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Sigyn Unbound

In Norse mythology, Sigyn is the wife of the trickster-god Loki. After Loki arranged the death of Baldr, the other gods imprisoned him. They bound him with the entrails of one of his sons, which turned to iron, and set a snake to drip its venom onto his face. Sigyn stays by his side, holding a bowl to catch the drops of poison. But whenever the bowl becomes full and she has to empty it out, the venom falls on Loki's face and he writhes in pain, causing earthquakes. Loki will eventually escape from his bonds and play a role in the destruction of the world at Ragnarök. What will happen to Sigyn is unknown. This poem is written from her perspective.

Welcome, wanderer, to my prison cell,
No less a prison cell for being chosen,
The central circle of my frigid hell

Where love and loss and longing all lie frozen.
A lonely moral, a statue wrought of stone,
With aching arms I bear my bowl of poison

In penance for a trespass not my own,
My husband's crime in which I played no part,
For which with weary vigil I atone.

So year by year I ply my wifely art
And hour by hour I measure out my fate
And drop by drop I poison my own heart,

Corroding love and longing into hate
As hate and love and longing take their toll
Until I can no longer watch and wait,

Until the day I set aside my bowl
And watch the acid etch into his face
Each line of anguish graven in my soul,

Each grief of which the gods have made me taste
Until in rage he rends these prison bars,
Shatters the earth, and lays the heavens waste.

Then shall I look once more upon the stars.