“Hail, Hrothgar!

Higlac is my cousin and my king; the days

Of my youth have been filled with glory. Now Grendel’s

Name has echoed in our land: sailors

Have brought us stories of Herot, the best

Of all mead-halls, deserted and useless when the moon

Hangs in the skies the sun had lit,

Light and life fleeing together.

My people have said, the wisest, most knowing

And best of them, that my duty was to go to the Danes’

Great king. They have seen my strength for themselves,

Have watched me rise from the darkness of war,

Dripping with my enemies’ blood. I drove

Five great giants into chains, chased

All of that race from the earth. I swam

In the blackness of night, hunting monsters

Out of the ocean, and killing them one

By one; death was my errand and the fate

They had earned. Now Grendel and I are called

Together, and I’ve come. Grant me, then,

Lord and Protector of this noble place,

A single request! I have come so far,

Oh shelterer of warriors and your people’s loved friend,

That this on favor you should not refuse me---

That I, alone and with the help of my men,

May purge all evil from this hall. I have heard,

Too, that the monster’s scorn of men

Is so great that he needs no weapons and fears none.

Nor will I. My lord Higlac

Might think less of me if I let my sword

Go where my feet were afraid to, if I hid

Behind some broad linden shield: my hands

Alone shall fight for me, struggle for life

Against the monster. God must decide

Who will be given to death’s cold grip.

Grendel’s plan, I think, will be

What it has been before, to invade this hall

And gorge his belly with our bodies. If he can,

If he can. And I think, if my time will have come,

There’ll be nothing to mourn over, no corpse to prepare

For its grave: Grendel will carry our bloody

Flesh to the moors, crunch on our bones

And smear torn scraps of our skin on the walls

Of his den. No, I expect no Danes

Will fret about sewing our shrouds, if he wins.

And if death does take me, send the hammered

Mail of my armor to Higlac, return

The inheritance I had from Hrethel, and he

From Wayland. Fate will unwind as it must!”