Riddle 3

Ic eom anhag  
bille gebennad,  
esgum weig,  
frene feohtan.  
keepers of the sea,  
seafarers, courage,  
seafarers.  

Isame wund,  
beadoweoreca sêd,  
beadoweoreca sêd,  
beadoweoreca sêd,  

I am the lone wood in the warp of battle,  
Wounded by iron, broken by blade,  
Weary of war. Often I see  
Battle-rush, rage, fierce fight flaring--
I hold no hope for help to come
Before I fall finally with warriors
Or feel the flame. The hard hammer-leavings
Strike me; the bright-edged, battle-sharp
Handiwork of smiths bites in battle.

5

Riddle 4

Mec gesette soð  
sigora waldend  
Crist to compe.  
often I climb  
unto the waves,  
unto the waves,  
unto the waves,  

The culminating lord of victories, Christ,  
Created me for battle. Often I burn  
Countless living creatures on middle-earth,  
Treat them to terror though I touch them not,  
When my lord rouses me to wage war.

5

Riddle 14

Oft ic scall wip wæge winnan ond wip wæde frohtan,  
somod wip þam secce,  
ponne ic secan gewite  
eorpan ybun þeath;  
me hiep se ejel fremde.  
strong like the wind,  
strong like the wind,  
strong like the wind,  

In battle I rage against wave and wind,  
Strive against storm, dive down seeking  
A strange homeland, shrouded by the sea.  
In the grip of war, I am strong when still;  
In battle-rush, rolled and ripped  
In flight. Conspiring wind and wave
Would steal my treasure, strip my hold,
But I seize glory with a guardian tail
As the clutch of stones stands hard.

5

Oft ic wîc sceo,  
Frore ne wene,  
guðgæwinnes,  
Fremont, herefore the land  
ed forwurde,  
bornore hafte,  
rudiments of the land  

In battle I rage against wave and wind,  
Strive against storm, dive down seeking  
A strange homeland, shrouded by the sea.  
In the grip of war, I am strong when still;  
In battle-rush, rolled and ripped  
In flight. Conspiring wind and wave
Would steal my treasure, strip my hold,
But I seize glory with a guardian tail
As the clutch of stones stands hard.

5

Hwylum ic moniga  
mod arete,  
hwylum ic frefre  
þa ic ær winne on  
feorran swipe--  
hi þæs fæla þeah,  
swylice þes oþres,  
ponne ic eft ðya  
offer deop gedreag  
drohta bete.  

The culminating lord of victories, Christ,  
Created me for battle. Often I burn  
Countless living creatures on middle-earth,  
Treat them to terror though I touch them not,  
When my lord rouses me to wage war.

5

5

Oft ic ær set  
gif ic stille wæorþe;  
gif me þæs toseled,  
hi ðæoð wæþran þonne ic,  
ond mec sliterde  
sona flymâð,  
willô ðeþergan  
þæt ic fæþian scall.  

5

5

Ic him þæt forstondse,  
gif min steort ðolað  
ond mec stipe wip  
stanes moton  
fæste gehabban.  
Fringe hwêt ic hatte.  

10

10
Riddle 18

Ic eom wunderlicu wiht, on gevin sceapan,
frean minum leof, fægere gegehwed.
Byrne is min bleofag, swyleec beocht secmað
wir ymb pone wealgum þe me waldend geaf,
se me widsgamum wisað hwilum
sylfum to sac. Donne ic sine wege
þush hlutterm deug, hondweorc smiða,
gold ofer geardeas. Oft ic gæstberend
cwelle compoweopnum. Cyneg mec grymød
since ond selodie ond mec on sele wæorphæ
ne wyrmæ wordofes, wisan menæð
mine for mengo, þær by meouc drincæ,
healdæ mec on heaþore, hwilum leotæ eft
radweorhæ on gerum sceacan,
oeleþornæ. Oft ic oþrum scod
treme æt his freonde, Fæheomic wide,
wæþnum avyrged. Ic me wenan ne þearf
þæt me beam wyræ on bonan freorc,
gif me gomna hwylæ guþe genigeð;
ne wæorhæ iso meþburg gemicledu
cafordan minum þe ic æfter woc,
ryme þe hlaforðæs hweorfan mot
from þam healdende þe me hringas geaf.
Me bið forð wítod, gif ic frean hyre,
güþe fremme, swa ic giæn dyre
minum þeodne on þonc, þæt ic þolian sceal
beængestreonæ. Ic wip bryde ne mot
hemed habban, ac me þæs hyhtþegæ
geþ wiþnað þæt mec geara on
bende lecgæ; forþon ic brutcan sceal
on hagostældæ haleþa gestreona.
Oft ic wiþum dæl wife abeige,
I am a strange creature shaped for battle
Coated in colors, dear to my lord.
Bright thread lucks and swings in my mail,
Cradles the death-gem, gift of a lord
Who grips and guides my body forward
Through the wide rush of war. In the clear
Court of day, I bear the glint of gold,
Bright song of smiths. Often I slay
Soul-bearers with thrust and slash.
Sometimes the hall-king decks me in silver
Or garnet praise, raises my power
Where men drink mead, reigns my killing
Or cuts me loose, heart-keen, swing-tired,
Through the broad room of war. Sometimes I sing
Through the throat of a friend-the curse
Of weapons. No son will seek vengeance
On my slayer when battle-foes ring death.
My tribe will not count children of mine
Unless I lordless leave the guardian
Who gave me rings. My fate is strange:
If I follow my lord and wage war,
Sure thirst of a prince’s pleasure,
Then I must stoke in blindless play
Without the hope of child-treasure.
I am bound by an ancient craft to lose
That joy-so in sheer celibacy I enjoy
The hoard of heroes. Wrapped with wire
Like a bright fool, I frustrate a woman;
Steal her joy, slake desire. She sants,
Rails, curses, claps hands, chants
Unholy incantations-bladed words
In a bloodless battle I cannot enjoy
Riddle 23

Ic eom wundenlicu wiht, wiferum on hyhte, neahbuencium nyt. Neangum sceaphe burgvitterendra gympe bonan anum. Stapol min is steapeah; stande ic on bedde, neopan nih natwær. Neped hwilum ful crytenu ceorres dohtor, modwlonc meowle, þat heo on mec griped, meseð mec on seode, reaðað min heafoð, feged mec on fæstæn. Feleþ sona mires gemotes seo þe mec nearwæð, wif wundenlocco— wæt bið þæt eage.

I am a wonderful help to women, The hope of something to come. I harm No citizen except my slayer. Rooted I stand on a high bed.

I am shaggy below. Sometimes the beautiful Peasant’s daughter, an eager-armed, Proud woman grabs my body, Rushes my red skin, holds me hard, Claims my head. The curly-haired Woman who catches me fast will feel Our meeting. Her eye will be wet.

Riddle 30

Is þes middangeard missenlicum wismun gewihteadg, wrræcum gefyretwad. Sipum sellic ic seah searo hwefsan, gründan wið greote, giellende faran. Neðde séllicu wiht, syne ne folme, eaut ne cármas; sceal on anum fe t særcoceap swifsan, swipe faran, faran ofer feldas. Heðde fela ribba, muð was on midden. Moncyne nyt, fered foddurwelæn, foloscope creogeð, wist in wigeð, ond werum giealæd gaful geara gehwam þæs þæs guman brucæd, rice ond heane. Reœ, gef þu cuunœ, wis worda gleaw, hwaet sið wiht se.

Middle-earth is made lovely in unmatched ways Rich and rare. I saw a strange creature Riding the road, weird craft and power From the workshops of men. She came sliding Up on the shore, shrieking without sight, Eyes, arms, shoulders, hands Sailed on one foot over smooth plains Treasure and haul. Her mouth in the middle Of a board of ribs, she carries corn Gold, grain-treasure, wine-wealth. The feast-floater brings in her belly food For rich and poor. Let the wise who catch The drift of this riddle say what I mean.

Riddle 31

Wiht cwom æfter wege wuestlicu līpan; cymlic from ceole cleode to londe, klinsaede hludec— hiæhter was gryelic, egesfylæ on æarde Eacge weron scearpe. Wæs hiæ heategra, hlude to sæne, biere beadowearca Borewealas grorf, heardlīpedæ. Heterune bond! Sægde scearcrostig ymb hve sceal pæcaescæft: "Iæ min modor magaþa cyanes þæs deorsætan, þæt is dohtor min eacen uþulden, swa þæt is aldsum cupe færum on folce, þet seo on fólde sceal on ealra londæ gehwam lissum stondan."

An awesome beauty angled the wove; The deep-throated creature called to land, Laughed loud-lingering, struck terror Home to men. Her blades honed sharp, She was slow to battle but battle-grim, Savage wound-worker. The slaughterer Struck ship-walls, carried a curse. The cunning creature said of herself: "My mother, who comes from the kind of women Dearest and best, is my daughter grown Great and pregnant; so is it known to men On earth that she shall come and stand Gracefully on the ground in every land."
Riddle 32

Ic wiht gesah in wera burgum,  
seo þat feoh feðê. Hafað fea toþa;  
nebb hip hyre et nyttæ, niperweard geongeð,  
hipeð holdlice ond to ham tyhô,  
wæþeð geond weallæ, wyhte seceð;  
Aa heo þa fíndeð, þa þe fæste ne hip;  
leðeð hio þa wîlîgan, wyrte fæste,  
stille stondan on ståpölwonge,  
beordite blican, blowan ond growan.

I saw close to the houses of men  
A strange creature that feeds cattle.  
By tooth-board and nose-haul  
(A useful slave), it scuffs the ground,  
Scratches at plants, dogs walls  
Or drags fields for plunder-seeks  
al crop-catch and carries it home.  
Its prey is bent stalk and weak root;  
Its gift is firm grain and full flower  
On a glittering plain-growing, blooming.

Riddle 48

Wiga is on coðpan wundnum accuned  
dyrnum to nyttæ, of dumnum twam  
toht stíhþet, þone on teon wigeð  
feond his feonde. Forstranghe oft  
wif hine wið. He him wel hecéð,  
þeowþaþ him geswére, gig him þegnað  
megæð ond wæcæs mid genete ryhte,  
feðað hine fægre; he him fremmu steðep  
life on lissum. Lcanð grimmé  
pam þe hine wîlonce weorþan leðeð.

On earth this warrior is strangely born  
of two dumb creatures, drawn gleaming  
Into the world, bright and useful to men.  
It is tended, kept, covered by women--  
Strong and savage, it serves well,  
A gentle slave to firm masters  
Who minds its measure and feeds it fairly  
With a careful hand. To these it brings  
Warm blessings; to those who let it run  
Wild it brings a grim reward.

Riddle 65

Ic on þinge gefræg ðeodcyninges  
wællice wiht, wordaldra[. . .]  
. . . . ] snyt[. . .] hio synle deð  
fir geðw[. . .] [ . . . . ]  
wisdome. Wundor me þat [. . .]  
[ . . . . ] næmne moh hafað  
set ne [. . . . ] [ . . . . ]  
[ . . . . ] welan oft sacað,  
cwþdæ cy[. . .] [. . . . ] weard  
leoda lærow. Forþon nu longe meg  
[ . . . . ] ealdre ece lifgan  
missenlice, þenden mean bugað  
coðpan sceatas. Ic þet oft gesah  
golde gecigemoð, þæs guman druncon,  
since ond seolfe. Sece se þe cuune,  
wísþeþra hwylc, hwæt seo wiht sy.

In the hall of the High King I heard  
That a voiceless creature spoke charmed  
Words, chanted praise, prayer-song  
Wise and wonderful it seemed to me  
* * *  
It speaks without mouth, moves without feet  
* * *  
Saying, "I am now teacher of men,  
Preacher to many on middle-earth--  
I will live as long as men walk the land."  
Wound with silver and plated gold,  
I have seen it open where men sit  
Drinking together. Now a wise man  
Should know what this creature is called.
Riddle 68

be swa wætlice be wege stonde
heah ond hleorhtorht haleþum to nytte.
(Riddle 68 equals K-D 70, lines 5-6)

Who am I who stand so boldly by the sea road--
Hightowering, cheek-bright, useful to men?

Riddle 79

Frod wæs min fromcynn  [.........]
biden in burgum,  sipþan beþes weard
[.........] wæra  life bewunden,
fyre gefælsad.  Nu me fah wanað
constan broþor,  se me ærest weard
gumena to gyne.  Ic ful gearwe gemon
lwa min fromcynn  fruman ægetto
eal of earde;  ic him yfe ne mot,
ac is herfynyd  hwilum ænere
wide geond wongas.  Hæbbe ic wundra fela,
middangeardes  megen unytel,
ac ic miþan sceal  monna gehwylcum
degofulne dom  dyran cæfetes,
siþest minne.  Saga hwæt ic hatte.

My race is old, my seasons many,
My sorrows deep. I have dwelt in cities
Since the fire-guardian wrought with flame
My clean beginning in the world of men,
Purged my body with a circling fire.

Now a fierce earth-brother stands guard,
The first to shape my sorrow--I remember
Who ripped our race, hard from its homeland,
Stripped us from the ground. I cannot bind
Or blast him, yet I cause the clench of slavery
Round the world. Though my wounds are many
On middle-earth, my strength is great.

My craft and course, power and rich passage,
I must hide from men. Say who I am.
Riddle 80

This mother of many well-known creatures
Is strangely born. Savage and fierce,
She roars and sings, courses and flows,
Follows the ground. A beautiful mover,
No one knows how to catch her shape
And power in song, or how to mark
The strength of her kin in myriad forms:
Her lineage sings the spawn of creation.
The high father broods over one flow,
Beginning and end, and so does his son,
Born of glory, and the heavenly spirit,
The ghost of God. His precious skill

All kinds of creatures who lived on the earth
When the garden was graced with beauty and joy.
Their mother is always mighty
Sustained in glory, teeming with power,
Plenty, a feast of being, a natural hoard
For rich and poor. Her power increases
Her manifest song. Her body is a bubbling
Jewel of use, a celibate gem with a quick,
Cleaning power—beautiful, bountiful,
Noble and good. She is boldest, strongest,
Greediest, greatest of all earth-travelers
Spawned under the sky, of creatures seen
With the eyes of men. She is the weaver
Of world—children's might.

A wise man
May know of many miracles—this one
Is harder than ground, smarter than men,
Older than counsel, more gracious than giving.
Dearer than gold. She washes the world
In beautiful tones, teems with children,
Soothes hard suffering, crushes crime.