

DANCE OF RUNES

**1

ASGARD**

Veiled in mist lies Asgard, the seat of the gods,
enthroned within the world ash Yggdrasil, high above Midgard,
sheltered by the powers of the worlds.

**2

LOKE**

Wothan, wearied by boredom and heavy with sweet mead,
encountered Loke, who sensed a chance
to lay a snare for the father of the gods.
Thus Loke spoke, claiming that Wothan had been deceived
by the world-powers and denied the sight of the future.
The secret of the place where the instruments of foresight lay hidden
had been entrusted by the world-powers
only to the lindwyrms of Midgard.

**3

DESCENT TO MIDGARD**

Wothan — enraged, yet grateful for a task —
set out for Midgard to seek the lindwyrms,
ready to face any peril with Gungner.

**4

MIDGARD FOREST**

The tree spirits of Midgard's forest stood in Loke's debt
and obeyed his wish to hinder the father of the gods.
As Wothan passed through the wood,
their branches struck against him.
Assailed from all sides,
he began to run, swinging his sword wildly,
faster and faster his feet carried him.

**5

DRAGONHOARD**

Then a clearing opened before Wothan.
As he stepped into it, three lindwyrms appeared
within a grail of trees.
Devoted to Wothan, they vowed to show him the sign
granted to them by the world-powers,
and they placed their claws upon one another.
The three merged into one.
Wothan understood and set out
for the plain of the three fountains.

**6

THREE-FOUNTAIN PLAIN**

The roots of Yggdrasil were nourished
by the three fountains of the plain,
which united to form the primal stream.

**7

GIANT ATTACK**

Now fear seized Loke.
If Wothan were soon to fix his gaze upon the future,
Loke's tricks would never again succeed.
So he told the giants
that the father of the gods was on his way to Utgard,
and they fell upon Wothan.
A fierce battle arose,
yet Wothan prevailed
with Gungner and the keen sword.

**8

UTGARD RISING**

Wothan, scarred by the struggle, sank down
and found renewed strength only
as the blazing red of morning greeted the new day over Utgard.

**9

WORLDASH YGGDRASIL**

Yggdrasil too glowed in the red of the world-powers.
Ever higher the ash seemed to stretch,
and ever more the father of the gods felt
the ancient strength of the tree.

**10

FLOAT TO YGGDRASIL**

Radiant as an almandine,
Yggdrasil received Wothan into her light
and bore him anew
within her crown.

**11

TWO REQUESTS**

Wothan, closer than ever to the world-powers,
asked for the instrument of prophecy.
Twice he cried into the ether,
yet his calls faded unheard.

**12

PIERCED BY GUNGNER**

The father of the gods understood
that the world-powers demanded a sacrifice
before revealing the secret of foresight.
Then Wothan took Gungner, his spear that never misses its mark,
and pierced his own body,
nailing himself to Yggdrasil,
consecrated to the world-powers and to death.

**13 - 14 - 15

NINE DAYS**

For nine days and nine nights
Wothan hung upon Yggdrasil,

until the world-powers heard him
and returned him to the foot of the ash.

**16

TWENTY-FOUR RUNES**

Then branches of the world ash fell before Wothan,
carved with signs.

When the father of the gods beheld them,
he recognized the names of the runes.

The runes revealed the future to the god,
and in gratitude he gave them to humankind –
but never to Loke.