A Tapestry of Tales
Honouring Dr. Dustin Geeraert

AINSLEY A. THORARINSON S. BLOOMER

A Viking Legend: Tapestry of Tales (AVLTOT) is a forthcoming book dedicated to Dustin Geeraert and his family. Since Loki was Dustin's favourite character in the Old Norse legends, the following chapter, "Loki or Lopt (Air, Sky-Traveller)," has been selected to honour him as an Old Norse mythology teacher, storyteller, member of the Icelandic community, and much more.

In AVLTOT, Chapter Five opens Section 3 and is dedicated to Loki. He also appears throughout the book in chapters including "Loki versus the Dwarves," "The Wall, Tale of Idunn," "Tale of Skadi," "Tale of Freyja and the Brisingamen Necklace," "Thor's Journey to Giantland," "Tale of Loki in Aegir's Hall," "Tale of the Missing Mjolnir," and "Tale of Baldur and Ragnarok." Loki is also referred to in "Tale of Svipdag and Mengloth," "The Tale of Freyja," "Ottar and Hyndla," and the "Afterthoughts."

A tapestry consists of multicoloured threads woven together to form a larger picture. In much the same way, the tales in AVLTOT weave together events and stories from Old Norse mythology. The book is a retelling of these mythological traditions, with names and spellings chosen both to honour Icelandic traditions and to make the stories accessible, informative, and engaging for an English-language audience.

These centuries-old stories have been retold and reinterpreted by different peoples and cultures over time, and that dialogue continues today. One modern expression can be found in comic books, particularly the Marvel stories featuring characters such as Thor and Loki. Such interpretations inevitably bear the marks of the cultures and periods that create them.

Ainsley A. Thorarinson S. Bloomer is a Winnipeg-based writer and educator with a particular interest in Icelandic language, Old Norse mythology, and literature. In retirement, she has taught elementary Icelandic and Old Norse mythology. She is the author of A Viking Legend: The Descendants of Odin and A Viking Legend: A Tapestry of Tales, both of which draw on the Old Norse Eddas and other sources to bring Norse mythology and legendary traditions to contemporary readers.

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Some readers may regard modern adaptations as a "degradation of myth," but the author and editors of this piece take a different view. Mythological traditions have long been retold, adapted, and reimagined. Culture is not static; it is continually performed and interpreted. Even the familiar image of the horned Viking helmet, although it does not reflect historical reality and was popularized through later artistic traditions, has become one of the most recognizable symbols associated with Norse culture. While much of the present work draws upon and paraphrases medieval Icelandic sources, it also takes creative liberties, allowing contemporary voices to become part of this continuing dialogue.

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Dedication

I dedicate this article to

Dr. Dustin Geeraert (1983–2024);

his parents, Allen and Linda (1957–2002);

his siblings, Coleman, Dr. Bryce Geeraert (Erin),

and Dr. Lindsay Geeraert (Dave Heyduck);

my family;

and the retellers of mythological stories,

of today and days gone by.

Section 3

Loki
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Chapter Five
Loki or Lopt (Air, Sky-Traveller)

Figure 1: Carl Emil Doepler, "Loke, Fenriswolf und Midgardschlange" [Loki, Fenrir, and Jormungand]. Illustration from Wilhelm Wägner, *Nordisch-germanische Götter und Helden*, 1882.

Of all the creatures and beings in the Old Norse mythological world, Loki was distinctive. In some accounts, he was regarded as a god, while in others he was understood as a shape-shifting giant. In some stories he helped the gods; in others he harmed them. Loki frequently caused trouble for the gods, only to become the one who helped them escape the difficulties he had created.

Loki was the son of two giants. His father was Farbauti and his mother was Laufey, also called Nal (needle). His brothers were Helbindi and Byleist. The name Farbauti has been translated as "anger striker," "dangerous anger," or "sudden striker."

Farbauti has also been associated with furious or fearsome lightning. Little is known about Loki's mother or brothers, but Loki himself is described as being of giant origin and possessing shape-shifting abilities. He has also been associated with fire and volcanoes and was described as beautiful, intelligent, and cunning.

Some interpretations connect Loki's nature with his ancestry, including Ymir, and with the contrasting forces of frost and heat found in the mythological world. These associations may help explain the contradictions in Loki's character: at times controlled and helpful, at others unpredictable and destructive. When Yggdrasil was young, Loki befriended Odin, and the two formed a bond of blood brotherhood.

Loki has also been described as a fire-spirit, particularly in connection with the hearth. This association provides another way of understanding his contradictory nature. A controlled fire can provide warmth and cook food, while an uncontrolled fire can become destructive. Similarly, Loki can be both helpful and harmful. He is described as alluring, appealing, and beautiful, yet also as a trickster capable of deception and destruction. In some tales he proves useful and resourceful; in others, he causes great harm. He has been described as the greatest of tricksters, the father of lies, the slander-bearer of the gods, and the disgrace of gods and humans.

In the "Tale of Svipdag and Mengloth," Loki demonstrates building skills, constructing a hall within Mengloth's stronghold. The hall was called Lyr or Hyrr (heat-holding), perhaps suggesting a place designed to remain warm in cold weather. Magical protective flames surrounded it. Loki apparently designed and built the hall with the assistance of the dwarves Barri, Ori, Varr, Vegdrasill, Dorri, Uri, Dellingr, Atvarth, and Lipski.

In the same tale, Loki is also credited with smithing abilities, forging a runic sword when he was close to death. In the "Tale of Baldur," he builds a house for himself with doors facing in each direction and devises a fishing net.

Loki was unusual in another respect: he not only fathered children but was also able to give birth. In the "Tale of the Wall," Loki transformed himself into a mare, mated with the giant stallion Svadifari, and gave birth to the eight-legged horse Sleipnir. According to Odin in the "Tale of Loki in Aegir's Hall," Loki lived beneath the earth as a woman for eight years and gave birth to children. In another account, the seeress Hyndla says that Loki ate the half-cooked heart of an ogress, became pregnant, and gave birth to ogresses (see "The Tale of Freyja, Ottar and Hyndla").

With his wife Sigyn, Loki fathered Nari or Narfi and Vali or Ali. With the giantess Angrboda, he fathered three children: Hel, a daughter with unusual qualities; Jormungandur, a great sea serpent; and Fenrir, a giant wolf.

The Aesir learned that these children were being raised in Giantland. Prophecies warned that the children of Loki and Angrboda would eventually bring harm to the gods and goddesses:

"All the gods became aware that harm was on the way, first because of the mother's nature, but even more so because of the father's."

The gods took counsel and expressed their fears about the three children. Hel was described as being half the colour of living flesh and half dark or deathly. Fenrir was a giant wolf whom prophecy associated with Odin's death, while Jormungand was an enormous sea serpent.

These descriptions raise questions about the nature of their parents. Little is recorded about Angrboda. Loki, however, possessed shape-shifting abilities and was often described as beautiful. Was this simply his natural appearance, or could his appearance itself have been another manifestation of his ability to change shape? Could he have altered himself in order to gain acceptance among Odin and the other beings of Yggdrasil? These are questions the surviving tales leave open.

Odin sent the gods to bring Loki and Angrboda's children to him so that he could see them for himself. After seeing them, he decided what would become of each one.

Loki and Angrboda's three children

Hel

Figure 2: Ludwig Burger, "Hel." Illustration from Preussens Geschichte in Wort und Bild, 1880.

Odin placed Hel in the depths of Niflheim and made her ruler of her own realm, also called Hel. She was given the power to provide lodging and provisions for those sent to her. Among them were people who had died from disease, old age, or natural causes, as well as those who had committed serious wrongs during their lives.

According to Snorri Sturlusson, Hel possessed an enormous dwelling with great walls, halls, and gates. Her main hall was called Eljudnir (sprayed with snowstorms or rain-damp). Her dish was called Hunger and her knife Famine. Her servant was Ganglati (Lazy), while her maidservant was Ganglöt (Slothful). The threshold was called Fallandaforad (falling to peril or stumbling-block), her bed was Kor (sick bed), and her bed curtains were Blikjandabol (gleaming disaster or pale misfortune).

Hel was portrayed as gloomy and severe, and few beings wished to visit her realm in the afterlife.

Jormungand

Figure 3: Charles Edmund Brock, "Thor Went Forth Against Jörmungand." Illustration from Annie and Eliza Keary, The Heroes of Asgard: Tales from Scandinavian Mythology, 1930.

When Odin saw the sea serpent Jormungand, he cast him into the deep sea surrounding Middle Earth. There, Jormungand grew so large that he eventually encircled the entire world and grasped his own tail. He became known as the Midgardsorm, the Midgard Serpent, or the World Serpent. Jormungand and Thor would ultimately face one another at Ragnarok.

Fenrir

Figure 4: Image by P.C. Skovgaard and frame by Johan Thomas Lundbye, "Loki and the Young Fenris Wolf." Illustration from *Mindeblade om den Nordiske Høitid* [Souvenir Book of the Nordic Festival], 1845.

Odin decided that Fenrir would be raised in Asgard among the Aesir so that he and the other gods could keep a close watch on the wolf. Many of the gods feared Fenrir and would not go near him. Tyr was the only god who had the courage to feed the young wolf. As Fenrir grew larger and stronger, the prophecies foretelling the danger he would bring remained in the minds of the Aesir.

The Aesir took counsel and searched for a way to restrain Fenrir. They made a strong fetter called Laeding and invited him to test his strength against it. They told him, "Fenrir, if you can break free from this strong and secure shackle, you will be known for your great strength and courage."

Fenrir carefully examined the restraint and decided that it was not strong enough to hold him. He allowed the Aesir to bind him and, once restrained, stretched with all his strength until the fetter snapped. Fenrir was delighted by his success. The Aesir praised his strength, but now feared him even more.

The Aesir had a second, stronger fetter made, called Dromi. Once again, they invited Fenrir to test his strength. They encouraged him, saying, "Fenrir, you will be known for your extraordinary strength if this finely forged fetter cannot hold you."

Fenrir considered the challenge. He had grown stronger since breaking the first restraint and wanted to earn still greater renown, so he agreed to be bound again. He struggled against Dromi until the fetter shattered and pieces flew in all directions. The Aesir praised the young wolf for his strength and endurance, and Fenrir was pleased with himself.

Afterwards, the gods again took counsel. They wanted Fenrir bound but no longer knew how to accomplish it. Odin sent Freyr's messenger, Skirnir, to Svartalfheim to ask the dwarves to create a fetter powerful enough to hold the wolf. The dwarves agreed and made the magical restraint called Gleipnir (Entangler).

Gleipnir was said to have been made from six extraordinary elements: "the noise of a cat's footsteps, a beard of a woman, the sinews of a bear, the breath of a fish, the spittle of a bird and the roots of a mountain."

These were things believed to be impossible or beyond ordinary perception. Although Gleipnir appeared delicate and harmless, it was extraordinarily strong, smooth, and soft to the touch.

The gods brought Fenrir to Lake Amsvartnir and then to the island of Lyngvi. Praising him for his previous feats of strength, the Aesir showed him the silken-looking band and encouraged him to break it as he had the other two restraints. They passed Gleipnir among themselves, each pretending to test it, before offering it to Fenrir.

Fenrir examined the ribbon suspiciously. "This is the bind? This strand of string is nothing special. I see no honour or renown in breaking it. It also feels and smells strange. I do not want it placed on my legs."

One of the Aesir assured him that breaking the band would be easy and that, if he could not free himself, they would release him. They continued to appeal to his pride and courage.

Fenrir remained suspicious. "Why should I trust you? If I am unable to free myself, will you remove the bind? If you make a pledge to me, I may agree. One of you must place his hand in my mouth as a guarantee that you will release me if I cannot break free."

Figure 5: John Bauer, "Tyr and Fenrir." Illustration from Viktor Rydberg's *Fädernas gudasaga* [Our Fathers' Godsaga], 1911.

The gods looked at one another, uncertain who would be willing to make such a pledge. Tyr stepped forward and placed his right hand in Fenrir's mouth. The Aesir looked on as Fenrir allowed himself to be bound.

While Tyr's hand rested in Fenrir's mouth, the gods fastened Gleipnir around the wolf's legs. Fenrir immediately began struggling to free himself, stretching and straining as he had against the previous two fetters. This time, however, the more he fought against the soft, silken-looking band, the tighter it became. He tried again with greater force but could not break free.

As the Aesir realized that Gleipnir was holding him, their fear began to subside. Fenrir, however, understood that he had been trapped and demanded that they release him. When the gods did not keep their promise, Tyr paid the price of the pledge he had made.

Figure 6: Charles E. Brock, "The Binding of Fenrir." Illustration from Annie and Eliza Keary, *The Heroes of Asgard: Tales from ScandinavianMythology*,1930.

Once the Aesir were certain that Fenrir could not escape, they secured a loose part of Gleipnir, called Gelgja, to a great stone called Gjoll, which they fastened deep into the earth. They then used another enormous stone, Thviti, to anchor the restraint even more firmly.

Fenrir cried out, "You have betrayed me! You have trapped me!"

The Aesir placed a sword between Fenrir's jaws to prevent him from biting. As he struggled against his bonds, a river called Van, or Hope, was said to flow from his mouth. The prophecies foretold that Fenrir would eventually bring about Odin's death, but with the wolf bound, the Aesir hoped that fate might be avoided.

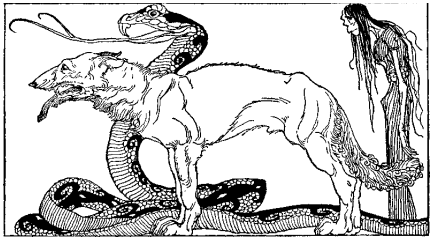

Figure 7: Willy Pogany, "The Children of Loki." Illustration from Padraic Colum, *The Children of Odin*, 1920.

The Aesir did not kill Fenrir because they held their sacred places and sanctuaries in high esteem. Instead, Fenrir remained imprisoned until Ragnarok.

The Eddas do not record how Loki and Angrboda responded to the treatment of their children. The children were taken from Angrboda while they were living in Giantland, yet little is said about her reaction. As their mother, she may well have been devastated by their loss, but the surviving sources leave her response unrecorded.

Afterthoughts and Questions about Loki

Loki was a complex and often contradictory character. In some stories, he was a friend and companion of the gods and goddesses of Asgard; in others, he caused them great harm. Snorri Sturluson's description of Loki and his family is particularly striking:

"All the gods became aware that harm was on the way, first because of the mother's nature, but even more so because of the father's."

The unusual nature of Loki and Angrboda's children—a wolf, a serpent, and Hel—raises questions about how the medieval sources understood their parents. Little is recorded about Angrboda beyond her identity as a giantess and the mother of Loki's children. Her children were taken from her because the Aesir feared what they might become, yet the surviving accounts tell us almost nothing about how either Angrboda or Loki responded to their loss.

More is written about Loki himself. He possessed remarkable shape-shifting abilities and was often described as beautiful. Could his appearance have been another expression of his ability to change form? Did he alter himself in order to gain acceptance from Odin and the other beings of Yggdrasil? The surviving tales do not provide clear answers, but they offer many examples of his transformations.

In the "Tale of Loki versus the Dwarves," Loki changes into a fly and distracts the dwarf Brokk while he is creating treasures for the gods. His attempts to interfere with Brokk's work are unsuccessful. Later, when the dwarves sew Loki's lips together, why does he not simply change form and escape? Does he allow the punishment to happen, and if so, why?

In the "Tale of Freyja and the Brisingamen Necklace," Loki again transforms into a fly, this time so that he can remove Freyja's necklace while she sleeps. Why does Loki want the necklace? Later, he transforms into a seal and fights Heimdal, who also takes the form of a seal. Why choose this form, and why does Loki not simply transform again and escape?

In the "Tale of Loki at Aegir's Hall," why does Loki kill Fimafeng, and why does he insult the gods and goddesses gathered there?

The "Tale of Baldur" raises even more questions. Why is Loki angered by Baldur's apparent invulnerability? Why does he search for a way to harm him, and why does he involve the innocent Hod in Baldur's death? Was Loki seeking revenge for the way Odin and the Aesir had treated his own children—Fenrir, Jormungand, and Hel?

Both Baldur and Hod ultimately survive Ragnarok. Did Loki somehow know what would happen? Could he have planned events with Hel, either to imprison them in her realm or perhaps even to protect them? If he believed there was no hope for himself or his own children, could he nevertheless have been trying to preserve Odin's sons? If so, why did he not share this knowledge with Odin, who continually sought information about Ragnarok?

And when Loki himself was later bound, why did he not use his shape-shifting abilities to escape?

So many questions remain unanswered. Perhaps that uncertainty is part of what has made Loki such an enduring and fascinating figure in Old Norse mythology.

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Dedication to Dustin Geeraert and his Family

While struggling to find a publisher for my first Old Norse mythology book, *A Viking Legend: The Descendants of Odin*, I discovered that the manuscript did not meet the criteria of some publishers. I asked for assistance on my Facebook page, and Ryan Johnson, then a PhD candidate in history at the University of Iceland, contacted me to say that he knew someone who might be able to help.

I was thrilled and grateful. Ryan introduced me to Dustin Geeraert, who was teaching Old Norse mythology at the University of Manitoba. Ryan and Dustin welcomed my project with enthusiasm and gave me hope that it could move forward. Both were deeply knowledgeable about Old Norse mythology and took a genuine interest in my work.

Although Ryan and Dustin were busy with their own work, projects, and lives, they made time to review my manuscript. Ryan completed a comprehensive mythological edit and wrote the Foreword. Dustin also edited the manuscript. In his words:

> I edited the Manuscript so that it is all in one document, containing all content from both of the previous files, in the order Title Page, Table of Contents, Introduction, Acknowledgements and Dedication, Chapters, Appendix, Genealogical Chart, Annotated Index, and Sources. It's pretty similar to the way things were before but it's meant to present the book in as simple, direct, and

> accessible manner as possible. I can't say I have a huge amount of experience submitting manuscripts to publishers, but I do have some, and it strikes me as key for any potential reader on the publisher's end to immediately understand what the book is about and to relate to it. I think your story about the background of the book does this very well, Ainsley, so I just put it at the start of the introduction.
>
> Other than that, I went through it to ensure all pagination appears properly; I apologize for converting it into .docx format, it's the way I need to edit it on my computer (all files are also provided in .Pdf format). In terms of edits in the chapters, I also made minor changes such as corrections to spelling (like where then should be than, or a comma was missing, or there was an extra "the," etc.). I also added to the definitions in footnotes 7 and 16.

I was surprised that Dustin apologized for changing the format when I was simply grateful that he had taken the time to work on the manuscript. Later, the footnotes were removed from the pages and the glossary was expanded. Dustin also wrote long, detailed emails in which he generously shared his extensive knowledge of Old Norse mythology. Both Dustin and Ryan contributed significantly to *The Descendants of Odin*.

We also exchanged several emails about finding the right title for the book. At various stages, the manuscript had different titles. One was *The Sigurd Saga*, but the story contained many important characters beyond Sigurd. Another was *A Nordic Tale*, with several possible subtitles, including *A Nordic Tale: The Destinies of the Descendants of Odin*. Dustin offered several suggestions:

> I would also suggest giving it some kind of striking title or sub-title that will entice potential publishers and readers, possibly based on a particular "angle" on the story that your retelling takes. Off the top of my head, here are some suggestions. A Nordic Tale: The Complete Story of the Volsung Family, *A Nordic Tale: The Rise and Fall of the Volsung Dynasty*, or maybe something like *Odin's Chosen: The Legend of the Volsungs*, or making use of the always-popular Viking term (although it may not be strictly accurate historically for this story), i.e. *The Clan of the Volsungs: A Viking Legend*. These suggestions may all be terrible, but in any case I would consider giving the retelling a title more specific and "eye-catching" for publication purposes.

Many of Dustin's suggestions drew upon the Volsung name, although we agreed that Volsung was only one of the many characters in the story. His final suggestion gave us the phrase that stayed: *A Viking Legend*. In this way, *A Nordic Tale* gradually became *A Viking Legend*.

Dustin later invited me to speak to one of his classes and encouraged me to bring guests. Three friends—Sonja, Helle, and Eleanor—came with me, along with my sister Kathi and her husband, John. Dustin called us his "Valkyries." The class happened to fall on my sister's birthday, and Dustin arranged an incredible chocolate birthday cake and coffee. We all sang "Happy Birthday," making an already memorable day even more special.

The students were also submitting artwork for an assignment, and it was wonderful to see their creativity.

Two published authors joined the class presentation: Crag Sigurdsson, author of *Sigurd the Dragonslayer: Legend of the Volsungs*, and Chadwick Ginther, author of *When the Sky Comes Looking for You*. At the time, my still-unpublished manuscript was titled *A Viking Legend: The Dreadful and Divine Designs of Destiny*.

Dustin prepared slides featuring the books while each author spoke. It was an extraordinary experience and a privilege to present my unpublished manuscript alongside two published authors. The presentations were followed by a question-and-answer period.

Later that year, Dustin included my manuscript among the options for a 2020 essay assignment. My book would eventually be published in December 2023. The assignment read:

> **1. The Volsung Legacy.** Choose and Review or Interpret a later version of the Norse story of *Sigurd and The Saga of the Volsungs*, such as any of the following three examples:
>
> ***A Viking Legend: The Dreadful and Divine Designs of Destiny* (2020)** by Ainsley Bloomer, Edited by Ryan E. Johnson. Ainsley Bloomer, a scholar of Old Norse Mythology, composed this prose account of the full Volsung story taking many sources into account. The editor, Ryan Johnson, is a PhD Candidate at the University of Iceland. It is an honour to offer students the chance to engage with an original, still-unpublished version of this key story. For those willing to share their work, essays could potentially guide final revisions to the eventual book (This would be an excellent way to gain participation marks). Email the instructor to obtain a copy.
>
> ***The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún* (2009)**, by J. R. R. Tolkien, Edited by Christopher Tolkien. Christopher Tolkien believes that his father composed this epic poem in the 1930s. The book actually consists of two poems, which together cover much of the history of the Volsung dynasty, and also touch on other historical and mythological details, some from "The Seeress's Prophecy" for example. As an Alliterative epic poem its format is reminiscent of *Beowulf* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, both of which Tolkien translated, or his own *The Fall of Arthur* from

around the same time. This book provides insight into Tolkien's many-faceted response to Old Norse Literature and the development of his own mythology. An ebook version of this book is available.

***Sigurd the Volsung* (1876)**, by William Morris, Edited by Stuart Blersch and Peter Wright for The William Morris Archive. William Morris's Victorian epic about the Volsung dynasty, together with his earlier translation of the *Saga of the Volsungs* and related poems, in collaboration with Eiríkur Magnússon, introduced this Norse heroic legend to a much wider reading public in England and elsewhere. It was also a cornerstone piece of his corpus of Norse-inspired works, including translations, retellings, romances, and essays.

I was deeply honoured that Dustin placed my work alongside Tolkien and Morris. I was equally touched that he described me as a scholar, because I had never thought of myself in that way.

One of Dustin's students, Mackenzie Stewart, chose *A Viking Legend* and wrote a review that was later published by *Icelandic Connection*. I remain grateful for Mackenzie's thoughtful review and editing, as well as for sharing an image of her diorama, *A Viking Burial*, which appears on page 77 of *A Viking Legend*.

As the manuscript developed, Dustin invited me to participate in one of his symposia, which consisted of four panels. *A Viking Legend* appeared in Panel 4, "Transforming Old Norse-Icelandic Literature: New Norse Creations." At that stage, the manuscript was titled *A Viking Legend: The Power of Love*. Dustin gave his own presentation at the end of the panel.

Dustin also introduced my manuscript to the University of Manitoba's Icelandic Language and Literature Department, where it was accepted by department head Peter John Buchan and secretary Catari (Cat) Macaulay Gauthier. The manuscript was edited again by student Karla King, and I remain grateful to the department for its support.

Once the editing and formatting were complete, the search for a publisher began. Rejection is often part of that process, and *A Viking Legend* did not meet the criteria of several publishers. Eventually, however, I found Prairie Heart Press. I liked their name, they liked my manuscript, and *A Viking Legend: The Descendants of Odin* found a home.

Dustin and Ryan remained supportive throughout the process, from editing the manuscript to seeing the finished book published. Ryan hosted my first book launch at the University of Manitoba. At another launch at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre, Ryan portrayed King Ragnar Sigurdsson during the reading. Louise Horst hosted the event and played Aslaug, while Vilhjálmur Wiium, Consul General of Iceland, participated as all the king's men. Dustin was enjoying life at home in British Columbia during both events.

Dustin also encouraged me to apply for the Canada Iceland Foundation's Goodman Grant, even though I had submitted applications in previous years. He told me:

> It definitely can't hurt to apply for the Goodman Grant with this project (my experience of grant applications is, you almost never get a grant, heh, but doing the application moves your project forward...

I did not follow the conventional academic path of completing a master's degree or doctorate. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Sociology, completed coursework in Icelandic and Criminal Justice, and later earned a counselling certificate specializing in Addictions and a certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language.

In retirement, I returned to teaching through volunteer work, including Elementary Icelandic and Old Norse mythology at the Scandinavian Cultural Centre. This eventually led to paid teaching with St. James School Division Continuing Education, the Creative Retirement Centre, and private students. Through that work, I found my way back to Old Norse mythology. Just before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, I began bringing together years of notes and research that eventually became *A Viking Legend: The Descendants of Odin*.

I remain grateful to Dustin and Ryan for their acceptance, encouragement, and assistance throughout that journey. They were simply being themselves, but in doing so, they helped me enormously.

Dustin himself received a grant for his unpublished work, *My God is Loki*. I would have loved to read it and to ask him questions about my current manuscript, *A Viking Legend: Tapestry of Tales*, particularly about Loki. I am certain he would have had much to share.

Dustin was an extraordinary storyteller and scholar of Old Norse mythology and an inspiring professor. He was also a dedicated friend and family member, an author, creator, designer, and much more. His creativity extended beyond academia. As a video-game player and map creator, he expanded the game *Quake* through a modification called *Mjolnir*, working under the name Tronyn. He was also a member of the William Morris Society and gave a presentation titled "The Dragon and the Smith."

The *Quake: Mjolnir* community

The *Quake: Mjolnir* community sent many messages of condolence to the Geeraert family. With permission from Dr. Lindsay Geeraert, the following comments are shared as examples of the affection and respect Dustin inspired within this community.

Dustin's friend Ryan H. gathered quotations from members of the Quake Mapping Discord server and the Quaddicted forums. Their words show another side of Dustin's life and legacy: his creativity, generosity, collaboration, and influence as Tronyn.

Quake Mapping Discord

Qmaster (The programmer powering Dustin's ideas for Mjolnir through the "Keep" mod)
10/20/2024 4:52 PM
It's taking some time to think of more to say. There is much good that could be said of Tronyn. Tronyn's Quake maps are steeped in Norse and medieval lore. He drew on ancient concepts and themes giving his creations depth most likely are unaware of. Areas and rooms have names, histories that direct their design that most will never know. I and a few others have been lucky to hear of the lore behind some of his creations and I've been even luckier yet to implement some of his crazy fun and nordic ideas in our Keep mod similar to what PM did in the Drake mod working with Tronyn back in the day. Tronyn's influence runs deep. And his lore, drawn from his work teaching and researching, even more so. His students loved him, both those in his class and those learning from his maps. He will be missed.

His influence will live on. We'll do what we can to finish what he started, to finish his vision. He really was a visionary, sometimes too visionary, heh, but I couldn't help but push myself to do what I could to make his out-there ideas a reality. He was a great friend.

Chuma
10/20/2024 2:13 PM
Tronyn i never met you, wish i have, thank you for creating Quake maps and mods that will stay forever, you are immortalized now within the dimensions, within the slipgate realms... thank you. I send hugs and my condolences to his family and friends, and we will keep the legacy of all quake modders alive forever... i'm sure.

PuLSaR
10/19/2024 11:53 PM
What a loss. RIP Tronyn. He was a great mapper and his work inspired me a lot especially in the beginning of my own mapping experience. His Add2 map was my favorite back then and I still respect it a lot. Maybe some streamers may do a Tronyn maps/mods marathon to honor him and to show Tronyn's (huge) heritage to newer members of this community who are not familiar with his work. He had kinda unique style that can be

Bang
10/19/2024 9:41 PM
I was playing Dry Sorrow just the other day for some inspiration. Tronyn is easily - very easily - my favorite mapper. What a fucking loss for everyone who knew him and experienced his work. I had a pleasant conversation with him in 2021 regarding some things about PM's Drake mod, and Tronyn was really helpful and shared a small memory about the mod and PM, how the mod had a coin dropping system to which he asked PM "even for dogs?" and PM amusingly replied "think of an RPG". His work on Mjolnir's episode 4 is stellar, and I was very much looking forward to more of his style under the mod of Keep. Jesus I'm beyond sad about this. His maps are by far the ones I would gawk at the most, just admiring and taking in the sights, firing them up for inspiration. In the readme for his episode "A Roman Wilderness Of Pain", among the

people Tronyn thanks in the thank you section, he gives thanks to "And all ye lost souls who continue to explore Quake's dark realms..." What a legend, what a guy. I'm so sorry for all of you who were close to him, robbed of who I have no doubt was a great man, and I'm so sorry for myself and the world for being robbed of his creative mind. God fucking dammit. (edited)

cardo
10/19/2024 2:38 PM
Absolutely devastating news. Tronyn was one of the OGs of the community

slengemedia fake news
10/19/2024 10:40 AM
This is deeply sad news. Tronyn was one of the guys I corresponded with most on func back in the mid to late OOs.

Hrimfaxi
10/19/2024 7:52 AM
Just receiver the massage on the discord channel of Mjolnier. I is true Tronyn is No more. I and the whole cummunity will miss him. We has lost a greath mapper. RIP.

Deleted User
05/06/2019 8:31 AM
pretty much every tronyn map has stuff like that video linked above, totally over the top and outrageous and that is what makes them so good.

Deleted User
05/06/2019 7:26 AM
@fw highly recommend a weekend ploughing through tronyn maps, my favourites are Arcanum , Soul of Evil and Unforgiven.

Quaddicted Forums

JohnXmas
Whaaat ? I just created my Quaddicted account. First msg I read is this sad news. I played so many Tronyn maps and stuff along the years. 42. That's much much too young. Sending all my best thoughts to his family and friends. So tragic.

Spirit
Oh man, that is sad to hear. Tronyn has been such an inspiration with his unique and ambitious style. Not to forget his academical forays.
RIP and happy fragging in the other dimension!

edit:
Tronyn has left footprints all over Quaddicted, I tried to retrace some of them and invite you too on a trip:
Go play some of his great creations:

* https://www.quaddicted.com/db/v2/?&include=%22author%3DDustin+%5C%22Tronyn%5C%22+Geeraert%22
* https://www.quaddicted.com/db/v2/?&include=%22author%3DTronyn%22
* https://www.quaddicted.com/db/v2/?&include=%22author%3DDustin+%5C%22Tronyn%5C%22+Geeraert+et+al%22

* Read his history of A Roman Wilderness of Pain
* Check out his many in-depth reviews
* Indulge in his talk The Lingering Legacy of id Software's Quake: A Glimpse Into Thirteen Years of Darkness Slides, Talk

I also stumbled on his QExpo interview with John Romero from 2016.

alexUnder

What the hell? How is this… Jesus Christ. My sincere condolences. Can someone confirm this? Maybe it's some really-really dark ugly trolling? It better be unappropriate bad joke than reality
RIP if this is real reality

Calluna Vulgaris

He was a star and will remain so. Good night sweet prince!

tarot

This is just awful. I can only hope people close to him stay strong.
I would be interested in the unfinished content if you don't mind, but there is no way I can finish it myself.

Shadesmaster

I can't believe this, I learned of the news from the dumptruck retrojam video. I was working with him on Mjolnir and just talked to hm recently. Not my business, but I still can't help but wonder HOW.

I DO know that he was interested in a Mjolnir mapjam once the mod was fully completed. My episodes are done save for mapscrool openings for the new episode I have… his finale maps are the biggest (literally and figuratively) thing that needs completion.

It's a damn shame, way too soon. I'm sorry, Whitefish. May he RIP.

rj

Heard this news whilst out yesterday and am still reeling from it.
Quake has lost one of its true titans. Few have influenced the SP mapping scene more than him, if any. Wonderful guy too.

Time to fire up one of his classic episodes

Kell

So sad to hear this.

Tronyn was one of the first people I was in contact with in the Quake community. He was the first person to playtest Contract Revoked back in 2000, and became its first fan. He was always very encouraging of my mapping, and represented the best of the community with his enthusiasm for collaboration.

Tronyn was a fan of the epic and the arcane and the long history of spooky stories, and in that, although I didn't know him personally, I felt he was more than a fellow mapper, he was a kindred spirit. And he was right: I should have made those beams wider! A fine mind, and a good person. He will be missed.

mars9444

Oh man, what a sad news… My condolences to his family and friends. Best mapper ever… Rest in Peace

Chuma

My condolences to his family and friends, his work and contributions are and will be immortalized within the community, sorry for your loss and all of those that met him… hugs and best wishes to all of you.

jakub1

It is strange how personal can be a loss of someone I have personally never met. Sincere condolences to his family and to all friends.

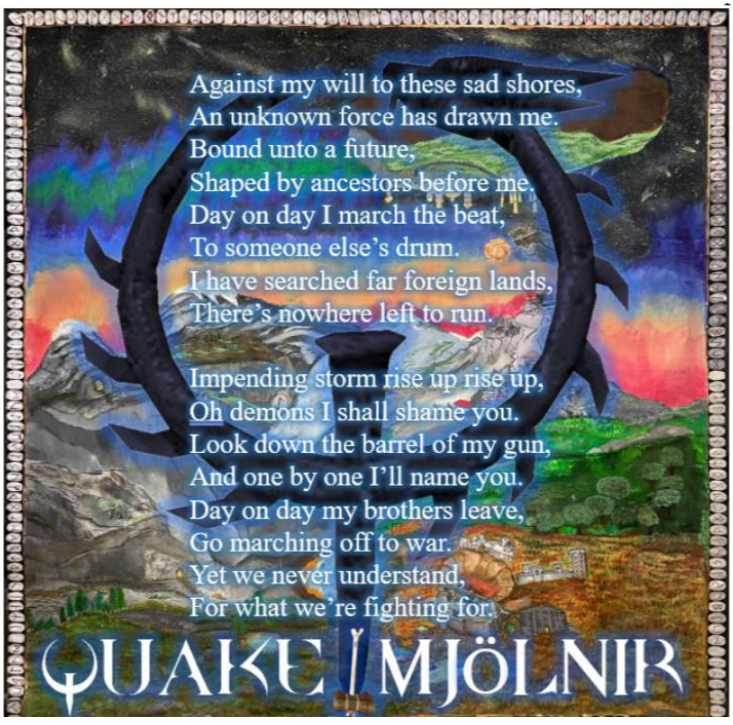

Figure 8: Illustration from *Quake: Mjölnir* 1.0 Manual, 2023.

I still remember these names that represented the corner stones of Q1 community back than in early 2000s - Tronyn, Tyrann, Necros, [kona], Vondur, Kell… Tronyn, you wont be forgotten.

Solomoriah

Wow, was just replaying In a Forest of Flesh… he was a master. Too sad.

Dustin was a creator and valued member of this online community. The anonymity of its members has been preserved, and his family and friends are grateful for the comments they shared. Dustin's absence is deeply felt across the many communities, interests, and relationships that were part of his life.

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A Viking Legend: Tapestry of Tales

A Viking Legend: Tapestry of Tales is my second book and is dedicated to Dustin and his family.

First, it is dedicated to Dustin: for his acceptance, for sharing his remarkable knowledge, for the work he did on my first book, *A Viking Legend: The Descendants of Odin*, for his guidance and foresight, for believing that I could write and publish a book, and for supporting me throughout the process of bringing it to fruition.

Second, it is dedicated in gratitude for the honour and privilege of meeting his family. Knowing them revealed another side of Dustin and helped me understand him more fully. I knew Dustin first as an academic. He was passionate about Old Norse mythology, creative in his work and presentations, and deeply caring toward his students and others. He had the gift of gab, expressed his views openly, and was never afraid to tell you exactly what he thought.

Third, this dedication honours Dustin and his family by helping to carry his legacy forward. A list of his works can be found at the end of Katrin Nielsdottir's article, "Remembering Dustin J. Geeraert (1983–2024)."

Finally, I want to thank Dustin for all that he shared: his knowledge, his honesty, his encouragement, and the work he contributed to *A Viking Legend*. His presence helped me become more confident in my writing, even through rejection.

Dustin, you are truly missed. In the class to which you invited me, you called my friends, my sister, and me your Valkyries. If that is so, then surely you will be guided to the halls of Valhalla.

Yet in this life, my friend, it was your beloved Valkyrie sister Lindsay, together with friends, who accompanied you to your final resting place on this earth, among the peaks of Mount Loki in British Columbia.

Figure 9: The Geeraert Family. Photo courtesy of Lindsay Geeraert.

Thank you, Dustin and the Geeraert family, for your generosity, support, and all that you have shared.

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Bibliography

The author consulted numerous sources while preparing *A Viking Legend: A Tapestry of Tales* for publication. Some passages draw directly from earlier translations, while others summarize or paraphrase material from multiple sources, which at times offer differing or conflicting accounts. The manuscript also incorporates the author's own interpretation and imagination.

Readers interested in exploring the myths, traditions, and source material in greater depth are encouraged to consult the works listed below.

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