Thus died the king,  
as still the elven harpers sing.

Finrod Felagund wrestles the Werewolf

There Beren lies. His grief no tear,  
his despair no horror has nor fear;  
waiting for footsteps, a voice, for doom.
Silences profounder than the tomb of long-forgotten kings, neath years and sands uncounted laid on biers and buried everlasting-deep, slow and unbroken round him creep.

The silences were sudden shivered to silver fragments. Faint there quivered a voice in song that walls of rock, enchanted hill, and bar and lock, and powers of darkness pierced with light. He felt about him the soft night of many stars, and in the air were rustlings and a perfume rare; the nightingales were in the trees, slim fingers flute and viol seize beneath the moon, and one more fair than all there be or ever were upon a lonely knoll of stone in shimmering raiment danced alone. Then in his dream it seemed he sang, and loud and fierce his chanting rang, old songs of battle in the North, of breathless deeds, of marching forth to dare uncounted odds and break great powers, and towers, and strong walls shake; and over all the silver fire

Beren sings in memory of Finrod
that once Men named the Burning Briar,
the Seven Stars that Varda set
about the North, were burning yet,
a light in darkness, hope in woe,
the emblem vast of Morgoth's foe.

'Huan, Huan! I hear a song
far under welling, far but strong;
a song that Beren bore aloft.
I hear his voice, I have heard if oft
in dream and wandering.' Whispering low
thus Lúthien spake. On the bridge of woe
in mantle wrapped at dead of night
she sat and sang, and to its height
and to its depth the Wizard's Isle,
rock upon rock and pile on pile,
trembling echoed. The werewolves howled,
and Huan hidden lay and growled
watchful listening in the dark,
waiting for battle cruel and stark.
Thû heard that voice, and sudden stood
wrapped in his cloak and sable hood
in his high tower. He listened long,
and smiled, and knew that elvish song.
'A! little Lúthien! What brought
the foolish fly to web unsought?
Morgoth! a great and rich reward

Lúthien hears the song
to me thou wilt owe when to thy hoard
this jewel is added.' Down he went,
and forth his messengers he sent.

Still Lúthien sang. A creeping shape
with blood-red tongue and jaws agape
stole on the bridge; but she sang on
with trembling limbs and wide eyes wan.
The creeping shape leaped to her side,
and gasped, and sudden fell and died.
And still they came, still one by one,
and each was seized, and there were none
returned with padding feet to tell
that a shadow lurketh fierce and fell
at the bridge's end, and that below
the shuddering waters loathing flow
o'er the grey corpses Huan killed.
A mightier shadow slowly filled
the narrow bridge, a slavering hate,
an awful werewolf fierce and great:
pale Draugluin, the old grey lord
of wolves and beasts of blood abhorred,
that fed on flesh of Man and Elf
beneath the chair of Thû himself.

No more in silence did they fight.
Howling and baying smote the night,
till back by the chair where he had fed
to die the werewolf yammering fled.
'Huan is there' he gasped and died,
and Sauron filled with wrath and pride.
'Before the mightiest he shall fall,
before the mightiest wolf of all',
so thought he now, and thought he knew
how fate long spoken should come true.
Now there came slowly forth and glared
into the night a shape long-haired,
dank with poison, with awful eyes
wolvish, ravenous; but there lies
a light therein more cruel and dread
than ever wolvish eyes had fed.
More huge were its limbs, its jaws more wide,
its fangs more gleaming-sharp, and dyed
with venom, torment, and with death.
The deadly vapor of its breath
swept on before it. Swooning dies
the song of Lúthien, and her eyes
are dimmed and darkened with a fear,
cold and poisonous and drear.

Thus came Sauron, as wolf more great
than e'er was seen from Angband's gate
to the burning south, than ever lurked
in mortal lands or murder worked.
Sudden he sprang, and Huan leaped aside in shadow. On he swept to Lúthien lying swooning faint. To her drowning senses came the taint of his foul breathing, and she stirred; dizzily she spake a whispered word, her mantle brushed across his face. He stumbled staggering in his pace. Out leaped Huan. Back he sprang. Beneath the stars there shuddering rang the cry of hunting wolves at bay, the tongue of hounds that fearless slay. Backward and forth they leaped and ran feinting to flee, and round they span, and bit and grappled, and fell and rose. Then suddenly Huan holds and throws his ghastly foe; his throat he rends, choking his life. Not so it ends. From shape to shape, from wolf to worm, from monster to his own demon form, Thú changes, but that desperate grip he cannot shake, nor from it slip. No wizardry, nor spell, nor dart, no fang, nor venom, nor devil's art could harm that hound that hart and boar had hunted once in Valinor.
Nigh the foul spirit Morgoth made and bred of evil shuddering strayed from its dark house, when Lúthien rose and shivering looked upon his throes.

'O demon dark, O phantom vile of foulness wrought, of lies and guile, here shalt thou die, thy spirit roam quaking back to thy master's home his scorn and fury to endure; thee he will in the bowels immure of groaning earth, and in a hole everlastingly thy naked soul shall wail and gibber—this shall be, unless the keys thou render me of thy black fortress, and the spell that bindeth stone to stone thou tell, and speak the words of opening.'

With gasping breath and shuddering he spake, and yielded as he must, and vanquished betrayed his master's trust.

Lo! by the bridge a gleam of light, like stars descended from the night to burn and tremble here below. There wide her arms did Lúthien throw,
and called aloud with voice as clear
as still at whiles may mortal hear
long elvish trumpets o'er the hill
echo, when all the world is still.

The dawn peered over mountains wan,
their grey heads silent looked thereon.
The hill trembled; the citadel
crumbled, and all its towers fell;
the rocks yawned and the bridge broke,
and Sirion spurned in sudden smoke.

Like ghosts the owls were flying seen
hooting in the dawn, and bats unclean
went skimming dark through the cold airs
shrieking thinly to find new lairs
in Deadly Nightshade's branches dread.
The wolves whimpering and yammering fled
like dusky shadows. Out there creep
pale forms and ragged as from sleep,
crawling, and shielding blinded eyes:
the captives in fear and in surprise
from dolor long in clinging night
beyond all hope set free to light.

A vampire shape with pinions vast
screeching leaped from the ground, and passed,
its dark blood dripping on the trees;
and Huan neath him lifeless sees
a wolvish corpse—Sauron had flown
to Taur-na-Fuin, a new throne
and darker stronghold there to build.

The captives came and wept and shrilled
their piteous cries of thanks and praise.
But Lúthien anxious-gazing stays.
Beren comes not. At length she said:
'Huan, Huan, among the dead
must we then find him whom we sought,
for love of whom we toiled and fought?'

Then side by side from stone to stone
o'er Sirion they climbed. Alone
unmoving they him found, who mourned
by Felagund, and never turned
to see what feet drew halting nigh.
'A! Beren, Beren!' came her cry,
'almost too late have I thee found?
Alas! that here upon the ground
the noblest of the noble race
in vain thy anguish doth embrace!
Alas! in tears that we should meet
who once found meeting passing sweet!

Her voice such love and longing filled
he raised his eyes, his mourning stilled,
and felt his heart new-turned to flame
for her that through peril to him came.
'O Lúthien, O Lúthien, 
more fair than any child of Men, 
O loveliest maid of Elvenesse, 
what might of love did thee possess 
to bring thee here to terror's lair! 
O lissom limbs and shadowy hair, 
O flower-entwined brows so white, 
O slender hands in this new light!' 

She found his arms and swooned away 
just at the rising of the day.
XI

Songs have recalled, by harpers sung long years ago in elven tongue, how Lúthien and Beren strayed in Sirion's vale; and many a glade they filled with joy, and there their feet passed by lightly, and days were sweet. Though winter hunted through the wood, still flowers lingered where they stood. Tinúviel! Tinúviel! Still unafraid the birds now dwell and sing on boughs amid the snow where Lúthien and Beren go.

From Sirion's Isle they passed away, but on the hill alone there lay a green grave, and a stone was set, and there there lie the white bones yet of Finrod fair, Finarfin's son, although that land be changed and gone, and foundered in unfathomed seas, while Finrod walks beneath the trees in Eldamar and comes no more to the grey world of tears and war.

To Nargothrond no more he came but thither swiftly ran the fame
of their dead king and his great deed, how Lúthien the Isle had freed: the Werewolf Lord was overthrown, and broken were his towers of stone. For many now came home at last who long ago to shadow passed; and like a shadow had returned Huan the hound, though scant he earned of praise or thanks of Celegorm.

There now arose a growing storm, a clamour of many voices loud, and folk whom Curufin had cowed and their own king had help denied, in shame and anger now they cried: 'Come! Slay these faithless lords untrue! Why lurk they here? What will they do, but bring Finarfin's kin to naught, treacherous cuckoo-guests unsought? Away with them!' But wise and slow Orodreth spoke: 'Beware, lest woe and wickedness to worse ye bring!

Finrod is fallen. I am king.

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33 The Weathertop manuscript here has a variant reading:

There elves bewailed their fallen king,
crying that a maid had dared that thing
which sons of Fëanor would not do.

The charge in this version would seem to be more one of cowardice than conspiracy. In general the ensuing scene at Nargothrond in the Weathertop and Cardolan MSS is much briefer and less detailed than that from Fornost. ~BB
But even as he would speak, I now command you. I will not allow in Nargothrond the ancient curse from evil unto evil worse to work. With tears for Finrod weep repentant! Swords for Morgoth keep! No kindred blood shall here be shed. Yet here shall neither rest nor bread the brethren find who set at naught Finarfin's house. Let them be sought, unharmed to stand before me! Go! The courtesy of Finrod show!

In scorn stood Celegorm, unbowed, with glance of fire in anger proud and menacing; but at his side smiling and silent, wary-eyed, was Curufin, with hand on haft of his long knife. And then he laughed, and 'Well?' said he. 'Why didst thou call for us, Sir Steward? In thy hall we are not wont to stand. Come, speak, if aught of us thou hast to seek!'

Cold words Orodreth answered slow: 'Before the king ye stand. But know, of you he seeks for naught. His will
ye come to hear, and to fulfill.  
Be gone for ever, ere the day  
shall fall into the sea! Your way  
shall never lead you hither more,  
nor any son of Fëanor;  
of love no more shall there be bond  
between your house and Nargothrond!'

'We will remember it,' they said,  
and turned upon their heels, and sped,  
saddled their horses, trussed their gear,  
and went with hound and bow and spear,  
alone; for none of all the folk  
would follow them.  
No word they spoke,  
but sounded horns, and rode away  
like wind at end of stormy day.

Towards Doriath the wanderers now  
were drawing nigh.  
Though bare was bough,  
and winter through the grasses grey  
grew hissing chill, and brief was day,

34 The Cardolan MS explicitly states the opposite, that they "took their horses and such folk/as still them followed." Surely any folk that did depart with them were Fëanorians from the brothers' original entourage. It is stated elsewhere that Curufin's son, Celebrimbor, remained behind in Nargothrond, disowning his father. ~BB

35 Though they are not named for another 14 lines, it seems clear that "the wanderers" of this passage are not Celegorm and Curufin, but Beren and Lúthien. ~BB
they sang beneath the frosty sky
above them lifted clear and high.
They came to Mindeb swift and bright
that from the northern mountains' height
to Neldoreth came leaping down
with noise among the boulders brown,
but into sudden silence fell,
passing beneath the guarding spell
that Melian on the borders laid
of Thingol's land. There now they stayed;
for silence sad on Beren fell.
Unheeded long, at last too well
he heard the warning of his heart:
alas, beloved, here we part.

'Alas, Tinúviel,' he said,
'this road no further can we tread
together, no more hand in hand
can journey in the Elven-land.'

'Why part we here? What dost thou say,
even at dawn of brighter day?'

'For safe thou'rt come to borderlands
o'er which in the keeping of the hands
of Melian thou wilt walk at ease
and find thy home and well-loved trees.'
'My heart is glad when the fair trees
far off uprising grey it sees
of Doriath inviolate.
Yet Doriath my heart did hate,
and Doriath my feet forsook,
my home, my kin. I would not look
on grass nor leaf there evermore
without thee by me. Dark the shore
of Esgalduin the deep and strong!
Why there alone forsaking song
by endless waters rolling past
must I then hopeless sit at last,
and gaze at waters pitiless
in heartache and in loneliness?'

'For never more to Doriath
can Beren find the winding path,
though Thingol willed it or allowed;
for to thy father there I vowed
to come not back save to fulfill
the quest of the shining Silmaril,
and win by valor my desire.
"Not rock nor steel nor Morgoth's fire
nor all the power of Elvenesse
shall keep the gem I would possess":
thus swore I once of Lúthien
more fair than any child of Men.
My word, alas! I now must keep,
and not the first of men must weep
for oath in pride and anger sworn.
Too brief the meeting, brief the morn,
too soon comes night when we must part!
All oaths are for breaking of the heart,
with shame denied, with anguish kept.
Ah! would that now unknown I slept
with Barahir beneath the stone,
and thou wert dancing still alone,
unmarred, immortal, sorrowless,
singing in joy of Elvenesse.'

'That may not be. For bonds there are
stronger than stone or iron bar,
more strong than proudly spoken oath.
Have I not plighted thee my troth?
Hath love no pride nor honor then?
Or dost thou deem then Lúthien
so frail of purpose, light of love?
By stars of Elbereth above!
If thou wilt here my hand forsake
and leave me lonely paths to take,\[36\]
then Lúthien will not go home
but weeping in the woods will roam,

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\[36\] Lúthien's speech up to this point is found only in the Fornost MS.
nor peril heed, nor laughter know
And if she may not by thee go
against thy will thy desperate feet
she will pursue, until they meet,
beyond all hope in love once more
on earth or on the shadowy shore.'

'Nay, Lúthien, most brave of heart,
thou makest it more hard to part.
Thy love me drew from bondage drear,
but never to that outer fear,
that darkest mansion of all dread,
shall thy most blissful light be led.'

'Never, never!' he shuddering said.
But even as in his arms she pled,
a sound came like a hurrying storm.
There Curufin and Celegorm
in sudden tumult like the wind
rode up. The hooves of horses dinned
loud on the earth. In rage and haste
thus madly eastward they now raced,
to find the old and perilous path
between the dreadful Gorgorath
and Thingol's realm. That was their road
most swift to where their kin abode
far off, where Himring's watchful hill

Lúthien and Beren are surprised by the sons of Fëanor
o'er Aglon's gorge hung tall and still.

They saw the wanderers. With a shout straight on them turned their steeds about as if neath maddened hooves to rend the lovers and their love to end.

But as they came the horses swerved with nostrils wide and proud necks curved; Curufin, stooping, to saddlebow with mighty arm did Lúthien throw, and laughed. Too soon; for there a spring fiercer than tawny lion-king maddened with arrows barbed smart, greater than any horned hart that hounded to a gulf leaps o'er, there Beren gave, and with a roar leaped on Curufin; round his neck his arms entwined, and all to wreck both horse and rider fell to ground; and there they fought without a sound.

Dazed in the grass did Lúthien lie beneath bare branches and the sky; the prince felt Beren's fingers grim close on his throat and strangle him, and out his eyes did start, and tongue gasping from his mouth there hung.

Up rode Celegorm with his spear,
and bitter death was Beren near.
With elvish steel he nigh was slain
whom Lúthien won from hopeless chain,
but baying Huan sudden sprang
before his master's face with fang
white-gleaming, and with bristling hair,
as if he on boar or wolf did stare.

The horse in terror leaped aside,
and Celegorm in anger cried:
'Curse thee, thou baseborn dog, to dare
against thy master teeth to bare!'
But dog nor horse nor rider bold
would venture near the anger cold
of mighty Huan fierce at bay.
Red were his jaws. They shrank away,
and fearful eyed him from afar:
nor sword nor knife, nor scimitar,
no dart of bow, nor cast of spear,
master nor man did Huan fear.

There Curufin had left his life,
had Lúthien not stayed that strife.
Waking she rose and softly cried
standing distressed at Beren's side:
'Forbear thy anger now, my lord!
nor do the work of Orcs abhorred;
for foes there be of Elvenesse
unnumbered, and they grow not less, while here we war by ancient curse 
distraught, and all the world to worse 
decays and crumbles. Make thy peace!

Then Beren did Curufin release; 
but took his horse and coat of mail, 
and took his knife there gleaming pale, 
hanging sheathless, wrought of steel. 
No flesh could leeches ever heal 
that point had pierced; for long ago 
the dwarves had made it, singing slow 
enchantments, where their hammers fell 
in Nogrod ringing like a bell. 
Iron as tender wood it cleft, 
and sundered mail like woollen weft. 
But other hands its haft now held; 
its master lay by mortal felled. 
Beren uplifting him, far him flung, 
and cried 'Begone!', with stinging tongue; 
'Begone! thou renegade and fool, 
and let thy lust in exile cool! 
Arise and go, and no more work 
like Morgoth's slaves or cursed Orc; 
and deal, proud son of Fëanor, 
in deeds more proud than heretofore!' 
Then Beren led Lúthien away,
while Huan still there stood at bay.

"Farewell," cried Celegorm the fair. 'Far get you gone! And better were to die forhungered in the waste than wrath of Fëanor's sons to taste, that yet may reach o'er dale and hill. No gem, nor maid, nor Silmaril shall ever long in thy grasp lie! We curse thee under cloud and sky, we curse thee from rising unto sleep! Farewell!' He swift from horse did leap, his brother lifted from the ground; then bow of yew with gold wire bound he strung, and shaft he shooting sent, as heedless hand in hand they went; a dwarvish dart and cruelly hooked. They never turned nor backward looked. Loud bayed Huan, and leaping caught the speeding arrow. Quick as thought another followed deadly singing; but Beren had turned, and sudden springing defended Lúthien with his breast. Deep sank the dart in flesh to rest. He fell to earth. They rode away, and laughing left him as he lay; yet spurred like wind in fear and dread
of Huan's pursuing anger red.
Though Curufin with bruised mouth laughed,
yet later of that dastard shaft
was tale and rumor in the North,
and Men remembered at the Marching Forth,
and Morgoth's will its hatred helped.\textsuperscript{37}
Thereafter never hound was whelped
would follow horn of Celegorm
or Curufin. Though in strife and storm,
though all their house in ruin red
went down, thereafter laid his head
Huan no more at that lord's feet,
but followed Lúthien, brave and fleet.
Now sank she weeping at the side
of Beren, and sought to stem the tide
of welling blood that flowed there fast.
The raiment from his breast she cast;
from shoulder plucked the arrow keen;
his wound with tears she washed it clean.

\textsuperscript{37} The scholiasts of the Dúnedain disagree whether the "Marching Forth" is in reference to to the Union of Maedhros (the ill-fated alliance whose efforts culminated in the Battle of Unnumbered Tears) or to the coming of the host of the Valar in the War of Wrath. The former, being led by a Fëanorian, would be the more sensible interpretation, were it not that the Edain, far from holding back, acquitted themselves with enormous distinction in that battle. The phrase "Marching Forth" is often used confusingly to refer either to the March of the elves of the west back into Middle-earth for the liberation of Elves and Men and the defeat of Morgoth at the end of the First Age, or to a similar "Faring Forth" against Morgoth at the end of all things. But it is hard to see how Curufin's arrow would play against the involvement of men in this instance. \textit{~BB}
Then Huan came and bore a leaf, 
of all the herbs of healing chief, 
that evergreen in woodland glade 
there grew, with broad and hoary blade.\(^{38}\)
The powers of all grasses Huan knew, 
who wide did forest-paths pursue. 
Therewith the smart he swift allayed, 
while Lúthien murmuring in the shade 
the staunching song, that Elvish wives 
long years had sung in those sad lives 
of war and weapons, wove o'er him.

The shadows fell from mountains grim. 
Then sprang about the darkened North 
the Sickle of the Valar; forth 
each star there stared in stony night 
radiant, glistering cold and white. 
a spark of red that leaps below: 
under woven boughs beside a fire 
of crackling wood and sputtering briar 
there Beren lies in drowsing deep, 
walking and wandering in sleep. 
Watchful bending o'er him wakes

\(^{38}\) A notation on the Fornost MS claims that this herb is in fact *athelas*, and that the power to use it is a gift of Lúthien to her descendants. ~\(BB\)
The description of the herb, however, as evergreen and "hoary" does not match the kingsfoil of Middle-earth today. ~\(MBr\)
a maiden fair; his thirst she slakes,
his brow caresses, and softly croons
a song more potent than in runes
or leeches' lore hath since been writ.
Slowly the nightly watches flit.
The misty morning crawleth grey
from dusk to the reluctant day.

Then Beren woke and opened eyes,
and rose and cried: 'Neath other skies,
in lands more awful and unknown,
I wandered long, methought, alone
to the deep shadow where the dead dwell;
but ever a voice that I knew well,
like bells, like viols, like harps, like birds,
like music moving without words,
called me, called me through the night,
enchanted drew me back to light!
Healed the wound, assuaged the pain!
Now are we come to morn again,
new journeys once more lead us on—
to perils whence may life be won,
hardly for Beren; and for thee
a waiting in the wood I see,
beneath the trees of Doriath,
while ever follow down my path
the echoes of thine elvish song,
where hills are haggard and roads are long.'

    'Nay, now no more we have for foe
dark Morgoth only, but in woe,
in wars and feuds of Elvenesse
thy quest is bound; and death, no less,
for thee and me, for Huan bold
the end of weird of yore foretold,
all this I bode shall follow swift,
But on the ground there is a glow,
if thou go on. Thy hand shall lift
and lay in Thingol's lap the dire
and flaming jewel, Fëanor's fire,
ever, never! Ah why then go?
Why turn we not from fear and woe
beneath the trees to walk and roam
roofless, with all the world as home,
over mountains, beside the seas,
in the sunlight, in the breeze?'

    Thus long they spoke with heavy hearts;
and yet not all her elvish arts,
nor lissom arms, nor shining eyes
as tremulous stars in rainy skies,
nor tender lips, enchanted voice,
his purpose bent or swayed his choice.
Never to Doriath would he fare
save guarded fast to leave her there;
ever to Nargothrond would go
with her, lest there came war and woe;
and never would in the world untrod
to wander suffer her, worn, unshod,
roofless and restless, whom he drew
with love from the hidden realms she knew.
'For Morgoth's power is now awake;
already hill and dale doth shake,
the hunt is up, the prey is wild:
a maiden lost, an elven child.
Now Orcs and phantoms prowl and peer
from tree to tree, and fill with fear
each shade and hollow. Thee they seek!
At thought thereof my hope grows weak,
my heart is chilled. I curse mine oath,
I curse the fate that joined us both
and snared thy feet in my sad doom
of flight and wandering in the gloom!
Now let us haste, and ere the day
be fallen, take our swiftest way,
till o'er the marches of thy land
beneath the beech and oak we stand
in Doriath, fair Doriath
whither no evil finds the path,
powerless to pass the listening leaves
that droop upon those forest-eaves.'
Then to his will she seeming bent.
Swiftly to Doriath they went,
and crossed its borders. There they stayed
resting in deep and mossy glade;
there lay they sheltered from the wind
under mighty beeches silken-skinned,
and sang of love that still shall be,
though earth be foundered under sea,
and sundered here for evermore
shall meet upon the Western Shore.

One morning as asleep she lay
upon the moss, as though the day
too bitter were for gentle flower
to open in a sunless hour,
Beren arose and kissed her hair,
and wept, and softly left her there.

'Good Huan,' said he, 'guard her well!
In leafless field no asphodel,
in thorny thicket never a rose
forlorn, so frail and fragrant blows.
Guard her from wind and frost, and hide
from hands that seize and cast aside;
keep her from wandering and woe,
for pride and fate now make me go.'
The horse he took and rode away,
nor dared to turn; but all that day
with heart as stone he hastened forth
and took the paths toward the North.
Once wide and smooth a plain was spread, where King Fingolfin proudly led his silver armies on the green, his horses white, his lances keen; his helmets tall of steel were hewn, his shields were shining as the moon. There trumpets sang both long and loud, and challenge rang unto the cloud that lay on Morgoth's northern tower, while Morgoth waited for his hour. Rivers of fire at dead of night in winter lying cold and white upon the plain burst forth, and high the red was mirrored in the sky.39 From Hithlum's walls they saw the fire, the steam and smoke in spire on spire leap up, till in confusion vast the stars were choked. And so it passed, the mighty field, and turned to dust, to drifting sand and yellow rust, to thirsty dunes where many bones lay broken among barren stones. Dor-na-Fauglith, Land of Thirst, they after named it, waste accurst,

39 Once again, the Battle of Sudden Flame is being described. –BB
the raven-haunted roofless grave
of many fair and many brave.
Thereon the stony slopes look forth
from Deadly Nightshade falling north,
from sombre pines with pinions vast,
black-plumed and drear, as many a mast
of sable-shrouded ships of death
slow wafted on a ghostly breath.
Thence Beren grim now gazes out
across the dunes and shifting drought,
and sees afar the frowning towers
where thunderous Thangorodrim lowers.
The hungry horse there drooping stood,
proud Gnomish steed; it feared the wood;
upon the haunted ghastly plain
no horse would ever stride again.
'Good steed of master ill,' he said,
'farewell now here! Lift up thy head,
and get thee gone to Sirion's vale,
back as we came, past island pale
where Thû once reigned, to waters sweet
and grasses long about thy feet.
And if Curufin no more thou find,
grieve not! but free with hart and hind
go wander, leaving work and war,
and dream thee back in Valinor,
whence came of old thy mighty race
from Tauron's mountain-fenced chase.'

There still sat Beren, and he sang, and loud his lonely singing rang. Though Orc should hear, or wolf a-prowl, or any of the creatures foul within the shade that slunk and stared of Taur-na-Fuin, nought he cared, who now took leave of light and day, grim-hearted, bitter, fierce and fey.

'Farewell now here, ye leaves of trees, your music in the morning-breeze! Farewell now blade and bloom and grass that see the changing seasons pass; ye waters murmuring over stone, and meres that silent stand alone! Farewell now mountain, vale, and plain! Farewell now wind and frost and rain, and mist and cloud, and heaven's air; ye star and moon so blinding-fair that still shall look down from the sky on the wide earth, though Beren die—though Beren die not, and yet deep, deep, whence comes of those that weep no dreadful echo, lie and choke in everlasting dark and smoke.
'Farewell sweet earth and northern sky, for ever blest, since here did lie, and here with lissom limbs did run, beneath the moon, beneath the sun, Lúthien Tinúviel more fair than mortal tongue can tell. Though all to ruin fell the world, and were dissolved and backward hurled unmade into the old abyss, yet were its making good, for this the dawn, the dusk, the earth, the sea— that Lúthien on a time should be!'

His blade he lifted high in hand, and challenging alone did stand before the threat of Morgoth's power; and dauntless cursed him, hall and tower, o'ershadowing hand and grinding foot, beginning, end, and crown and root; then turned to stride forth down the slope abandoning fear, forsaking hope.

'Ah, Beren, Beren!' came a sound, 'almost too late have I thee found! O proud and fearless hand and heart, not yet farewell, not yet we part! Not thus do those of elven race
forsake the love that they embrace.
A love is mine, as great a power
as thine, to shake the gate and tower
of death with challenge weak and frail
that yet endures, and will not fail
nor yield, unvanquished were it hurled
beneath the foundations of the world.
Beloved fool! escape to seek
from such pursuit; in might so weak
to trust not, thinking it well to save
from love thy loved, who welcomes grave
and torment sooner than in guard
of kind intent to languish, barred,
wingless and helpless him to aid
for whose support her love was made!’

Thus back to him came Lúthien:
they met beyond the ways of Men;
upon the brink of terror stood
between the desert and the wood.

He looked on her, her lifted face
beneath his lips in sweet embrace:
'Thrice now mine oath I curse,' he said,
'that under shadow thee hath led!
But where is Huan, where the hound
to whom I trusted, whom I bound
by love of thee to keep thee well
from deadly wandering unto hell?'

'I know not! But good Huan's heart
is wiser, kinder than thou art,
grim lord, more open unto prayer!
Yet long and long I pleaded there,
until he brought me, as I would,
upon thy trail—a palfrey good
would Huan make, of flowing pace:
 thou wouldst have laughed to see us race,
as Orcs on werewolves ride like fire
night after night through fen and mire,
through waste and wood! But when I heard
thy singing clear—(yea, every word
of Lúthien one rashly cried,
and listening evil fierce defied)—
he set me down, and sped away;
but what he would I cannot say.'

Ere long they knew, for Huan came,
his great breath panting, eyes like flame,
in fear lest her whom he forsook
to aid some hunting evil took
ere he was nigh. Now there he laid
before their feet, as dark as shade,
two grisly shapes that he had won
from that tall isle in Sirion:
a wolfhame huge—its savage fell
was long and matted, dark the spell
that drenched the dreadful coat and skin,
the werewolf cloak of Draugluin;
the other was a batlike garb
with mighty fingered wings, a barb
like iron nail at each joint's end—
such wings as their dark cloud extend
against the moon, when in the sky
from Deadly Nightshade screeching fly
Thû's messengers.

'What hast thou brought,
good Huan? What thy hidden thought?
Of trophy of prowess and strong deed,
of Sauron vanquishèd, what need
here in the waste?' Thus Beren spoke,
and once more words in Huan woke:
his voice was like the deep-toned bells
that ring in Valmar's citadels:

'Of one fair gem thou must be thief,
Morgoth's or Thingol's, loath or lief;
thou must here choose twixt love and oath!
If vow to break is still thee loath,
then Lúthien must either die
alone, or death with thee defy.
beside thee, marching on your fate that hidden before you lies in wait. Hopeless the quest, but not yet mad, unless thou, Beren, run thus clad in mortal raiment, mortal hue, witless and redeless, death to woo.

'Lo! good was Felagund's device, but may be bettered, if advice of Huan ye will dare to take, and swift a hideous change will make to forms most cursed, foul and vile, of werewolf of the Wizard's Isle, of monstrous bat's envermined fell with ghostly claw like wings of hell. 'To such dark straits, alas! now brought are ye I love, for whom I fought. Nor further with you can I go whoever did a great hound know in friendship at a werewolf's side to Angband's grinning portals stride? Yet my heart tells that at the gate what there ye find, 'twill be my fate myself to see, though to that door my feet shall bear me nevermore. Darkened is hope and dimmed my eyes, I see not clear what further lies; yet maybe backwards leads your path
beyond all hope to Doriath,
and thither, perchance, we three shall wend,
and meet again before the end.

They stood and marveled thus to hear
his mighty tongue so deep and clear;
then sudden he vanished from their sight
even at the onset of the night.

His dreadful counsel then they took,
and their own gracious forms forsook;
in werewolf fell and batlike wing
prepared to robe them, shuddering.

With elvish magic Lúthien wrought,
lest raiment foul with evil fraught
to dreadful madness drive their hearts;
and there she wrought with elvish arts
a strong defense, a binding power,
singing until the midnight hour.

Swift as the wolvish coat he wore,
Beren lay slavering on the floor,
red tongued and hungry; but there lies
a pain and longing in his eyes,
a look of horror as he sees
a batlike form crawl to its knees
and drag its creased and creaking wings.
Then howling undermoon he springs
fourfooted, swift, from stone to stone
from hill to plain—but not alone:
a dark shape down the slope doth skim,
and wheeling flitters over him.

Ashes and dust and thirsty dune
withered and dry beneath the moon,
under the cold and shifting air
sifting and sighing, bleak and bare;
of blistered stones and gasping sand,
of splintered bones was built that land,
o' er which now slinks with powdered fell
and hanging tongue a shape of hell.

Many parching leagues lay still before
when sickly day crept back once more;
many choking miles 'yet stretched ahead
when shivering night once more was spread
with doubtful shadow and ghostly sound
that hissed and passed o' er dune and mound.

A second morning in cloud and reek
struggled, when stumbling, blind and weak,
a wolvish shape came staggering forth
and reached the foothills of the North;
upon its back there folded lay
a crumpled thing that blinked at day.

They cross the desert before Thangorodrim
The rocks were reared like bony teeth, and claws that grasped from opened sheath, on either side the mournful road that onward led to that abode far up within the Mountain dark with tunnels drear and portals stark.

They crept within a scowling shade, and cowering darkly down them laid. Long lurked they there beside the path, and shivered, dreaming of Doriath, of laughter and music and clean air, in fluttered leaves birds singing fair.

They woke, and felt the trembling sound, the beating echo far underground shake beneath them, the rumor vast of Morgoth's forges; and aghast they heard the tramp of stony feet that shod with iron went down that street: the Orcs went forth to rape and war, and Balrog captains marched before.

They stirred, and under cloud and shade at eve stepped forth, and no more stayed; as dark things on dark errand bent up the long slopes in haste they went. Ever the sheer cliffs rose beside, where birds of carrion sat and cried;
and chasms black and smoking yawned,  
whence writhing serpent-shapes were spawned;  
until at last in that huge gloom,  
heavy as overhanging doom,  
that weighs on Thangorodrim's foot  
like thunder at the mountain's root,  
they came, as to a sombre court  
walled with great towers, fort on fort  
of cliffs embattled, to that last plain  
that opens, abysmal and inane,  
before the final topless wall  
of Bauglir's immeasurable hall,  
whereunder looming awful waits  
the gigantic shadow of his gates.
XIII
In that vast shadow once of yore
Fingolfin stood: his shield he bore
with field of heaven's blue and star
of crystal shining pale afar.
In overmastering wrath and hate
desperate he smote upon that gate,
the Noldor's king, there standing lone,
while endless fortresses of stone
engulfed the thin clear ringing keen
of silver horn on baldric green.
His hopeless challenge dauntless cried
Fingolfin there: 'Come, open wide,
dark king, your ghastly brazen doors!
Come forth, whom earth and heaven abhors!
Come forth, O monstrous craven lord,
and fight with thine own hand and sword,
thou wielder of hosts of banded thralls,
thou tyrant leaguered with strong walls,
thou foe of men and elvish race!
I wait thee here. Come! Show thy face!'

Then Morgoth came. For the last time
in those great wars he dared to climb
from subterranean throne profound,
the rumor of his feet a sound
of rumbling earthquake underground. Black-armored, towering, iron-crowned he issued forth; his mighty shield a vast unblazoned sable field with shadow like a thundercloud; and o'er the gleaming king it bowed, as huge aloft like mace he hurled that hammer of the underworld, Grond. Clanging to ground it tumbled down like a thunder-bolt, and crumbled the rocks beneath it; smoke up-started, a pit yawned, and a fire darted.

Fingolfin like a shooting light beneath a cloud, a stab of white, sprang then aside, and Ringil drew like ice that gleameth cold and blue, his sword devised of elvish skill to pierce the flesh with deadly chill. With seven wounds it rent his foe, and seven mighty cries of woe rang in the mountains, and the earth quook, and Angband's trembling armies shook.

Yet Orcs would after laughing tell of the duel at the gates of hell; though elvish song thereof was made
ere this but one—when sad was laid
the mighty king in barrow high,
and Thorondor, Eagle of the sky,
the dreadful tidings brought and told
to mourning Elvenesse of old.
Thrice was Fingolfin with great blows
to his knees beaten, thrice he rose
still leaping up beneath the cloud
aloft to hold star-shining, proud,
his stricken shield, his sundered helm,
that dark, nor might could overwhelm
till all the earth was burst and rent
in pits about him. He was spent.
His feet stumbled. He fell to wreck
upon the ground, and on his neck
a foot like rooted hills was set,
and he was crushed—not conquered yet;
one last despairing stroke he gave:
the mighty foot pale Ringil clave
about the heel, and black the blood
gushed as from smoking fount in flood.

Halt goes for ever from that stroke
great Morgoth; but the king he broke,
and would have hewn and mangled thrown
to wolves devouring. Lo! from throne
that Manwë bade him build on high,
on peak unscaled beneath the sky,
Morgoth to watch, now down there swooped Thorondor the King of Eagles, stooped, and rending beak of gold he smote in Bauglir's face, then up did float on pinions thirty fathoms wide bearing away, though loud they cried, the mighty corse, the Elven-king; and where the mountains make a ring far to the south about that plain where secret Gondolin did reign, embattled city, at great height upon a dizzy snowcap white in mounded cairn the mighty dead he laid upon the mountain's head. Never Orc nor demon after dared that pass to climb, o'er which there stared Fingolfin's high and holy tomb, till Gondolin's appointed doom.  

Thus Bauglir earned the furrowed scar that his dark countenance doth mar; and thus his limping gait he gained; but afterward profound he reigned darkling upon his hidden throne; and thunderous paced his halls of stone,

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40 The death of Fingolfin was the final catastrophe of the Fourth Battle, the *Dagor Bragollach*. —BB
slow building there his vast design
the world in thralldom to confine.
Wielder of armies, lord of woe,
no rest now gave he slave or foe;
his watch and ward he thrice increased,
his spies were sent from West to East
and tidings brought from all the North,
who fought, who fell; who ventured forth,
who wrought in secret; who had hoard;
if maid were fair or proud were lord;
well nigh all things he knew, all hearts
well nigh enmeshed in evil arts.

Doriath only, beyond the veil
woven by Melian, no assail
could hurt or enter; only rumor dim
of things there passing came to him.
A rumor loud and tidings clear
of other movements far and near
among his foes, and threat of war
from the seven sons of Fëanor,
from Nargothrond, from Fingon still
gathering his armies under hill
and under tree in Hithlum's shade,
these daily came. He grew afraid
amidst his power once more; renown
of Beren vexed his ears, and down
the aisled forests there was heard
great Huan baying.

Then came word
most passing strange of Lúthien
wild-wandering by wood and glen,
and Thingol's purpose long he weighed,
and wondered, thinking of that maid
so fair, so frail. A captain dire,
Boldog, he sent with sword and fire
to Doriath's march; but battle fell
sudden upon him: news to tell
never one returned of Boldog's host,
and Thingol humbled Morgoth's boast.
Then his heart with doubt and wrath was burned:
new tidings of dismay he learned,
how Sauron fell and his strong isle
broken and plundered, how with guile
his foes now guile beset; and spies
he feared, till each Orc to his eyes
was half suspect. Still ever down
the aisléd forests came renown
of Huan baying, hound of war
that was unleashed in Valinor.

Then Morgoth of Huan's fate bethought
long-rumored, and in dark he wrought.
Fierce hunger-haunted packs he had
that in wolvish form and flesh were clad,
but demon spirits dire did hold;
and ever wild their voices rolled
in cave and mountain where they housed
and endless snarling echoes roused.
From these a whelp he chose and fed
with his own hand on bodies dead,
on fairest flesh of Elves and Men,
till huge he grew and in his den
no more could creep, but by the chair
of Morgoth's self would lie and glare,
nor suffer Balrog, Orc, nor beast
to touch him. Many a ghastly feast
he held beneath that awful throne,
rending flesh and gnawing bone.
There deep enchantment on him fell,
the anguish and the power of hell;
more great and terrible he became
with fire-red eyes and jaws aflame,
with breath like vapors of the grave,
than any beast of wood or cave,
than any beast of earth or hell
that ever in any time befell,
; surpassing all his race and kin,
the ghastly tribe of Draugluin.

Him Carcharoth, the Red Maw, name
the songs of Elves. Not yet he came
disastrous, ravening, from the gate of Angband. There he sleepless waits; where those great portals threatening loom his red eyes smolder in the gloom, his teeth are bare, his jaws are wide and none may walk, nor creep, nor glide, nor thrust with power his menace past to enter Morgoth's dungeon vast.

Now, lo! before his watchful eyes a slinking shape he far descries that crawls into the frowning plain and halts at gaze, then on again comes stalking near, a wolvish shape haggard, wayworn, with jaws agape; and o'er it batlike in wide rings a reeling shadow slowly wings. Such shapes there oft were seen to roam, this land their native haunt and home; and yet his mood with strange unease is filled, and boding thoughts him seize.

'What grievous terror, what dread guard hath Morgoth set to wait, and barred his doors against all entering feet? Long ways we have come at last to meet the very maw of death that opes
between us and our quest! Yet hopes we never had. No turning back!' Thus Beren speaks, as in his track he halts and sees with werewolf eyes afar the horror that there lies. Then onward desperate he passed, skirting the black pits yawning vast where King Fingolfin ruinous fell alone before the gates of hell.

Before those gates alone they stood, while Carcharoth in doubtful mood glowered upon them, and snarling spoke, and echoes in the arches woke:
'Hail! Draugluin, my kindred's lord! 'Tis very long since hitherward thou camest. Yea, 'tis passing strange to see thee now: a grievous change is on thee, lord, who once so dire, so dauntless, and as fleet as fire, ran over wild and waste, but now with weariness must bend and bow! 'Tis hard to find the struggling breath when Huan's teeth as sharp as death have rent the throat? What fortune rare brings thee back living here to fare—if Draugluin thou art? Come near!
I would know more, and see thee clear.'

'Who art thou, hungry upstart whelp, to bar my ways whom thou shouldst help?
I fare with hasty tidings new
from Morgoth's forest-haunting Thû.
Aside! for I must in; or go
and swift my coming tell below!'

Then up that doorward slowly stood,
eyes shining grim with evil mood,
easy growling: 'Draugluin,
if such thou be, now enter in!
But what is this that crawls beside,
slinking as if 'twould neath thee hide?
Though winged creatures to and fro
unnumbered pass here, all I know.
I know not this. Stay, vampire, stay!
I like not thy kin nor thee. Come, say
what sneaking errand thee doth bring,
thou winged vermin, to the king!
Small matter, I doubt not, if thou stay
or enter, or if in my play
I crush thee like a fly on wall,
or bite thy wings and let thee crawl.'

Huge-stalking, noisome, close he came.
In Beren's eyes there gleamed a flame; 
the hair upon his neck uprose. 
Nought may the fragrance fair enclose, 
the odor of immortal flowers 
in everlasting spring neath showers 
that glitter silver in the grass 
in Valinor. Where'er did pass 
Tinúviel, such air there went. 
From that foul devil-sharpened scent 
its sudden sweetness no disguise 
enchanted dark to cheat the eyes 
could keep, if near those nostrils drew 
snuffling in doubt. This Beren knew 
upon the brink of hell prepared 
for battle and death. There threatening stared 
those dreadful shapes, in hatred both, 
false Draugluin and Carcharoth 
when, lo! a marvel to behold: 
some power, descended from of old, 
from race divine beyond the West, 
sudden Tinúviel possessed 
like inner fire. The vampire dark 
she flung aside, and like a lark 
cleaving through night to dawn she sprang, 
while sheer, heart-piercing silver, rang 
her voice, as those long trumpets keen 
thrilling, unbearable, unseen
in the cold aisles of morn. Her cloak
by white hands woven, like a smoke,
like all-bewildering, all-enthralling,
all-enfolding evening, falling
from lifted arms, as forth she stepped,
across those awful eyes she swept,
a shadow and a mist of dreams
wherein entangled starlight gleams.
'Sleep, O unhappy, tortured thrall!
Thou woebegotten, fail and fall.
down, down from anguish, hatred, pain,
from lust, from hunger, bond and chain,
to that oblivion, dark and deep,
the well, the lightless pit of sleep!
For one brief hour escape the net,
the dreadful doom of life forget!'

His eyes were quenched, his limbs were loosed;
he fell like running steer that noosed
and tripped goes crashing to the ground.
Deathlike, moveless, without a sound
outstretched he lay, as lightning stroke
had felled a huge o'ershadowing oak.
XIV
Into the vast and echoing gloom,
more dread than many-tunneled tomb
in labyrinthine pyramid
where everlasting death is hid,
down awful corridors that wind
down to a menace dark enshrined;
down to the mountain's roots profound,
devoured, tormented, bored and ground
by seething vermin spawned of stone;
down to the depths they went alone.

The arch behind of twilit shade
they saw recede and dwindling fade;
the thunderous forges' rumor grew,
a burning wind there roaring blew
foul vapors up from gaping holes.
Huge shapes there stood like carven trolls
enormous hewn of blasted rock
to forms that mortal likeness mock;
monstrous and menacing, entombed,
at every turn they silent loomed
in fitful glares that leaped and died.
There hammers clanged, and tongues there cried
with sound like smitten stone; there wailed
faint from far under, called and failed
amid the iron clink of chain
voices of captives put to pain.
Loud rose a din of laughter hoarse, self-loathing yet without remorse; loud came a singing harsh and fierce like swords of terror souls to pierce. Red was the glare through open doors of firelight mirrored on brazen floors, and up the arches towering clomb to glooms unguessed, to vaulted dome swathed in wavering smokes and steams stabbed with flickering lightning-gleams. To Morgoth's hall, where dreadful feast he held, and drank the blood of beast and lives of Men, they stumbling came: their eyes were dazed with smoke and flame. The pillars, reared like monstrous shores to bear earth's overwhelming floors, were devil-carven, shaped with skill such as unholy dreams doth fill: they towered like trees into the air, whose trunks are rooted in despair, whose shade is death, whose fruit is bane, whose boughs like serpents writhe in pain. Beneath them ranged with spear and sword stood Morgoth's sable-armored horde: the fire on blade and boss of shield was red as blood on stricken field.
Beneath a monstrous column loomed the throne of Morgoth, and the doomed and dying gasped upon the floor: his hideous footstool, rape of war. About him sat his awful thanes, the Balrog-lords with fiery manes, redhanded, mouthed with fangs of steel; devouring wolves were crouched at heel. And o'er the host of hell there shone with a cold radiance, clear and wan, the Silmarils, the gems of fate, emprisoned in the crown of hate.

Lo! through the grinning portals dread sudden a shadow swooped and fled; and Beren gasped—he lay alone, with crawling belly on the stone: a form bat-winged silent, flew where the huge pillared branches grew, amid the smokes and mounting steams. And as on the margin of dark dreams a dim-felt shadow unseen grows to cloud of vast unease, and woes foreboded, nameless, roll like doom upon the soul, so in that gloom the voices fell, and laughter died slow to silence many-eyed.
A nameless doubt, a shapeless fear, 
had entered in their caverns drear, 
and grew, and towered above them cowed, 
hearing in heart the trumpets loud 
of Valar forgot. Morgoth spoke, 
and thunderous the silence broke: 
'Shadow, descend! And do not think 
to cheat mine eyes! In vain to shrink 
from thy Lord's gaze, or seek to hide. 
My will by none may be defied. 
Hope nor escape doth here await 
those that unbidden pass my gate. 
Descend! ere anger blast thy wing, 
thou foolish, frail, bat-shapen thing, 
and yet not bat within! Come down!' 

Slow-wheeling o'er his iron crown, 
reluctantly, shivering and small, 
Beren there saw the shadow fall, 
and droop the hideous throne, 
a weak and trembling thing, alone. 
And as thereon great Morgoth bent 
his darkling gaze, he shuddering went, -belly to earth, the cold sweat dank 
upon his fell, and crawling shrank 
beneath the darkness of that seat, 
beneath the shadow of those feet.
Tinúviel spake, a shrill, thin, sound piercing those silences profound:
'A lawful errand here me brought;
from Sauron's mansions have I sought,
from Taur-na-Fuin's shade I fare
to stand before thy mighty chair!'

'Thy name, thou shrieking waif, thy name!
Tidings enough from Sauron came but short while since. What would he now? Why send such messenger as thou?'

'Thuringwethil I am, who cast a shadow o'er the face aghast of the sallow moon in the doomed land of shivering Beleriand.'

'Liar art thou, who shalt not weave deceit before mine eyes. Now leave thy form and raiment false, and stand revealed, delivered to my hand!'
About her slender shoulders hung
her shadowy hair, and round her clung
her garment dark, where glimmered pale
the starlight caught in elvish veil.
Dim dreams and faint oblivious sleep
fell softly thence, in dungeons deep
an odor stole of elven-flowers
from elven-dells where silver showers
drip softly through the evening air;
and round there crawled with greedy stare
dark shapes of snuffling hunger dread.

With arms upraised and drooping head
then softly she began to sing
a theme of sleep and slumbering,
wandering, woven with deeper spell
than songs wherewith in ancient dell
Melian did once the twilight fill,
profound, and fathomless, and still.

The fires of Angband flared and died,
smoldered into darkness; through the wide
and hollow halls there rolled unfurled
the shadows of the underworld.
All movement stayed, and all sound ceased,
save vaporous breath of Orc and beast.
One fire in darkness still abode:
the lidless eyes of Morgoth glowed;
one sound the breathing silence broke:  
the mirthless voice of Morgoth spoke.

'So Lúthien, so Lúthien,
a liar like all Elves and Men!
Yet welcome, welcome, to my hall!
I have a use for every thrall.
What news of Thingol in his hole
shy lurking like a timid vole?
What folly fresh is in his mind,
who cannot keep his offspring blind
from straying thus? or can devise
no better counsel for his spies?'

She wavered, and she stayed her song.
'The road,' she said, 'was wild and long,
but Thingol sent me not, nor knows
what way his rebellious daughter goes.
Yet every road and path will lead
Northward at last, and here of need
I trembling come with humble brow,
and here before thy throne I bow;
for Lúthien hath many arts
for solace sweet of kingly hearts.
And here of need thou shalt remain
now, Lúthien, in joy or pain—
or pain, the-fitting doom for all,
for rebel, thief, and upstart thrall.
Why should ye not in our fate share
of woe and travail? Or should I spare
to slender limb and body frail
breaking torment? Of what avail
here dost thou deem thy babbling song
and foolish laughter? Minstrels strong
are at my call. Yet I will give
a respite brief, a while to live,
a little while, though purchased dear,
to Lúthien the fair and clear,
a pretty toy for idle hour.
In slothful gardens many a flower
like thee amorous Valar are used
honey-sweet to kiss, and cast then bruised,
their fragrance loosing, under feet.
But here we seldom find such sweet
amid our labors long and hard,
from godlike idleness debarred.
And who would not taste the honey-sweet
lying to lips, or crush with feet
the soft cool tissue of pale flowers,
ease like Valar the dragging hours?
Ah! curse those Lords! O hunger dire,
O blinding thirst, unending fire!
One moment shall ye cease, and slake
In his eyes the fire to flame was fanned, and forth he stretched his brazen hand. Lúthien as shadow shrank aside. 'Not thus, O king! Not thus!' she cried, 'do great lords hark to humble boon! For every minstrel hath his tune; and some are strong and some are soft, and each would bear his song aloft, and each a little while be heard, though rude the note, and light the word. But Lúthien hath cunning arts for solace sweet of kingly hearts. Now hearken!' And her wings she caught then deftly up, and swift as thought slipped from his grasp, and wheeling round, fluttering before his eyes, she wound a mazy-winged dance, and sped about his iron-crowned head. Suddenly her song began anew; and soft came dropping like a dew down from on high in that domed hall her voice bewildering, magical, and grew to silver-murmuring streams pale falling in dark pools in dreams.
She let her flying raiment sweep,
enmeshed with woven spells of sleep,
as round the dark void she ranged and reeled.
From wall to wall she turned and wheeled
in dance such as never Elf nor fay
before devised, nor since that day;
than swallow swifter, than flittermouse
in dying light round darkened house
more silken-soft, more strange and fair
than sylphine maidens of the Air
whose wings in Varda's heavenly hall
in rhythmic movement beat and fall.

    Down crumpled Orc, and Balrog proud;
all eyes were quenched, all heads were bowed;
the fires of heart and maw were stilled,
and ever like a bird she thrilled
above a lightless world forlorn
in ecstasy enchanted borne.

    All eyes were quenched, save those that glared
in Morgoth's lowering brows, and stared
in slowly wandering wonder round,
and slow were in enchantment bound.
Their will wavered, and their fire failed,
and as beneath his brows they paled,
the Silmarils with living light
were kindled clear, and waxing bright
shone like the stars that in the North
above the reek of earth leap forth.\textsuperscript{41}

Then flaring suddenly they fell, down, down upon the floors of hell. The dark and mighty head was bowed; like mountain-top beneath a cloud the shoulders foundered, the vast form crashed, as in overwhelming storm huge cliffs in ruin slide and fall; and prone lay Morgoth in his hall. His crown there rolled upon the ground, a wheel of thunder; then all sound died, and a silence grew as deep as were the heart of Earth asleep.

Beneath the vast and empty throne the adders lay like twisted stone, the wolves like corpses foul were strewn; and there lay Beren deep in swoon: no thought, no dream nor shadow blind

\textsuperscript{41} In the Cardolan and Weathertop MSS these lines are rather different. The Cardolan Codex reads:

\begin{verbatim}
the Silmarils like stars were kindled
that in the reek of Earth had dwindled
escaping upwards clear to shine,
glistening marvellous in heaven’s mine
\end{verbatim}

The Weathertop text is the same, except for the first two lines:

\begin{verbatim}
the Silmarils were lit like stars
that fume of earth upreeking mars
\end{verbatim}
moved in the darkness of his mind.

'Come forth, come forth! The hour hath knelled, and Angband's mighty lord is felled!
Awake, awake! For we two meet alone before the aweful seat.'
This voice came down into the deep where he lay drowned in wells of sleep;
a hand flower-soft and flower-cool passed o'er his face, and the still pool of slumber quivered. Up then leaped his mind to waking; forth he crept.
The wolvish fell he flung aside and sprang unto his feet, and wide staring amid the soundless gloom he gasped as one living shut in tomb.
There to his side he felt her shrink, felt Lúthien now shivering sink, her strength and magic dimmed and spent, and swift his arms about her went.

Before his feet he saw amazed the gems of Fëanor, that blazed with white fire glistening in the crown of Morgoth's might now fallen down.
To move that helm of iron vast no strength he found, and thence aghast
he strove with fingers mad to wrest
the guerdon of their hopeless quest,
till in his heart there fell the thought
of that cold morn whereon he fought
with Curufin; then from his belt
the sheathless knife he drew, and knelt,
and tried its hard edge, bitter-cold,
o'er which in Nogrod songs had rolled
of dwarvish armourers singing slow
to hammer-music long ago.
Iron as tender wood it clove
and mail as woof of loom it rove.
In claws of iron the gem was caught;
the knife them rent, as they were naught
but brittle nails on a dead hand.
Behold! the hope of Elvenland,
the fire of Fëanor, Light of Morn
before the sun and moon were born,
thus out of bondage came at last,
from iron to mortal hand it passed.
There Beren stood. The jewel he held,
and its pure radiance slowly welled
through flesh and bone, and turned to fire
with hue of living blood. Desire
then smote his heart their doom to dare,
and from the deeps of Hell to bear
all three immortal gems, and save

Beren cuts a Silmaril from the Iron Crown with the knife Angrist
the elven-light from Morgoth's grave. Again he stooped; with knife he strove; through band and claw of iron it clove. But round the Silmarils dark Fate was woven: they were meshed in hate, and not yet come was their doomed hour when wrested from the fallen power of Morgoth in a ruined world, regained and lost, they should be hurled in fiery gulf and groundless sea, beyond recall while Time shall be.\textsuperscript{42} The dwarvish steel of cunning blade by treacherous smiths of Nogrod\textsuperscript{43} made snapped; then ringing sharp and clear

\textsuperscript{42} In the Cardolan and Weathertop MSS the preceding 26 lines are missing, and instead the following briefer statement is made. 
\textit{The claws of iron that held the gem, 
it bit them through and sundered them; 
a Silmaril he clasped and held, 
and the pure radiance slowly welled red glowing through the clenching flesh. 
Again he stooped and strove afresh 
one more of the holy jewels three 
that Fëanor wrought of yore to free. 
But round those fires was woven fate: 
not yet should they leave the halls of hate.}

\textsuperscript{43} The reputation of the dwarves of Nogrod for treachery was a later and deeply unfortunate development, the result of the fatal conflict between Nogrod and Doriath which left King Thingol dead. Those events have cast a shadow over relations between Elves and Dwarves ever since. The prejudice against was dwarves was passed, to some extent, to the Dúnedain as well, whence we see it manifested in this line. On the quests of Erebor and of the Ring we saw these ill-feelings (and dwarvish resentment of the same) manifested many times. \§fb§
in twain it sprang, and like a spear
or errant shaft the brow it grazed
of Morgoth's sleeping head, and dazed
their hearts with fear. For Morgoth groaned\textsuperscript{44} with voice entombed, like wind that moaned
in hollow caverns penned and bound.
There came a breath; a gasping sound
moved through the halls, as Orc and beast
turned in their dreams of hideous feast;
in sleep uneasy Balrogs stirred,
and far above was faintly heard
an echo that in tunnels rolled,
a wolvish howling long and cold.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44} The Weathertop text has only two lines here, instead of four:
\texttt{in twain it sprang; and quaking fear fell on their hearts, for Morgoth's groaned}\textsuperscript{\textemdash}BB

\textsuperscript{45} The Cardolan MS ends at this point. \texttt{BB}
XV
Up through the dark and echoing gloom
as ghosts from many-tunneled tomb,
up from the mountains' roots profound
and the vast menace underground,
their limbs a-quake with deadly fear,
terror in eyes, and dread in ear,
together fled they, by the beat
affrighted of their flying feet.

At last before them far away
they saw a glimmer, faint and grey
of ghostly light that shivering fell
down from the yawning gates of Hell.
Then hope awoke, and straightway died
the doors were open, gates were wide;
but on the threshold terror walked.
The wolf awake there watchful stalked
and in his eyes the red fire glowered;
there Carcharoth in menace towered,
a waiting death, a biding doom:
his jaws were gaping like a tomb,
his teeth were bare, his tongue aflame;
aroused he watched that no one came,
no flitting shade nor hunted shape,
seeking from Angband to escape.
Now past that guard what guile or might
could thrust from death into the light?

He heard afar their hurrying feet, he snuffed an odor strange and sweet; he smelled their coming long before they marked the waiting threat at door. His limbs he stretched and shook off sleep, then stood at gaze. With sudden leap upon them as they sped he sprang, and his howling in the arches rang.

Too swift for thought his onset came, too swift for any spell to tame; and Beren in despair then strode past Lúthien to bar the road, unarmed, defenseless, to defend the elven-maid until the end.  

With left he caught at hairy throat, with right hand at the eyes he smote his right, from which the radiance welled of the holy Silmaril he held. As gleam of swords in fire there flashed the fangs of Carcharoth, and crashed together like a trap, that tore the hand about the wrist, and shore through brittle bone and sinew nesh,

46 Here the Fornost MS comes to an abrupt end. ~BB
devouring the frail mortal flesh;
and in that cruel mouth unclean
engulfed the jewel's holy sheen.

Against the wall then Beren reeled.
but still with his left he sought to shield
fair Lúthien, who cried aloud
to see his pain, and down she bowed
in anguish sinking to the ground.

**BB:** From here the Weathertop text is damaged beyond hope of decipherment. There is one further page of verse, from much later in the codex, which survived. It seems to deal with Lúthien’s journey to Mandos seeking to join Beren:

Where the forest-stream went through the wood,
and silent all the stems there stood
of tall trees, moveless, hanging dark
with mottled shadows on their bark
above the green and gleaming river,
there came through leaves a sudden shiver,
a windy whisper through the still
cool silences; and down the hill,
as faint as a deep sleeper's breath,
an echo came as cold as death:
'Long are the paths, of shadow made
where no foot's print is ever laid,
over the hills, across the seas!
Far, far away are the Lands of Ease,
but the Land of the Lost is further yet,
where the Dead wait, while ye forget.
No moon is there, no voice, no sound
of beating heart; a sigh profound
once in each age as each age dies
alone is heard. Far, far it lies,
the Land of Waiting where the Dead sit,
in their thought's shadow, by no moon lit.'
Conclusion:

**Bilbo writes:** Although the remainder of the tale of Beren and Lúthien’s "release from bondage" is still well known among the Dúnedain, in terms of written poetry or chronicles, no other telling of their adventure approaches the level of detail or vividness found in surviving parts of the Lay. I mourn the loss, but I am grateful too for what has been preserved. Consider, for example, the loss of nearly all written lore concerning Eärendil!

The scholiasts of the North Kingdom prepared summaries of the entire lay; and from these (some of which are preserved in Rivendell) we can glean something of how the lost cantos of the poem ran. I provide these below, beginning with a summary of the conclusion of Canto XV

Carcharoth goes mad and drives all Orcs before him like a wind. The sound of his awful howling causes rocks to split and fall. There is an earthquake underground. Morgoth's wrath on waking. The gateway falls in and hell is blocked, and great fires and smokes burst from Thangorodrim. Thunder and lightning. Beren lies dying before the gate. Tinúviel's song as she kisses his hand and prepares to die.

Thorondor comes down and bears them amid the lightning that stabs at them like spears and a hail of arrows from the battlements. They pass above Gondolin and Lúthien sees the white city far below, gleaming like a lily in the valley. Thorondor sets them down in Brethil.

Material from the scholiasts regarding the lost Canto XVI is potentially confusing. In other sources (oral tradition, the Quentas, the Annals) there appears the tradition that Celegorm and Curufin sent emissaries to Thingol informing him that Finrod and Beren were believed dead, that they had Lúthien in their custody at Nargothrond and that Celegorm intended to wed her. It may be that the missing sections of the Fornost text (the version about which the scholiasts seem to have been writing), Cantos VI-X, contained these details. Or it may be that, as in some prose accounts, this particular detail about Celegorm and Curufin’s maneuverings was not revealed until this point in the narrative. Canto XVI would have represented the first returning of the point-of-view to Doriath and Thingol since Lúthien’s escape in Canto VI. Here is the most thorough of the summaries.
Sorrow in Doriath at flight of Lúthien. Thingol's heart hardened against Beren, despite words of Melian. A mighty hunt is made throughout the realm, but many of the folk strayed north and west and south of Doriath beyond the magic of Melian and were lost. Daeron became separated from his comrades and wandered away into the East of the world, where some say he pipes yet seeking Lúthien in vain. The embassy of Celegorm tells Thingol that Beren and Felagund are dead, that Celegorm will make himself king of Narog, and while telling him that Lúthien is safe in Nargothrond and treating for her hand, hints that she will not return: it also warns him to trouble not the matter of the Silmarils. Thingol is wroth- and is moved to think better of Beren, while yet blaming him for the woes that followed his coming to Doriath, and most for loss of Daeron.

Thingol arms for war against Celegorm. Melian says she would forbid this evil war of Elf with Elf, but that never shall Thingol cross blade with Celegorm. Thingol's army meets with the host of Boldog on the borders of Doriath. Morgoth has heard of the beauty of Lúthien, and the rumor of her wandering. He has ordered Sauron and the Orcs to capture her. A battle is fought and Thingol is victorious. The Orcs are driven into Taur-na-Fuin or slain. Thingol himself slays Boldog.

Mablung Heavyhand was Thingol's chief warrior and fought at his side; Beleg Strongbow was the chief of his scouts. Though victorious Thingol is filled with still more disquiet at Morgoth's hunt for Lúthien. Beleg goes forth from the camp on Doriath’s borders and journeys, unseen by the archers, to Narog. He brings tidings of the flight of Lúthien, the rescue of Beren, and the exile of Celegorm and Curufin. Thingol goes home and sends an embassy to Aglon to demand recompense, and aid in the rescue of Lúthien. He renews his vow to imprison Beren for ever if he does not return with a Silmaril, though Melian warns him that he knows not what he says. The embassy to

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47 The prose sources do not report that Thingol actually marched forth from Menegroth, nor, of course, do they make any mention of Boldog. ~BB

48 Mablung and Beleg play significant roles in the *Narn i Chîn Hûrin*. ~BB

194
Celegorm meets the onslaught of Carcharoth who, by fate or the power of the Silmaril, bursts into Doriath. All the company perish save Mablung who brings the news. Devastation of the woods. The wood-elves flee to the caves.

Canto XVII deals with the arrival of Beren and Lúthien in Doriath, where they are rejoined by Huan. Beren’s words and gesture before Thingol, telling him that "Even now a Silmaril is in my hand," showing first his empty left hand and then revealing his missing right, is one of the most celebrated scenes of the Elder days. From it, Beren received his names "Camlost" (empty-handed) and "Erchamion" (one-handed). But it is attested only only in the prose sources. In the summary, this is glossed over:

Huan, Beren, and Lúthien come before Thingol. They tell their tale; yet Thingol will not relent. The brave words of Beren, revealing the mystery of Carcharoth. Thingol relents. The wolf-hunt is prepared. Huan, Thingol, Beren, and Mablung depart. Lúthien abides with Melian in foreboding. Carcharoth is slain, but slew Huan who defended Beren. Yet Beren is mortally hurt, though he lived to place the Silmaril on Thingol's hand (which Mablung cut from the wolf’s belly). The meeting and farewell of Beren and Tinúviel beneath Hirilorn. Burial of Huan and Beren.

Canto XVIII dealt with what many interpreters see as the true heart and meaning of the tale: that the love of Beren and Lúthien transcended not only their disparate kindreds but death itself. The final fragment from the Weathertop MS is believed to be from this Canto.

Fading of Lúthien. Her journey to Mandos. The song of Lúthien in Mandos' halls, and the release of Beren. They dwelt long in Beleriand, but spake never more to mortal Men, and Lúthien became mortal.

Findegil, King's Archivist writes: The fate of Huan is remembered differently in the South Kingdom, where it is maintained that he either vanquished Carcharoth without the loss of his own life, or that he was permitted to return to Middle-Earth with Beren and Lúthien. This tradition is preserved in the so-called "Lost Tales" of Dol Amroth.