

Dual Enrollment Students – For your E-day assignment, read this poem. It is an Old English poem that has been translated, obviously. When you get to line 30, the tree (or rood) will talk. A rood is actually a crucifix; thus, this tree is the one Christ was crucified on.

For your assignment, email me (isturgeon@hoover.k12.al.us) one paragraph summarizing the poem and one paragraph of your personal reaction to the poem. In the subject line of the email to me, put the word ROOD!

ASSIGNMENT DUE on THURSDAY NOV. 15 by 3:35 p.m.

“The Dream of the Rood”

Translation by Richard Hamer (1970)

1

Hear while I tell about the best of dreams
Which came to me the middle of one night
While humankind were sleeping in their beds.
It was as though I saw a wondrous tree

5

Towering in the sky suffused with [light](#),
Brightest of beams; and all that beacon was
Covered with gold. The corners of the earth
Gleamed with fair jewels, just as there were five
Upon the cross-beam. Many bands of angels,

10

Fair throughout all eternity, looked on.
No felon's gallows that, but holy spirits,
Mankind, and all this marvellous creation,
Gazed on the glorious tree of victory.
And I with sins was stained, wounded with guilt.

15

I saw the tree of glory brightly shine
In gorgeous clothing, all bedecked with gold.
The Ruler's tree was worthily adorned
With gems; yet I could see beyond that gold
The ancient strife of wretched men, when first

20

Upon its right side it began to bleed.
I was all moved with sorrows, and afraid
At the fair sight. I saw that lively beacon
Changing its clothes and hues; sometimes it was
Bedewed with [blood](#) and drenched with flowing gore,

25

At other times it was bedecked with treasure.
So I lay watching there the Savior's tree,
Grieving in spirit for a long, long while,

Until I heard it utter sounds, the best
Of woods began to speak these words to me:

30

"It was long past - I still remember it -
That I was cut down at the copse's end,
Moved from my root. Strong enemies there took me,
Told me to hold aloft their criminals,
Made me a spectacle. Men carried me

35

Upon their shoulders, set me on a hill,
A host of enemies there fastened me.
And then I saw the Lord of all mankind
Hasten with eager zeal that He might mount
Upon me. I durst not against God's word

40

Bend down or break, when I saw tremble all
The surface of the earth. Although I might
Have struck down all the foes, yet stood I fast.
(OE 39) Then the young hero (who was God almighty)
Got ready, resolute and strong in heart.

45

He climbed onto the lofty gallows-tree,
Bold in the sight of many watching men,
When He intended to redeem mankind.
I trembled as the warrior embraced me.
But still I dared not bend down to the earth,

50

Fall to the ground. Upright I had to stand.
(OE 44) A rood I was raised up; and I held high
The noble King, the Lord of heaven above.
I dared not stoop. They pierced me with dark nails;
The [scars](#) can still be clearly seen on me,

55

The open wounds of malice. yet might I
Not harm them. They reviled us both together.
I was made wet all over with the blood
Which poured out from his side, after He had Sent forth His spirit. And I underwent

60

Full many a dire experience on that hill.
I saw the God of hosts stretched grimly out.
Darkness covered the Ruler's corpse with clouds
His shining beauty; shadows passed across,
Black in the darkness. All creation wept,

65

Bewailed the King's death; Christ was on the cross.
(OE 57) And yet I saw men coming from afar,

Hastening to the Prince. I watched it all.
With sorrows I was grievously oppressed,
Yet willingly I bent to those men's hands,

70

Humbly. They took up there Almighty God,
And from the heavy torment lifted Him.
The soldiers left me standing drenched with moisture,
Wounded all over with the metal points.
They laid Him down limb-weary; then they stood

75

Beside the corpse's head, there they beheld
The Lord of heaven, and He rested there
A while, tired after the great agony.
The men then made a sepulchre for Him
In sight of me. They carved it of bright stone,

80

And set therein the Lord of victories.
Next, wretched in the eveningtide, they sang
A dirge for Him; and when they went away,
Weary from that great Prince, He stayed alone.
(OE 70) Yet we remained there weeping in our places

85

A good long time after the warriors' voices
Had passed away from us. The corpse grew cold,
The fair abode of life. Then men began
To cut us down. That was a dreadful fate.
In a deep pit they buried us. But friends

90

And servants of the Lord learnt where I was,
And decorated me with gold and silver.
(OE 78) Now you may understand, dear warrior,
That I have suffered deeds of wicked men
And grievous sorrows. Now the time has come

95

That far and wide on earth men honour me,
And all this great and glorious creation,
And to this beacon offers prayers. On me
The Son of God once suffered; therefore now
I tower mighty underneath the heavens,

100

And I may heal all those in awe of me.
Once I became the cruellest of tortures,
Most hateful to all nations, till the time
I opened the right way of life for men.
(OE 90) So then the prince of glory honoured me,

105

And heaven's King exalted me above
All other trees, just as Almighty God

Raised up His mother Mary for all men
Above all other women in the world.
(OE 95) Now, my dear warrior, I order you

110

That you reveal this vision to mankind,
Declare in words this is the tree of glory
On which Almighty God once suffered torments
For mankind's many sins, and for the deeds
Of Adam long ago. He tasted death

115

Thereon; and yet the Lord arose again
By his great might to come to human aid.
He rose to heaven. And the Lord Himself,
Almighty God and all His angels with Him,
Will come onto this earth again to seek

120

Mankind on Doomsday, when the final Judge
Will give His verdict upon every man,
What in this fleeting life he shall have earned.
(OE 110)Nor then may any man be without fear
About the words the Lord shall say to him.

125

Before all He shall ask where that man is
Who for God's name would suffer bitter death
As formerly He did upon the cross.
Then they will be afraid, and few will know
What they may say to Christ. But there need none

130

Be fearful if he bears upon his breast
The best of tokens. Through the cross each soul
Nay journey to the heavens from this earth,
Who with the Ruler thinks to go and dwell."
(OE 122)I prayed then to the cross with joyous heart

135

And eagerness, where I was all alone,
Companionless; my spirit was inspired
With keenness for departure; and I spent
Much time in longing. Now my hope of life
Is that I may approach the tree of triumph

140

Alone more often than all other men,
Honour it well; my wish for that is great
Within my heart, and my hope for support
Is turned towards the cross. I have on earth
Not many noble friends, but they have gone

145

Hence from earth's joys and sought the King of glory.
With the High father now they live in heaven
And dwell in glory; and I wait each day
For when the cross of God, which here on earth
I formerly beheld, may fetch me from

150

This transitory life and carry me
To where there is great bliss and joy in heaven,
Where the Lord's host is seated at the feast,
And it shall set me where I afterwards
may dwell in glory, live in lasting bliss

155

Among the saints. May God be friend to me,
He who once suffered on the gallows tree
On earth here for men's sins. Us He redeemed
And granted us our life and heavenly home.
Hope was renewed with glory and with bliss

160

For those who suffered burning fires in hell.
(OE 150)The Son was mighty on that expedition,
Successful and victorious; and when
The one Almighty Ruler brought with Him
A multitude of spirits to God's kingdom,

165

To bliss among the angels and the souls
Of all who dwelt already in the heavens
In glory, then Almighty God had come,
The Ruler entered into His own land.
