

A Feast of Creatures



ANGLO-SAXON RIDDLE-SONGS

Translated
with Introduction,
Notes and Commentary
by
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A life-thief stole my world-strength, Ripped off flesh and left me skin, Dipped me in water and drew me out, Stretched me bare in the tight sun; The hard blade, clean steel, cut,	5
Scraped—fingers folded, shaped me. Now the bird's once wind-stiff joy Darts often to the horn's dark rim, Sucks wood-stain, steps back again— With a quick scratch of power, tracks	10
Black on my body, points trails. Shield-boards clothe me and stretched hide, A skin laced with gold. The bright song Of smiths glistens on me in filigree tones. Now decorative gold and crimson dye,	15
Cloisoned jewels and a coat of glory Proclaim the world's protector far and wide— Let no fool fault these treasured claims. If the children of men make use of me, They will be safer and surer of heaven,	20
Bolder in heart, more blessed in mind, Wiser in soul: they will find friends, Companions and kinsmen, more loyal and true, Nobler and better, brought to new faith— So men shall know grace, honor, glory,	25
Fortune, and the kind clasp of friends. Say who I am—glorious, useful to men, Holy and helpful from beginning to end.	

Favored solution: Bible, Book