

Oh, Light of that Divine Source
which does in all things reside and ever moves them
to its ultimate purpose, whose beauty is blinding,
whose radiance is splendor, whose power
5 is unmatched, sing now through me the tale
of our ancestors, of those few men of great worth
who became High Teloch of the land and ruled
with the Signet Ring of the Hart upon their finger,
of battles, of hunts, of wolf-hours and blood-days,
10 of trials terrible, and how in victory they were
granted right to rule the Iolish peoples with wisdom
and grace.

Mathred, son of Math,
was strongest of the Iolish, taller than any other,
15 powerful as three oxen, gold fell his locks,
keen his sight, for his mother was a Baíth witch
whose blood gave him magic and he faced beasts
of the earth without terror, never fled nor lost
a battle, he flattened the wild mountains
20 of Ail Bolam when they would not submit,
he separated the Sun and Moon and gave them each
a time to reign, often that great warrior defeated
the circling Sea before she could swallow Ioland
and the children of Iol, for she had desired Iol,
25 giving him many gifts, but he loved her not,
and when she would shake the island Mathred
would place it upon his back, battling the beasts
of the darkest seas though doubled over
until the pillars of the earth ceased shaking
30 and his people were once more at peace.

Mathred was advised
by his friend, the young but knowledgeable
wise man of Ail Meloch, to forge a weapon
which would grant him power over this foe,
35 that the Iolish might never again be troubled
by her malice; this his final labor, for with weapon
in hand he could defeat the Sea and bring her
to submit or else slay the demons of dark earth
and dragons of wild sky, forever defending
40 his people.

With the wise man of Ail Meloch
at his side, he began to search all the Earth
for those boons which might be forged together
to make that mighty weapon, in caves and valleys,
45 through the windswept realms of the Tella
where green grass fields and untamed meadows

stretch to the skies, in sweet-water streams
and cool lakes, in the bitter waves of the spiteful
Sea, on the white-caped peaks of the mountains
50 where eagles make their roost; always they searched
for those fantastic materials to forge together
into his weapon.

Yet this task was not one of ease,
for though the Earth did love Mathred, his blood
55 belonging to the Baith, it would not part easily
from its wonders and in all hours of the day
they were tested by beasts as Mathred safeguarded
the wise man of Ail Meloch as he by his earned
knowledge sought to discover these materials
60 by which he would forge his great boon.

Long was their search
and for five years Mathred slept not but battled
the creatures of the night as the wise man slept,
for many terrible beasts did oppose them and hid
65 these boons from the waking world: wolves as great
as bears, maned cats large as horses, whose claws
like knives hacked and slashed more fiercely
than axes, spiders which devour men as others
do flies and feast on darkness, filth, and decay,
70 demons and dragons which eat the flesh of man,
yet faithfully Mathred kept his vigil, slaying
each beast which moved in the night and by
his strength and devotion conquered and delivered
these boons.

By guile they stole
the ends of the rainbow from the skies, by skill
Mathred built a ladder to reach the heavens
where they stole the shadow of the Sun,
with honeyed words they took the wind's voice
80 that ever after it could only howl or whisper,
by strength he stole the redness from the waters
and left it forever blue, with a sack so deep
it might hold ten kingdoms they plucked like apples
the stars which shone in daylight, from cats
85 they stole the sound of their footfall.

These wonders gathered,
the wise man of Ail Meloch did declare their
search over and by his skill began to discover
means of joining them in his home beneath
90 those great Iolish mountains while Mathred returned
to his people, the Ui Lide Aesal, to await the day
when he might subdue the Sea and secure

Ioland for all ages.

95 He wrestled the five wild brothers
of Tach Fel and won their sister as a bride, for only
the woman of Tach Fel could know him and love
there was between them, creating the boy Malach,
and in joy they lived two years before her death,
for she drowned in the salt waves of the Sea as she
100 returned from her brothers and for three months
Mathred spoke no word, neither to God nor Man
and his son Malach knew not his voice, until
breaking his silence he vowed vengeance
and declared war on the Sea, he gave battle
105 though he was without the great weapon which
would secure his victory.

 The Sea called a gale
as foul demons of the deep rose in the waves
and for three days his ship sailed alone in the storm,
spearing those beasts which hold no form true,
110 unafraid he was under the wind and rain;
on the fourth his boat sank, the Sea held him in her
grasp and set all her children upon him, but they
could not subdue him, for he was the son of Math
115 who had taken a Baíth woman for a wife, her strong
magic ran through him, and in his rage he brought
the Sea to boil and the creatures of the salt did die,
and, weeping for her children, she submitted to him,
swearing to never again harm men nor call
120 the storms while Mathred lived.

 In triumph he returned
to shore, but when he walked among his own people
again, he fell ill with longing for his wife and died.

 Such was the life of Mathred,
125 and thus Fate had placed her pieces on the board,
and thus the trials of Mathred's blood began.