

PLAY NINE- THE FLOOD

(The Fishers and Mariners)

NOAH

That lord that lives *ay-lasting life, (**ever-lasting*)
I love thee ever with heart and hand,
That me would rule by reason *rife, (**plentiful*)
Six hundred years to live in land.
Three seemly sons and a worthy wife
I have ever at my *steven to stand; (**command, shout*)
But now my cares are keen as knife,
Because I *ken what is command. (**know*)
There comes to *ilke country, (**each*)
Yea, cares both keen and cold.
For God has warned me
This world wasted shall be,
And certain the *sooth I see, (**truth*)
As fore-fathers has told.
My father Lamech who, likes to neven, (**name, mention*)
Here in this world thus long gone *lend, (**lived*)
Seven hundred year seventy and seven,
In such a space his time he spend.
He prayed to God with stable *steven (**voice*)
That he to him a son should send,
And at the last there come from heaven
Such *hetting that him mickle **amend, (**promise*) (***increased his status*)
And made him *grub and **grave (**delve*) (***dig*)
As ordained fast before,
For he a son should have,
As he gone after crave;
And as God vouchesafe

In world then was I born.

When I was born Noah named he me,

And said these words with mickle *wynne: (*joy)

Lo, he said, this *ilke is he (*specifically)

That shall be comfort to mankind.

Sirs, by this well wit may ye,

My father knew both more and *min (*less)

By certain signs he could well see,

That all this world should sink for sin;

How God should vengeance take,

As now is seen certain,

And end of mankind make

That sin would not forsake;

And how that it should *slake, (*lessen, quench)

And a world *wax again. (*grow)

I would God it wasted were,

So that I should not *tent theretil. (*attend)

My seemly sons and daughters dear,

Takes you *attent unto my **skill. (*attention) (**reason)

Filius 1

Father we are all ready here,

Your bidding *banely to fulfil. (*obediently)

Noah

Go call your mother, and come near,

And speed us fast that we not *spill. (*die)

Filius 1

Father, we shall not *fyne (*rest)

'Til your bidding be done.

Noah

All that lives under lyne (*line- possibly lineage, or a boundary line-
i.e. everybody!)

Shall, son, sooner pass to pain.

Filius 1

Where are ye, mother mine?

Come to my father soon.

Uxor

What says thou son?

Filius 1

Mother, certain

My father thinks to flit full far.

He bids you haste with all your main

Unto him, that no thing you mar.

Uxor

Ya, good son, *hie thee fast again (*go)

And tell him I will come no near.

Filius 1

Dame, I would do your bidding *fain, (*gladly)

But you must wend, else be it worse.

Uxor

Worse? That would I wit.

We board all wrong, I *ween. (*think)

Filius 1

Mother, I say you yet,

My father is bound to flit.

Uxor

Now certain, I shall not sit

*Ere I see what he mean. (*Before)

Filius 1

Father, I have done now as ye command,

My mother comes to you this day.

Noah

She is welcome, I well warrant;
This world shall soon be waste away.

Uxor

Where art thou Noah?

Noah

Look, here at hand,
Come hither fast dame, I thee pray.

Uxor

*Trowes thou that I will leave the hard land (**Think*)
And turn up here in *toure **deraye? (**utter*) (***disarray*)
Nay Noah, I am not bound
To *fonde now over there *fells (**find/go*) (***i.e. the Pennines*)
Do *bairns, go we and **truss to town. (**children*) (***trudge, travel*)

Noah

Nay, certain, *soothly then **mun ye drown. (**surely*) (***must*)

Uxor

In faith thou were as good come down
And go do somewhat else.

Noah

Dame, forty days are nearhand past
And gone since it began to rain,
On life shall no man longer last
But we alone, is not to *layne. (**lying, i.e. not to lie*)

Uxor

Now Noah, in faith thee *fonnes full fast, (**fools, i.e. acts like a clown*)
This fare will I no longer *frayne; (**think about*)
Thou art near *wode, I am aghast, (**mad*)
Farewell, I will go home again.

Noah

O woman, art thou *wode? (**mad*)

Of my works thou not *wot;
All that has bone or blood
Shall be overflowed with the flood.

*(*understand)*

Uxor

In faith, thee were as good
To let me go my gait.
Wey! Out! Harrow!

Noah

What now, what cheer?

Uxor

I will no near for no-kin's need.

Noah

Help, my sons, to hold her here,
For to her harms she takes no heed.

Filius 2

Be merry mother, and mend your cheer;
This world be drowned, without dread.

Uxor

Alas, that I this lore should learn.

Noah

Thou *spills us all, ill might thou speed.

*(*kills, destroys)*

Filius 3

Dear mother, wone with us,
There shall nothing you grieve.

*(*remain, dwell)*

Uxor

Nay, needless home me *bus,
For I have *tolis to **truss

*(*go)*

*(*possessions) (**gather,
pack)*

Noah

Woman, why does thou thus
To make us more mischief?

Uxor

Noah, thou might have let me wit;
Early and late thou went thereout,
And *ay at home thou let me sit (**ever*)
To look that nowhere were wealth about.

Noah

Dame, thou hold me excused of it,
It was God's will without a doubt.

Uxor

What, *wenys thou so for to go quit? (**thinks*)
Nay, by my *troth, thou gets a clout. (**truth, promise*)

Noah

I pray thee dame, be still.
Thus God would have it wrought.

Uxor

Thou should have wit my will,
If I would *sent theretil, (**consent, assent*)
And Noah, for that same *skill, (**reason*)
This bargain shall be bought.
Now at first I find and feel
Where thou has to the forest sought,
Thou should have told me for our *seele (**happiness*)
When we were to such bargain brought.

Noah

Now dame, thee there not dread a *dele, (**suffering, pain, dolour*)
For till account it cost thee nought.
A hundred winters, I wot well,
Is went since I this work had wrought.
And when I made ending,

God gave me measure fair

Of every *ilke a thing;

(*each)

He bade that I should bring

Of beasts and fowls young,

Of *ilke a kind a pair.

(*each/every)

Uxor

Now certain, and we should scape from *scathe

(*harm- i.e. unscathed)

And so be saved as ye say here,

My *comrades and my cousins both,

(*comrades)

Them would I went with us in fear.

Noah

To wend in the water it were *wathe,

(*perilous)

Look in and look without *were.

(*doubt)

Uxor

Alas, my life me is full loath,

I live over-long this *lare to **lere.

(*lore, news) (**learn)

Filia 1

Dear mother, mend your mood,

For we shall wend you with.

Uxor

My friends that I from *yoode

(*gone)

Are overflown with flood.

Filia 2

Now thank we God all good

That us has granted *grith.

(*safety)

Filia 3

Mother, of this work now would ye not *wene,

(*believe)

That all should *worth to waters **wan.

(*pass under) (**dark)

Filius 2

Father, what may this marvel mean?

Whereto made God middle-earth and man?

Filia 1

So *selcouthe sight was never none seen, (**miraculous, strange*)
Since first that God this world began.

Noah

Wend and spar your doors *bedene, (**now*)
For better counsel none I can.
This sorrow is sent for sin,
Therefore to God we pray
That he our *bale would **blynne. (**torment*) (***end, relieve*)

Filius 3

The king of all mankind
Out of this woe us win,
As thou art lord, that may.

Filius 1

Ya, lord, as thou let us be borne
In this great *bale, some **bote us bid. (**sorrow*) (***relief, salvation*)

Noah

My sons, see you midday and morn
To these cattle takes good heed;
Keeps them well with hay and corn;
And women, *fanges these fowls and feed, (**care for*)
So that they be not lightly *lorne (**lost*)
As long as we this life shall lead.

Filius 2

Father, we are full fain
Your bidding to fulfil.
Nine months past are plain
Since we were put to pain.

Filius 3

He that is most of main
May mend it when he will.

Noah

O bairns, it waxes clear about,
That may you see there where you sit.

Filius 1

Ay, leave Father, ye look thereout,
If that the water wane ought yet.

Noah

That shall I do without doubt,
For by the waning may we wit.
A, lord, to thee I love and laud.

The cataracts I *trow be knit. (**trust*)

Behold, my sons all three
The clouds are waxing clear.

Filius 2

A, lord of mercy free,
Ay loved might thou be.

Noah

I shall assay the sea,
How deep that it is here.

Uxor

Loved be that lord that gives all grace,
That kindly thus our *care would **kele. (**troubles*) (***kill*, i.e. end)

Noah

I shall cast lead and look the space,
How deep the water is *ilke a **dele. (**each*)(***possibly dale/dell*, i.e. depths)

Fifteen cubits of height it has
Over *ilke a hill fully to feel; (**each*)

But be well comfort in this case,

It is waning, this wot I well.
Therefore a fowl of flight
Full soon shall I forth send
To seek if he have sight,
Some land upon to light;
Then may we wit full right
When our mourning shall mend.
Of all the fowls that men may find
The raven is *wight, and wise is he.
Thou art full *crabbed **and all thy kind,
Wend forth thy course I command thee,
And warily *wot, and hither thee wind
If thou find either land or tree.
Nine months here have we been pained,
But when God will, better must be.

(*strong, bold)

(*crabby, bad-tempered) (**of)

(*know)

Filia 1

That lord that lends us life
To learn his laws in land,
He made both man and wife,
He help to stint our strife.
Our cares are keen as knife,
God grant us good tidings.

Filius 1

Father, this fowl is forth full long;
Upon some land I *trow he land,
His food therefore to find and *fange-
That makes him be a failing friend.

(*trust, think)

(*take up, eat)

Noah

Now son, and if he so forth *gang,
Since he for all our wealth gone wend,

(*goes)

Then be he for his works wrong
Evermore wearied withouten end.

And certain for to see
When our sorrow shall cease,
Another fowl full free
Our messenger shall be;
Thou dove, I command thee,
Our comfort to increase.

A faithful fowl to send art thou

Of all within there *wanys wide; (*walls)

Wend forth I pray thee, for our proof,

And *sadly seek on ilke a side (*soberly)

If the floods be falling now,

That thou on the earth may *belde and bide; (*flourish)

Bring us some tokening that we may *trow (*know/trust)

What tidings shall of us betide.

Filia 2

Good lord, on us thou look,

And cease our sorrow *sere, (*many)

Since we all sin forsook

And to thy *lare us took. (*teachings, law)

Filia 3

A twelvemonth but twelve week

Have we been hovering here.

Noah

Now bairns, we may be blithe and glad

And love our lord of heaven's king;

My bird has done as I him bade,

An olive branch I see him bring.

Blessed be thou fowl that never was *fayd, (*deceptive)

That in thy force makes no failing;
More joy in heart never are I had,
We must be saved, now may we sing.
Come hither my sons in hie,
Our woe away is went,
I see here certainly
The hills of Harmony.

Filius 1

Loved be that lord forthy
That us our lives has lent.

Tunc cantent Noe et filii sui, etc

Then Noah and his sons should sing.

Uxor

For *wrecks now that we may win (*disasters)
Out of this woe that we in were;
But Noah, where are now all our kin
And company we knew before?

Noah

Dame, all are drowned, let be thy din,
And soon they bought their sins sore.
Good living let us begin,
So that we grieve our God no more;
He was grieved in degree
And greatly moved in mind
For sin, as men may see:
Dum dixit `Penitet me`. (*Then God said "I repent")
Full sore for thinking was he
That ever he made mankind.
That makes us now to toil and truss;
But sons, he said-I wot well when-

`Arcum ponam in nubibus`, *(*I will set the rainbow in the sky)*
He set this bow clearly to *ken *(*know)*
As a tokening between him and us,
In knowledge 'til all Christian men
That from this world were finished thus,
With water would he never waste it then.
Thus has God most of might
Set his sign full clear
Up in the air of height;
The rainbow it is right,
As men may see in sight
In seasons of the year.

Filius 2

Sir, now since God our sovereign sire
Has set his sign thus in certain,
Then may we wit this world's empire
Shall evermore last, is not to *layne. *(*hide)*

Noah

Nay son, that shall we not desire,
For if we do we work in vain;
For it shall once be waste with fire,
And never *worth to world again. *(*exist)*

Uxor

A, sire, our hearts are sore
For these *saws that you say here, *(*sayings)*
That mischief may be more.

Noah

Be not afeared therefore,
You shall not live then *yore *(*as long)*
By many hundred year.

Filius 1

Father, how shall this life be led
Since none are in this world but we?

Noah

Sons, with your wives you shall be *sted, (**living together*)

And multiply your seed shall ye.

Your bairns shall *ilkon other wed (**each one*)

And worship God in good degree;

Beasts and fowls shall forth be bred,

And so a world begin to be.

Now travail shall you taste

To win you bread and wine,

For all this world is waste;

These beasts must be *unburst, (**released*)

And wend we hence in haste,

In God's blessing and mine.