**The Wife's Lament**

**Translated by:  Ann Stanford**

*Read the poem and annotate it (meaning you will have lots of underlining/highlighting and comments in the margin). Answer questions that follow.*

I make this song about me full sadly

my own wayfaring. I a woman tell

what griefs I had since I grew up

new or old never more than now.

Ever I know the dark of my exile. 5

First my lord went out away from his people

over the wave-tumult. I grieved each dawn

wondered where my lord my first on earth might be.

Then I went forth a friendless exile

to seek service in my sorrow’s need. 10

My man’s kinsmen began to plot

by darkened thought to divide us two

so we most widely in the world’s kingdom

lived wretchedly and I suffered longing.

My lord commanded me to move my dwelling here. 15

I had few loved ones in this land

or faithful friends. For this my heart grieves:

that I should find the man well matched to me

hard of fortune mournful of mind

hiding his mood thinking of murder. 20

Blithe was our bearing often we vowed

that but death alone would part us two

naught else. But this is turned round

now . . . as if it never were

our friendship. I must far and near 25

bear the anger of my beloved.

The man sent me out to live in the woods

under an oak tree in this den in the earth.

Ancient this earth hall. I am all longing.

The valleys are dark the hills high 30

the yard overgrown bitter with briars

a joyless dwelling. Full oft the lack of my lord

seizes me cruelly here. Friends there are on earth

living beloved lying in bed

while I at dawn am walking alone 35

under the oak tree through these earth halls.

There I may sit the summerlong day

there I can weep over my exile

my many hardships. Hence I may not rest

from this care of heart which belongs to me ever 40

nor all this longing that has caught me in this life.

May that young man be sad-minded always

hard his heart’s thought while he must wear

a blithe bearing with care in the breast

a crowd of sorrows. May on himself depend 45

all his world’s joy. Be he outlawed far

in a strange folk-land— that my beloved sits

under a rocky cliff rimed with frost

a lord dreary in spirit drenched with water

in a ruined hall. My lord endures 50

much care of mind. He remembers too often

a happier dwelling. Woe be to them

that for a loved one must wait in longing.

**Questions – for all answers use lines from the poem to answer. Write the actual words or phrases; *do not* merely write line numbers:**

1. In lines 1-10, which words or phrases help to illuminate the theme of isolation or loneliness?
2. Find two examples of assonance in the poem and write them here.
3. Why was the wife commanded to leave her home?
4. Give three examples that give an idea of the setting where the wife is now.
5. List three things the wife is mourning and give lines from the text to prove it.
6. Elegies express sorrow and longing. Find three phrases in the poem that emphasize this mood.
7. At the end of the poem, what is her hope for her husband? Write lines to prove your answer.