

The Wife's Lament

Anonymous

Exeter Book

Ic þis giedd wrece bi me ful geomorre,
minre sylfre sið. Ic þæt secgan mæg,
hwæt ic yrmþa gebad, siþþan ic up weox,
niwes oþþe ealdes, no ma þonne nu.

A ic wite wonn minra wræcsiþa. 5

ærest min hlaford gewat heonan of leodum
ofer yþa gelac; hæfde ic uhtceare
hwær min leodfruma londes wære.

ða ic me feran gewat folgaðsecan,

wineleas wræcca, for minre weapearfe. 10

Ongunnon þæt þæs monnes magas hycgan

þurh dyrne geþoht, þæt hy todælden unc,

þæt wit gewidost in woruldrice

lifdon laðlicost, ond mec longade.
Het mec hlaford min herheard niman, 15
ahte ic leofra lyt on þissum londstede,
holdra freonda. Forþon is min hyge geomor,
ða ic me ful gemæcne monnan funde,
heardsæligne, hygegeomorne,
mod miþendne, morþor hycgendne. 20
Bliþe gebæro ful oft wit beotedan
þæt unc ne gedælde nemne deaðana
owiht elles: eft is þæt onhworfen,
is nu . . . swa hit no wære
freondscipe uncer. Sceal ic feor ge neah 25
mines felaleofan fæhðu dreogan.
Heht mec mon wunian on wuda bearwe,
under actreo in þam eorðscræfe.
Eald is þes eorðsele, eal ic eom oflongad,
sindon dena dimme, duna uphea, 30
bitre burgtunas, brerum beweaxne,
wic wynna leas. Ful oft mec her wraþe begeat
fromsiþfreat. Frynd sind on eorþan,
leofe lifgende, leger weardiað,

þonne ic on uhtan ana gonge 35
under actreo geond þas eorðscrafu.
þær ic sittan mot sumorlangne dæg,
þær ic wepan mæg mine wræcsiþas,
earfoþa fela; forþon ic æfre ne mæg
þære modceare minre gerestan, 40
ne ealles þæs longapes þe mec on þissum life begeat.
A scyle geong mon wesan geomormod,
heard heortan geþoht, swylce habban sceal
bliþe gebæro, eac þon breostceare,
sinsorgna gedreag, sy æt him sylfum gelong 45
eal his worulde wyn, sy ful wide fah
feorres folclondes, þæt min freond siteð
under stanhlife storme behrimed,
wine werigmod, wætre befloweren
on dreorsele. Dreogeðse min wine 50
micle modceare; he gemon to oft
wynlicran wic. Wa biðþam þe sceal
of langoþe leofes abidan.