

I.

Never would I have left
of mist that sank
had I known
had I listened

the lily-pads, the breath
sighing upon the shore
how this would end,
to those I should have listened to.

If only I had known
such darkness,
and the heavy leaves

what death begets,
such never-ending sadness,
above the rotting ground.

Oh, for we fell like leaves
and we fell forever

and we fell so many
and we still fall.

Oh, for we died that once
and when we have finished

and we die forever
we will know no peace.

Oh, for had I known

the punishment for love
was war

I would have never left
of mist that sunk

the lily-pads, the breath
sighing upon the shore.

I would have never left to die in a foreign land.

II.

How quiet the hills,
How thick the shadows

how still the forest.
and quick the squirrels.

How silent the blades,
How long I have lain here

how swift the guns.
in darkness, my dear.

I dream of your lips,
I yearn for your care,

of your nails, of your stomach.
for your comfort, your bed.

And I fear for you, dearest,
for your spirit, our children,

for your homestead and honor,
and for your mother so dear.

For if tonight I shall perish
who then will defend

and be no more-
against the flight of light

that silver shore.

III.

You are on an island, dear,
You will drink the Lord's sacrifice tonight,

and I am on another.
but it is different with us.

I fear, my love,
than the cold ground

a punishment more dire
and the blood-drenched mud.

I fear, any moment now,
that will char the frozen dew

the all-consuming fire
and rain embers upon the trees.

I fear, my love, I fear

an end to all this pain.

You will find peace
but it is different with us.

in deliverance, my dear,

IV.

The punishment for war
and the cradle of cold wind

is love, now I know,
the cruelest hand to hold.

My love, oh, my love,
Your rare visits
and the rustling leaves

my hopes of you make me sick.
turn the sky to stormy sea
scream your name.

Any thought of you
My wounds weep for you,

turns my mind to gloom.
my love. My tears bleed.

Yes- the punishment for war

is love after all.

Oh, so many men I sent
So many men skewered
lie beside me now.

begging to the Lord.
upon my sword
My love, my Lord,

pray for me, for night is falling.

V.

Do you hear me, Ælfleda?

If you cannot

hear...

Do you hear me,

Ælfleda? If you will

not hear...

Do you hear me,

Ælfleda?

If you shall not hear...