

University of Manitoba Department of Icelandic



Christmas Newsletter & Art Exhibit Catalogue



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Department of Icelandic Language and Literature

Christmas Newsletter 2022



Greetings from the Head of [The Icelandic Department](#)

After the upheavals of 2020 and 2021, 2022 could be seen as a year that hints at the possibility of renewal. This year the Icelandic Department was able to bring back long-established projects such as the 10th version of the Partnership Conference of the University of Iceland and the University of Manitoba. With the return to in-person learning on campus in the fall we were also able to hold public events featuring writers and scholars, and our first ever exhibit of student artwork was held in the Dr. Paul H. T. Thorlakson Gallery at The Icelandic Collection. We look forward to continuing to work closely with The Icelandic Collection, and would like to thank all students, members of the Icelandic community, and all others who attended our events. The Department also sponsored several publications this year, including a full-length academic book featuring Canadian, Icelandic, English and Italian contributors, as well as a computer game. We look forward to supporting students in 2023, and hope you enjoy this newsletter's retrospective of the Icelandic Department's events and publications in 2022.

P.J. Buchan, Department Head, Department of Icelandic Language and Literature

Greetings from the Head Librarian at [The Icelandic Collection](#)

This fall we have been happy to see students return to The Icelandic Collection, and have been busy maximizing the accessibility of our vast collection of books and research materials. We encourage students to make use of an office in The Icelandic Collection, The Icelandic Media Room. It has seating for 4 or more, a computer and a desk. It can be booked weekdays 9:00am until 4:00pm by contacting myself (katrin.nielsdottir@umanitoba.ca) with the names of the group members and the Icelandic department classes they are in. Please see our [Library Guide](#) where we announce new books coming in to the Icelandic Collection, and keep readers up to date on both online and on-campus events, as well as research resources. We hope you had a wonderful year in 2022, and look forward to seeing you in 2023!

Katrín Níelsdóttir, Head Librarian, Icelandic Collection, Elizabeth Dafoe Library



Greetings from the [Icelandic Department's Student Society](#)

I am pleased to announce the return of UMISS, the University of Manitoba Icelandic Students' Society. Dormant for several years, the students' club would host study groups, movie Mondays, and share information about events, research, opportunities, etc. Our colleague Brian Mabon at [The Language Centre](#) has created a TEAMS group for UMISS. We plan to use this group to coordinate between UMISS and the Icelandic Department, and support UMISS activities in 2023. Merry Christmas and happy New Year!

Catari Macaulay Gauthier, Secretary, Department of Icelandic Language and Literature

Acknowledgements and Permissions

Photographs of Iceland by Guillaume Flandre, from [Mynstur: A Collection of Icelandic Patterns](#). Artwork by Icelandic Department students appears by artist permission. Inside cover: [Stained glass window depicting Odin](#) by Brian James Waugh, based on an 1881 design by Edward Burne-Jones. Inside back cover: [Stained glass window depicting Woden](#) (the Anglo-Saxon equivalent of Odin) designed by Frederick Weekes and made by Saunders & Company (1869-1873). Much of this content can also be seen on [From Vinland to Valinor](#), whose webmaster is Ryan E. Johnson of the Icelandic Collection, the Icelandic Department, and the University of Iceland. Newsletter created by Dustin Geraert, instructor in the Department and organizer of many of these events and projects.



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Page 10. August 25. A new academic book supported by the Icelandic Department, [Cultural Legacies of Old Norse Literature: New Perspectives](#), is published.

Page 11. November 3. [Publishing Northern Narratives](#) takes place at University College, featuring three Winnipeg writers who have published books based on Norse legends: Chadwick Ginther, author of the [Thunder Road](#) trilogy (2012-2015) and [When the Sky Comes Looking for You](#) (2022), Crag Sigurdsson, author of [Sigurd the Dragonslayer](#) (2021), and Ainsley Bloomer, author of [A Viking Legend](#) (2023).

Page 13. September 22 until December 1. [Creation Myths of the North: An Exhibit of Student Artwork](#), appears in The Icelandic Collection. The exhibit opening features talks by student artists and visiting scholars.

Page 36. The Stair of Grief: Developing the game [Quake: Mjöltnir](#), showcases an upcoming computer game inspired by Norse mythology and supported by the Icelandic Department. Contents from [Quake: Mjöltnir](#) also appeared in the art exhibit.

*For a digital version of this catalogue with online links see <https://vinlandtovalinor.com/symposia/>



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The History of the Partnership Conference

There have been ten iterations of the Partnership Conference between the two universities so far, enabling the development, presentation, and exchange of a great deal of research by scholars at both universities. The conference brings together contributors from a wide range of academic disciplines and fields, and it has been addressed by numerous major public figures in both Iceland and Canada. Iterations of the Partnership Conference include:

2002. Reykjavík. *Northern Countries.*

2003. Winnipeg.

2005. Reykjavík. *Culture and Science.*

2006. Reykjavík. *Women and Knowledge.*

2010. Winnipeg. *Earthly and Cultural Metamorphoses.*

2012. Reykjavík. *Origins.*

2019. Reykjavík. *Migration.*

2022. Online. *Bridging the North.*



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Bridging the North: The 10th Partnership Conference



The 10th Partnership Conference, Bridging the North, considered a wide variety of northern topics in history, geology, environmental sciences, linguistics and literature, such as institutions, trade networks, settlements and supply chains. This was the first-ever online version of the conference, scheduled simultaneously across the 6 hour time difference between Winnipeg and Reykjavík. Some panelists preferred not to publish their presentations, but aside from those, videos of all panels will be published on [The Icelandic Department's Youtube Channel](#) in early 2023. Thanks to our moderators, Icelandic Department students Mackenzie Stewart and Karla King. Organized by Birna Bjarnadóttir (University of Iceland), Dustin Geeraert (University of Manitoba), and the Conference Committee: P.J. Buchan, Catari M. Gauthier, Vanessa Warne, Katrín Níelsdóttir, Ryan E. Johnson, Justin Lewis, Paul D. Larson, Simone Mahrenholz, and Ursule Critoph.

Bridging the North: Friday, February 25

Opening Remarks

- Peter John Buchan (Icelandic Department Head), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Michael Benarroch (President, University of Manitoba), Opening Remarks
- Jón Atli Benediktsson (Rector, University of Iceland), Opening Remarks
- Jeff Taylor (Dean of Arts, University of Manitoba), Opening Remarks

Keynote Address

- Christopher Crocker (University of Iceland), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Ryan Eyford (University of Winnipeg), Race and the Icelanders in North America

The Icelandic Heritage Project: The Myth of the Linguistically Isolated North

- Katrín Níelsdóttir (University of Manitoba), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir (University of Iceland), Language Ideology and Literacy Practices in Icelandic Heritage Communities in North America
- Kristín M. Jóhannsdóttir (University of Iceland), The (In)stability of Elements of Heritage Icelandic
- Matthew Whelpton (University of Iceland), Word Meanings in North American Icelandic: More North American or More Icelandic?

The Icelandic Heritage Project: The Myth of the Culturally Isolated North

- Ryan E. Johnson (University of Iceland and University of Manitoba), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Gísli Sigurðsson (University of Iceland), Icelandic-Canadian Oral Lore: New Life in a New Land and How the Women's Tales May Shed Light on the Classification of the Edda Poems
- Katelin Parsons (University of Iceland), Raven Tracks Across the Prairies: Icelandic Immigration and Manuscript Culture in the Canadian West
- Birna Bjarnadóttir (University of Iceland), Another Emigrant Ship Crossing the Atlantic: The Poetics of Migration in the Poetry of Undína and Stephan G. Stephansson

Bridging the North: Friday, February 25



 **University of Manitoba**  **UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND**

Bridging the North: The 10th Partnership Conference



Bridging the North: Saturday, February 26

Opening Remarks

- Peter John Buchan (Icelandic Department Head), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Jeannette Menzies (Ambassador of Canada to Iceland), Opening Remarks

The Natural Environment of the North

- Gary Stern (University of Manitoba), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Þóra Ellen Þórhallsdóttir (University of Iceland), There and Back Again: The Double Environmental Transformation of Skeiðarársandur Glacial Outwash Plain, SE Iceland
- Guðfinna Aðalsteinsdóttir (University of Iceland), The Impact of Anthropogenic Climate Change on Glaciers in Iceland.

Institutions and Cultural Connections

- Pam Perkins (University of Manitoba), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Vanessa Warne (University of Manitoba), Interwoven: Cane Work and Resistance at the Ontario Institute for the Blind
- Katrín Nielsdóttir, The Use of Special Collections to Connect People and Culture
- Christopher Crocker, "Ég þakka þér fyrir litla blaðið": North American-Icelandic Community, Cultural Identity, and the Children's Newspaper Sólskin

Travel, Literature, and Geography

- Vanessa Warne (University of Manitoba), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Paul D. Larson (University of Manitoba), The Hudson Bay Railway Saga
- Pam Perkins (University of Manitoba), A "singular anomaly": Henry Holland's Writing on Iceland
- Sumarliði R. Ísleifsson (University of Iceland), Ida Pfeiffer and Travels in Iceland in the 19th Century
- Ingibjörg Ágústsdóttir (University of Iceland), "Queen of Lands": Iceland in the Writings of Mary Gordon and Isobel Wylie Hutchison
- Kristín Ingvarsdóttir (University of Iceland), Building Bridges in His Name: Icelandic and Western Icelandic Missionaries in Early 20th-Century Asia

Aesthetics and Representation

- Brynjarr Þór Eyjólfsson (University of Iceland), Panel Chair's Introduction
- Dustin Geeraert (University of Manitoba), Twilight of the Idols: A Virtual Journey Through a Winter Hall
- Mackenzie Stewart (University of Manitoba), From Sketch to Screen: Creating Norse Mythological Landscapes
- Thomas Ellison (Independent Musician), Alone, Together: Music as Refuge & Transcendence
- Liv Valmestad (University of Manitoba), In Between (S)P(L)ACES: Scenes from North Iceland

Bridging the North: Saturday, February 26



Cultural Legacies of Old Norse Literature: New Perspectives

The *Medieval and Modern* symposiums (2015, 2016, and 2017) brought together students and scholars from the University of Manitoba with guest speakers from the University of Winnipeg, the University of Iceland, and Western University, and helped shape a special volume of *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, entitled [The Modern Reception of the Medieval Saga of the Sworn Brothers \(*Fóstbræðra saga*\)](#) (2019). This volume, dedicated to Birna Bjarnadóttir, features contributions from numerous Icelandic Department students, alumni, instructors, and guest speakers. These symposiums, and later on the [Transforming Old Norse-Icelandic Literature](#) online symposium (2021), also shaped the new book [Cultural Legacies of Old Norse Literature: New Perspectives](#) (published in August of 2022).

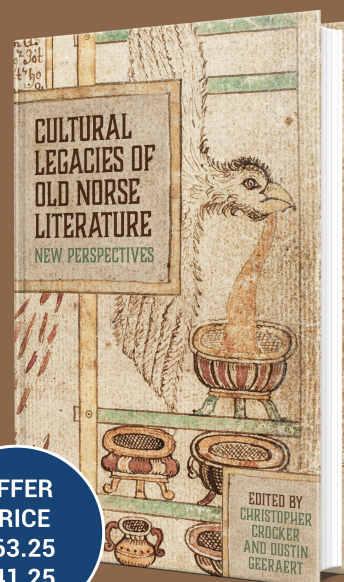
CULTURAL LEGACIES OF OLD NORSE LITERATURE

NEW PERSPECTIVES

EDITED BY CHRISTOPHER CROCKER & DUSTIN
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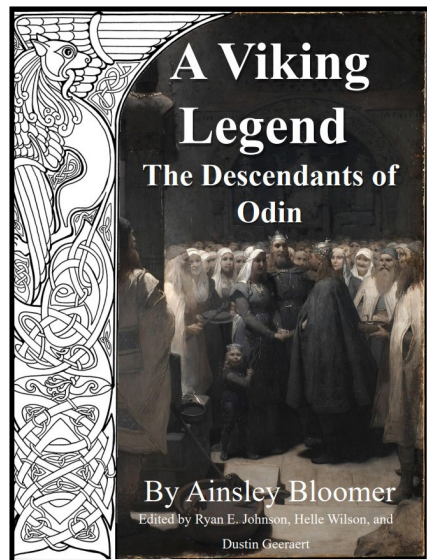
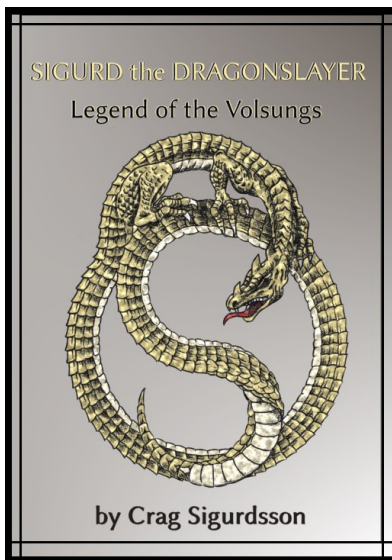
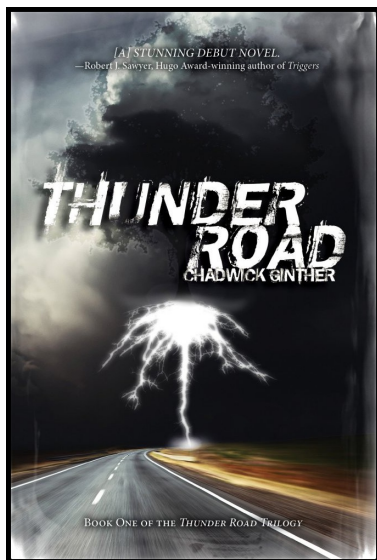


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Publishing Northern Narratives

An event featuring writers who have created new stories based on Norse Myth and Legend



This event, hosted as part of ICEL 3320 and open to the public, took place on November 3, and was attended by students and members of the Icelandic community of Manitoba. Three Manitoba authors each discussed the inspiration that Norse literature gave them:

[Chadwick Ginther](#), author of the [Thunder Road Trilogy](#) (Ravenstone Press, 2012–2015) and the recent follow-up [When The Sky Comes Looking For You: Short Trips Down the Thunder Road](#) (October 2022), discussed the origins of his *Thunder Road* novels, the urban fantasy genre, working with an Icelandic editor, and portraying the apocalypse in the contemporary world. He read an exciting and ominous passage from *Thunder Road*, in which the fire-demon Surt appears at an exploding Canadian oil site.

[Crag Sigurdsson](#), author of [Sigurd the Dragonslayer: Legend of the Volsungs](#) (ISBN Canada, 2021), described the research underlying his book, particularly the history (battles and migrations north of the Roman frontier during the era of the decline and collapse of Rome) and geography (cities, landscape features, settlements, trade routes, monuments and fortresses). Crag read a passage from his book which ties up loose ends from the original story, and described his work with illustrator Didda Arga Fahrizal.

[Ainsley Bloomer](#), author of the upcoming book [A Viking Legend](#) (forthcoming in 2023 from [Prairie Heart Press](#)), described her upbringing as a Canadian of Icelandic descent, and how her interest in her family's cultural heritage motivated her to learn Icelandic language and literature. She discussed the origins and development of her book, and the process of editing. She described her work teaching Norse Myth and other Icelandic topics, as well as participating in a Viking Village field trip for children that the Scandinavian Centre has held since 2011, with the latest iteration coming up next spring.



A replica of a figurine depicting a Valkyrie, which one of the audience members brought to show at Publishing Northern Narratives. Valkyries were the shield-maidens of Odin and “choosers of the slain” in Norse Myth, responsible for taking dead heroes to Valhalla. The original figurine was discovered by Morten Skovsby near the village of Hårby in the southwestern part of the island of Funen in Denmark, and is estimated to date to around the year 800 A.D. For more information, see Jarrett Lobell’s [*“Visions of Valhalla” at Archaeology: A Publication of the Archaeological Institute of America.*](#)

Thanks to all participants and attendees and to [*The Daily Bread Café*](#) for cake and coffee.



Creation Myths of the North



An Exhibit of Student Artwork

The Dr. Paul H.T. Thorlakson Gallery, [The Icelandic Collection](#)
Created by the [Department of Icelandic Language and Literature](#)

Third Floor, [Elizabeth Dafoe Library](#)
Fort Garry Campus, [University of Manitoba](#)

September 22, 2022 – December 1, 2022



Classes such as ICEL 3320 Old Norse Mythology, ICEL 2400 Icelandic Folktales, ICEL 3330 Icelandic Sagas in Translation, among many others, carry on the Icelandic Department's tradition, originating with Birna Bjarnadóttir, of including a "Free play" assignment option where students may create an original work of any kind in response to course materials. These classes, and associated Icelandic Department events such as symposiums, workshops, conferences, lectures, etc., provide the context in which the pieces on display in this exhibit, were first created. Such "free play" projects are evaluated in an equivalent grading scale to essays, including how students interpreted and responded to source materials such as the Old Norse Eddas.



Foreword: *Þorlákssona saga* by Ryan E. Johnson

Housed inside the Iceland Reading Room on the third floor of Elizabeth Dafoe Library, on the University of Manitoba Fort Garry campus and on the lands of Treaty 1 Territory, there is a gallery named after the esteemed Dr. Paul Henrik Thorbjorn Thorlaksson M.D., a Canadian success story for his great accomplishments as a medical practitioner. He is most well-known in Winnipeg as the founder of the Winnipeg Clinic, but he also greatly supported the Icelandic communities his family has been connected to since 1872, when his uncle the Rev. Paul Thorlaksson touched American soil in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Dr. Thor had his uncle's ardent and determined spirit as an outspoken supporter of Icelandic culture and a staunch believer in Canadian multiculturalism. His father emigrated with his parents in 1873, and both of the Thorlaksson boys eventually settled in North Dakota. Dr. P. H. T. Thorlakson's uncle, Rev. Paul, and his father, *séra* Niels Steingrimur, were prominent Lutheran ministers for several Icelandic communities throughout the United States and Canada. For 27 years, his father served the Selkirk congregation belonging to the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America.

The Rev. Paul Thorlaksson is a controversial figure to this day, since moving away from the Arnes District of New Iceland and taking approximately 30 families along with him. Some consider this to have been over a religious dispute. However, the actual abandonment of the Arnes settlement was most likely largely driven by a mere need for survival. He and these families settled an area of the Dakota territory originally called Vik, later renamed Mountain. The Vikur church where he rests is a monument to his courageous spirit. Evidenced by the Paul Henrik Thorbjorn Thorlakson Icelandic fonds, we see a testament to meticulous care for precious objects belonging to the Thorlakson family. For example, there is a composition book of Rev. Paul's, written largely in German during his renowned schooling in seminary at St. Louis, Missouri. Within the collection are also found an abundance of notes, sermons, and correspondence of Dr. Thor's father, Niels Steingrimur, most interestingly about his travels to Japan in 1930.

Dr. Paul Henrik Thorbjorn Thorlakson adorns our magnificent reading room with his grand bust and welcomes guests as they enter his gallery. It is only fitting that we remember him and his family's contribution to Western Icelandic culture in North America while presenting the fruits of their heart-felt labour. In addition, I would like to thank our *kæra* Birna Bjarnadóttir for her legacy we so well cherish in our students' free play assignments. Without a light such as hers in our world, we should all surely be lost.





Photo of Dr. Paul H.T. Thorlakson statue from [The Winnipeg Citizens' Hall of Fame](#).

Supported by [The Icelandic Department](#): P.J. Buchan and Catari Macaulay Gauthier.

Hosted by [The Icelandic Collection](#): Katrín Nielsdóttir and Ryan E. Johnson.

In [Elizabeth Dafoe Library](#) at the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry Campus.

Featuring Artwork by Jenna Glidden, Karla King, Adam Hansson, Matt Mayor, Mackenzie Stewart, and the [Quake: Mjölfnir](#) Team (Dustin Geeraert and others).

Created by Dustin Geeraert, based on classes, student work, events, and publications supported by the Icelandic Department ([University of Manitoba, Faculty of Arts](#)).

Curated by Theresa McAvoy, Katrín Nielsdóttir, and Heather Bidzinski.

Exhibit Opened by Heather Bidzinski ([University of Manitoba Archives](#)).

Opening remarks by Christopher Crocker, Adam Hansson, Katrín Nielsdóttir, Ryan Johnson, Katelin Parsons, Karla King, Mackenzie Stewart, & Dustin Geeraert.

Opening refreshments from [The Daily Bread Café](#). Thanks to Ian Park.

[Web page and online schedule](#) by Ryan E. Johnson ([From Vinland to Valinor](#)).

[Promotion](#) by Irene Hoi Ling Chan and the Faculty of Arts Communications Office.

Thanks to Liv Valmestad, Gretchen Hitt, [Boydell and Brewer](#), and Oliver Botar.

Thor Dressed as Freyja by Peter Graham

Let's tie on Thor a bridal head-dress,
Let him wear the great necklace of the Brisings.
Let keys jingle by his side
And women's clothing fall down over his knees,
And on his breast display jewels,
And we'll put a pointed head-dress properly on his head!

-Thrym's Poem (Translated byCarolyn Larrington)

This pastel image inspired by Norse myth was completed as part of Icelandic Department coursework and gifted to the Department by the artist prior to 2018. When the giant Thrym steals Thor's hammer Mjölfnir and demands to marry Freyja as the price of returning it, the other gods hatch a plan to dress Thor as Freyja. Loki, dressed as Freyja's serving-maid, helps the gods to trick the giants.



Crete by F. Neil Klassen

Every nine years, nine men come into the house so that I can free them from all evil. I hear their footsteps or their voices far away in the galleries of stone, and I run joyously to find them. The ceremony lasts but a few minutes. One after another, they fall, without my ever having to bloody my hands.

-Jorge Luis Borges, [*The House of Asterion*](#)

This drawing inspired by the Greek myth of the Minotaur (also known as Asterion) was completed as part of Icelandic Department coursework and gifted to the Department by the artist prior to 2018. In the eerie *House of Asterion* (1947) the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges writes from the point of view of the Minotaur, a being who is half-man and half-bull, and to whom living men are sacrificed when they are forced into the labyrinth he inhabits, beneath the city of Crete.



Seeress's Prophecy (2018) by Jenna Glidden

She sees, coming up a second time,
 Earth from the ocean, eternally green;
 the waterfall plunges, an eagle soars over it,
 hunting fish on the mountain.

-[The Seeress's Prophecy \(Translated by Carlyne Larrington\)](#)

In 2018 Jenna Glidden, a student in ICEL 3320, created this painting inspired by the Old Norse mythic poem, *Völuspá* or *The Seeress's Prophecy*. It was then published in a special volume of [Scandinavian-Canadian Studies](#) (Volume 26, 2019). Explaining this piece, Jenna wrote:

The goal is to create a visual representation of the overlapping influences of both Christian and pagan belief systems in Norse mythology. To do this I focus on one poem, the myth *Völuspá* or *The Seeress's Prophecy*, which covers the cosmology of the Norse gods from creation to Ragnarok. Though it is clearly the portrayal of pagan themes, the poem hints at some Christian influence in its imagery. Eclecticism, the combining of elements from several style movements, is commonly used in visual art. Similarly, some Norse poems seem to display elements of blended traditions (Syncretism). It involves the merging of elements of two or more distinct practices. *The Seeress's Prophecy* seems to incorporate a certain degree of syncretism as it draws influence from and blends the same themes of both medieval Christian and pagan traditions. The painting blends Norse artistic styles with early medieval Christian art styles to portray the story in visual form and illustrate the transitional period between paganism and Christianity when both religions could have co-existed.



The Seeress's Prophecy: Major figures from Norse Myth depicted include the Seeress (top centre), Sigurd and the Dragon Fafnir (right), and Thor and the World Serpent (left), as well as the first man and woman (top right).



Odin's Last Words to Baldr (2021) by Matt Mayor

“Much have I travelled, much have I tried out,
Much have I tested the Powers;
What did Odin say into his son's ear
Before he mounted the pyre?”

“No one knows what you said in bygone days
Into your son's ear;
With doomed mouth I've spoken my ancient lore
About the fate of the gods;
I've been contending with Odin in words of wisdom;
You'll always be the wisest of beings.”

-Vafthrudnir's Sayings (Translated byCarolynne Larrington)

In 2021 Matt Mayor, a student in ICEL 3320, created this sculpture depicting the death of the god Baldr, the beloved son of Odin and Frigg. Explaining this piece, he wrote:

Baldr's death is a turning point in the Norse myths. Baldr was a glimpse of hope, as he was one of the wisest and most beautiful gods. In *The Prose Edda*, Snorri Sturluson remarks that "he is the best and all praise him." Snorri adds that "the death of Baldr was ruin for the Æsir." His loss was a key event that shifted the balance of power within the mythical cycle and sparked the onset of Ragnarok, the end of the world. This sculpture depicts the last moments Odin had with his son. Weak with grief, Odin fell to his knees, too weak to lift Baldr's body from the ground where he laid. He is not only overwhelmed with the loss of his son, but also burdened with the knowledge that allows him to comprehend what this signifies for the fate of the world. The sculpture tries to capture the feeling of loss in the broken-hearted expression and body language of Odin as he kneels next to Baldr's lifeless body. *Last Words* represents a tragic moment between a father and son, but more importantly the quenching of a shining beacon of hope, thus initiating the destruction of the world.



Scorn Pole (Níðstang) (2019) by Adam Hansson





When all was ready for sailing, Egil went up into the island. He took in his hand a hazel-pole, and went to a rocky eminence that looked inward to the mainland. Then he took a horse's head and fixed it on the pole. After that, in solemn form of curse, he thus spake:

“Here set I up a curse pole, and this curse I turn on king Eric and queen Gunnhilda. (Here he turned the horse's head landwards). This curse I turn also on the guardian-spirits who dwell in this land, that they may all wander astray, nor reach or find their home till they have driven out of the land king Eric and Gunnhilda.”

This spoken, he planted the pole down in a rift of the rock, and let it stand there. The horse's head he turned inwards to the mainland; but on the pole he cut runes, expressing the whole form of the curse.

—*Egil's Saga* (Translated by W.C. Green)

In 2019 Adam Hansson, a student in ICEL 3330, created a “Scorn pole,” an object used to curse one's enemies in early medieval Scandinavia. Adam also later published an article, “Sympathy for a Jötunn: The Justification of Loki's Actions” in [Icelandic Connection Magazine](#), and presented it at the [Transforming Old Norse-Icelandic Literature online symposium](#).

Old Icelandic Weaving (2021) by Karla King

Karla King has long been fascinated by both the Viking era in Iceland and the fibre arts. Taking ICEL 2400 in the fall of 2021, the option for a free-play project presented her with an opportunity to combine these interests with a portion of an ongoing personal project which had led to her return to school in the first place.





This project involved building a warp-weighted loom and weaving a small piece of fabric as it would have been done between the settlement of Iceland (874) and the middle of the 18th Century. The process of going from sheep to garment involves a number of tools, and woolen fabric was an important currency in the first centuries of Iceland's history. Karla also recorded [*Rímnadanslög Op. 11, Nos. 1-4*](#), by Icelandic composer Jón Leifs.

Blood Eagle (2020) by Mackenzie Stewart

In 2020, Mackenzie Stewart, a student in ICEL 3330, created a depiction of the Blood Eagle, a sacrificial killing depicted in *Orkneyinga Saga* (*History of the Earls of Orkney*) and *Heimskringla* (*History of the Kings of Norway*). Mackenzie drew on these sources as well as *þetta af Ragnars sonum* (*The Tale of Ragnar's Sons*) to recreate the scene where a person who has committed a great offence is sacrificed by his ribs and lungs being cut from his back and placed over his shoulders like wings.



The Creation of Midgard from Ymir the Giant (2020) by Mackenzie Stewart

Young were the years when Ymir made his settlement,
there was no sand nor sea nor cool waves;
earth was nowhere nor the sky above,
chaos yawned, grass was there nowhere.

-[The Seeress's Prophecy \(Translated by Carlyne Larrington\)](#)

In 2020, as part of ICEL 3320, Mackenzie Stewart created a sculpture inspired by the Old Norse Creation Myth, whose sources include *The Seeress's Prophecy*, *Vafthrudnir's Sayings*, and *The Prose Edda*. In primordial time the gods, led by Odin, kill the giant Ymir then create the earth out of his corpse; the sky is his skull, the clouds his brains, and the mountains his bones. She documented the creation process at the [Transforming Old Norse-Icelandic Literature online symposium](#) (2021).



***Viking Burial (2020)* by Mackenzie Stewart**

In 2020, as part of ICEL 2410, Mackenzie Stewart created a diorama depicting a female Viking burial, whose sources of inspiration include archaeological findings like the Birka female Viking warrior.



Sleipnir on the Bridge Bifröst (2022) by A.J. Nelson

In 2022 A.J. Nelson, a student in ICEL 3320, created this painting. Sleipnir, Odin's horse, is the greatest of horses in Norse Myth. He is the offspring of Loki (in the form of a mare) and a giant's stallion, Svaðilfari, and has eight legs. Grani, the horse of Sigurd the Dragonslayer, is descended from Sleipnir, just as Sigurd is descended from Odin himself.



Surt at the Gates of Muspelheim (2022) by Aliyah Bedard



In 2022 Aliyah Bedard, a student in ICCEL 3320, created this painting of Surt, a fire-demon in Norse myth. *The Seeress's Prophecy* speaks of Surt as the King of Muspelheim, whose flaming sword will one day burn down the whole world.

Ragnarok (2022) by Spencer Lowes



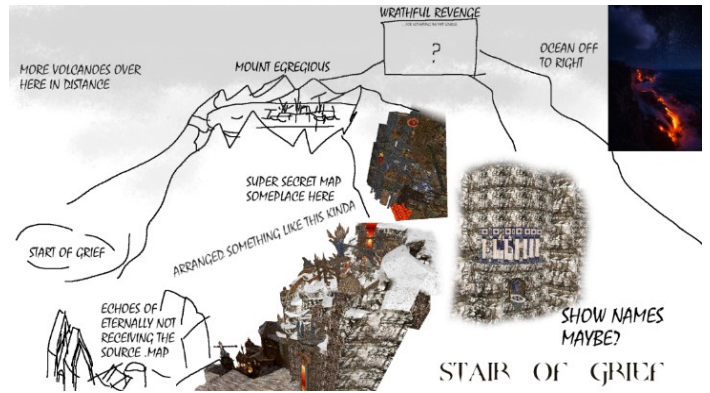
In 2022 Spencer Lowes, a student in ICEL 2410, created this painting. Ragnarok includes a large battle, natural disasters, the burning and drowning of the world, the death of several notable figures, and the repopulation of the world by two surviving humans. The first panel depicts Fenrir, the great wolf who is the child of Loki and Angrboða, and the god Odin, riding his horse Sleipnir. The second panel depicts a forest on fire from the arrival of Surt. The last panel features the Midgard Serpent, known as Jörmungandr, and the god Thor, wielding his hammer Mjölhnir.



The Stair of Grief:

Developing the game Quake: Mjölfnir







Mjölfnir World Map (2021) by Mackenzie Stewart

In 2021, [The Department of Icelandic](#), [The Faculty of Arts \(The Arts Endowment Fund\)](#), and [The Department of English, Theatre, Film, and Media](#) supported a key stage in the development of the computer game project [Quake: Mjölfnir](#). Named after the famous hammer of the Norse god Thor, this game lets players travel through a medieval world inspired by Norse Myth. Project support enabled hiring student Mackenzie Stewart as an artist to create the “World Map” showing all locations in the game. Release of the first version of this game is planned for December 2022.

Mackenzie presented this piece at the **Bridging the North Partnership Conference**, and the World Map and other images from the game appeared in the **Creation Myths of the North** exhibit. The first version of *Quake: Mjölfnir* features artwork by Dustin Geeraert, Mackenzie Stewart Ironlizard, Tintin, Shadesmaster, Madfox, and Hrimfaxi, programming by Josiah Jack and Ryan Holaday, and music by Idioplex, Field of Fear, WitcheR, Stvannyr, Haxan Dreams, and Carbon Based Life-Forms.



Cold wind blows,
 Gods look down in anger on this poor child.
 Why so unforgiving, and why so cold?
 Been a long time crossing Bridge of Sighs.

Among the most prominent locations in *Quake: Mjölfnir* is *Karnith Zo: Bridge of Sighs*. Unparalleled digital artist Ironlizard created a vast mountainous landscape around the titular Bridge (based on earlier work by Dustin Geeraert and Hrimfaxi), which leads away from the dwellings and infrastructure on these glacial cliffs. Overlooking a burning chasma of lava, the local army garrison carefully places boxes full of dead sheep on the bridge then rings the nearby dinner bells, summoning the many dragons who live in the area for their regular tribute and meal. Local residents are advised to stay indoors during the dragons' feeding frenzy.

This location's title comes from Irish fantasy writer Lord Dunsany's story [*In the Land of Time*](#) (1906), where a mighty King passes on the hereditary name Karnith Zo, and yet is confounded by Time. The subtitle is a reference to English guitarist Robin Trower's haunting and mournful song [*Bridge of Sighs*](#) (1974, see also Swedish band Opeth's [cover](#)). This level's soundtrack consists of Hungarian band Stvannyr's somber, reflective album [*Secrets of the Runes*](#) (2018), bookended by two heavier tracks from the same band's epic follow-up [*Valley of Shadows*](#) (2019), namely ***Death in the Ravine*** and ***Emperor Eagle***. We find this music quite suitable for this northern mountain landscape, as Stvannyr explains: "On this album, I imagine a mystic world inspired by the cold beauty of the Nordic wilderness and play its folk music."

Death, O King, is a gift sent by the gods by the hand of their servant Time, and some receive it gladly, and some are forced reluctantly to take it, and before others it is suddenly flung in the middle of the day. And with this gift that Time hath brought him from the gods a man must go forth into the dark to possess no other thing for so long as the gods are willing.

There are dangers on the way up the mountain, ranging from an avalanche to bombardment by siege equipment, and inquisitive adventurers may be rewarded with secret weapons and even the entrance to a secret level. Locations include a water tower, cistern, greenhouse, outdoor forge, perched hall, watchtower, and lookout. The oldest structure is an ancient temple dedicated to Time itself, whose huge multi-pillared facade juts out of the mountain, where sheep dwell in a fortified enclosure. Since the game is inspired by Norse Myth, players can collect and wield weapons of Thor, Hel, Ran, Odin, Baldr, Freyr, Skadi, Loki, and Hodr.

“The past is not dead, it is living in us, and will be alive in the future which we are now helping to make.”

William Morris



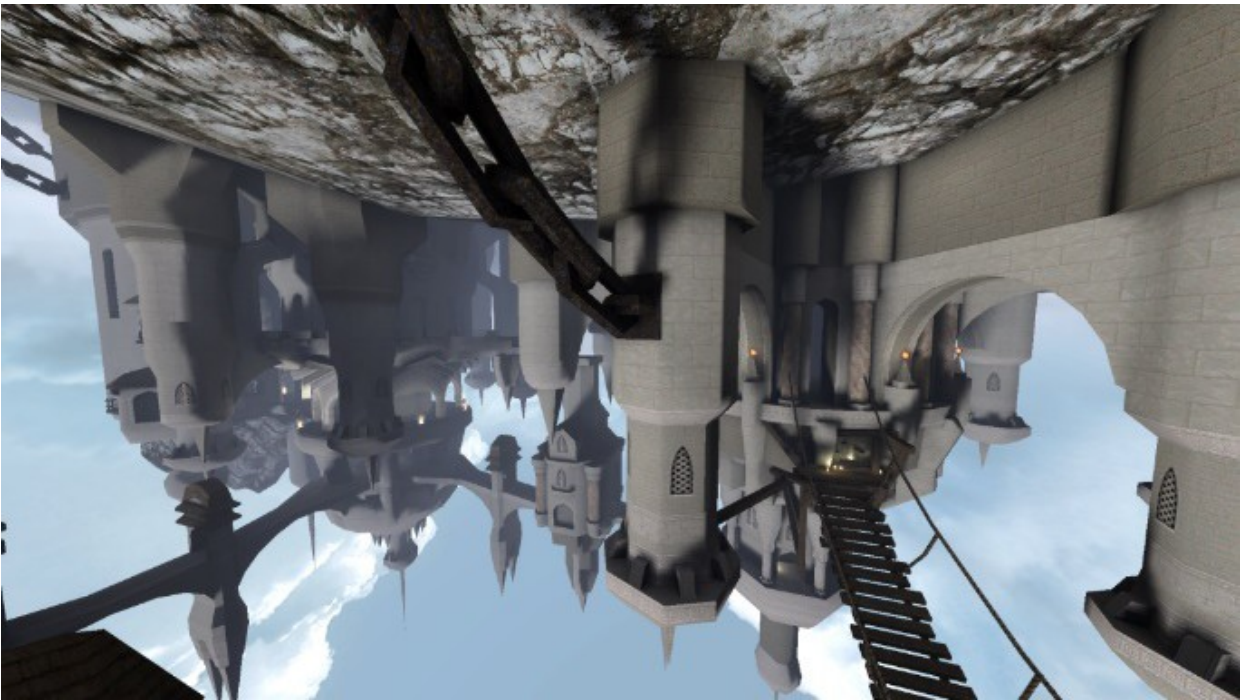
Extensive Foundations: Open Source & the Creative Commons

Quake: Mjölfnir is created and organized by Dustin Geeraert, and is powered by [Keep](#), Josiah Jack’s vast compilation of new and modified content for [Quake](#). This mod incorporates content and code from many previously released mods, including mods by Ryanscissorhands ([Arms of Asgard](#)), by Sock and others ([Arcane Dimensions](#)), PM ([Drake](#)), and Preach, Necros, and Kell ([Quoth](#)). Artwork released online during the quarter-century of Quake history appears in Mjölfnir, most notably models by Redfield, aDaya, Dwere, Bal, Sock, and Naitelveni. This project is made possible by a quarter century’s worth of free and open source game design and editing software utilities, and we particularly appreciate the support of Ericw (creator of the engine [Quakespasm](#), and [who has specialized in making the impossible just work anyway, in terms of compiling game levels](#)), Shpoike (creator of the engine [QuakeSpasm-Spiked](#)) and Andrei Drexler (creator of the engine [IronWail](#)). You can also play Mjölfnir using [FTE-Quake](#), [VK Quake](#), or [DarkPlaces](#). All of this builds on the original Quake source code by id Software, released to the public (GPL License) in 1999. In keeping with the open source ethos of the Quake community, we encourage others to distribute, republish, edit, modify, and otherwise undertake any and all non-commercial uses any of any and all of Quake: Mjölfnir’s content.





Your journeys through these strange and ancient lands reveal many signs of the old gods, but the past is fragile in an age of destruction...



Inspiration and Reference Images follow, with words from the New Trailer that will accompany the release of *Quake: Mjöltnir*.

Against my will to these sad shores,
An unknown force has drawn me.

Bound unto a future,
Shaped by ancestors before me.

Day on day I march the beat,
To someone else's drum.

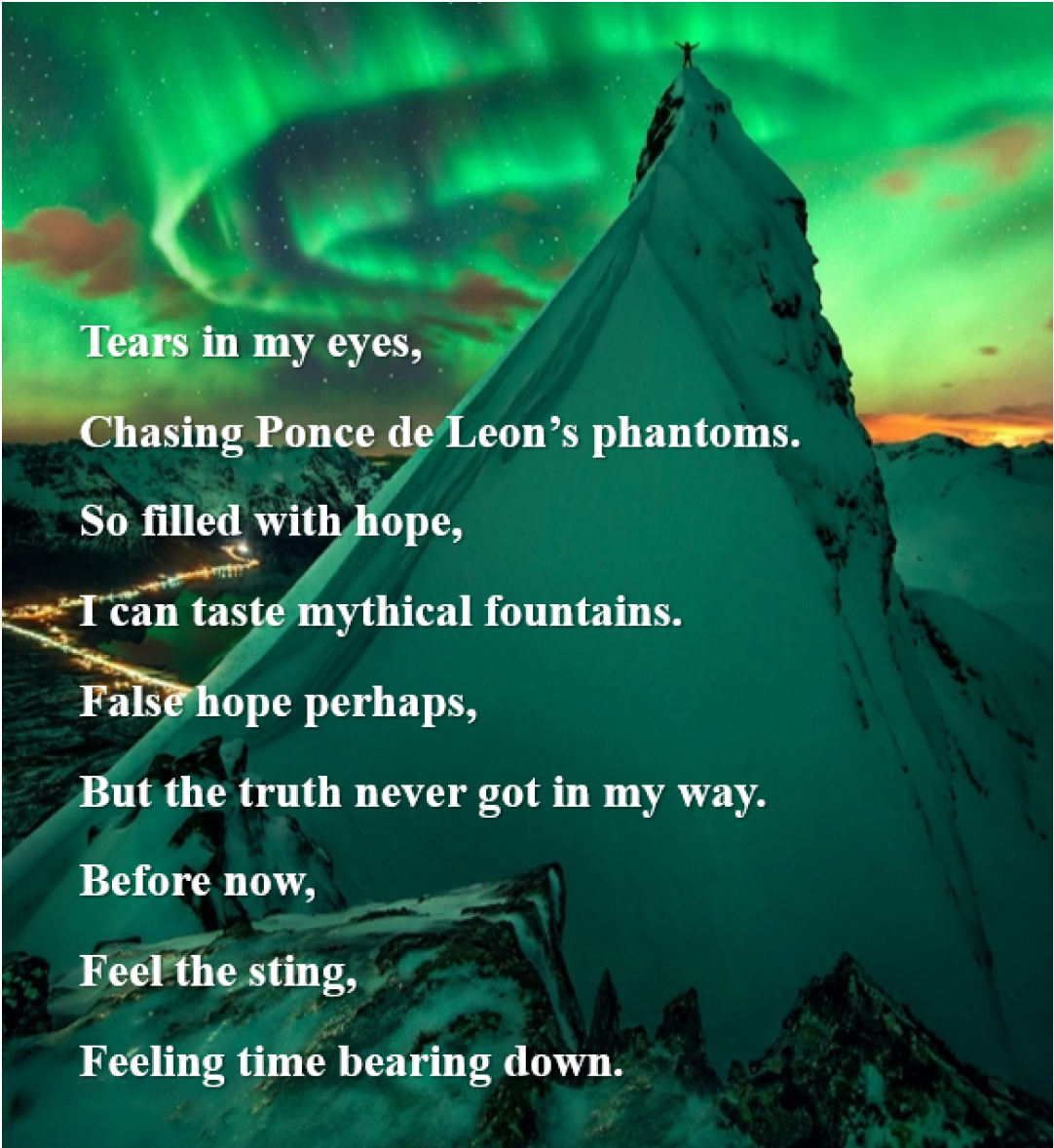
I have searched far foreign lands,
There's nowhere left to run.

Impending storm rise up rise up,
Oh demons I shall shame you.

Look down the barrel of my gun,
And one by one I'll name you.

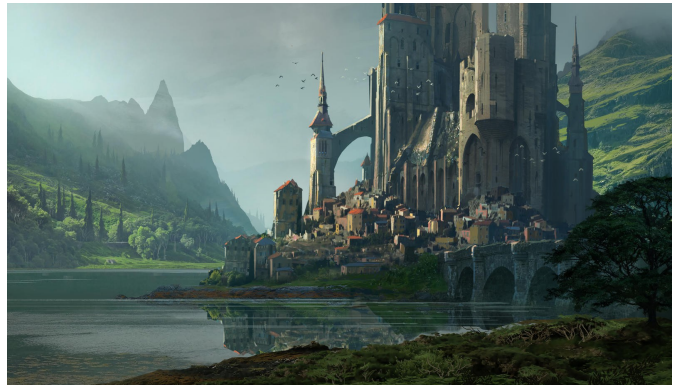
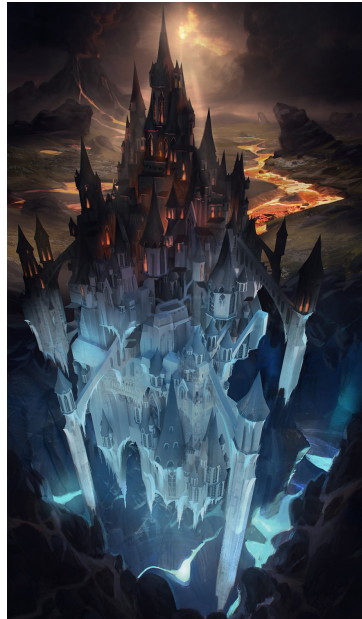
Day on day my brothers leave,
Go marching off to war.

Yet we never understand
For what we're fighting for.



**Tears in my eyes,
Chasing Ponce de Leon's phantoms.
So filled with hope,
I can taste mythical fountains.
False hope perhaps,
But the truth never got in my way.
Before now,
Feel the sting,
Feeling time bearing down.**

All that has been shall be again,
And on the same riverbank in the same land,
On the same spring day the same daffodil will bloom,
And echoes of eternity shall stir in the tomb.





“We are only the trustees for those who come after us.” William Morris





“The present life of man upon earth, O King, seems to me in comparison with that time which is unknown to us like the swift flight of a sparrow through the mead-hall where you sit at supper in winter with your thanes and counsellors. A fire blazes and the hall is warmed, but wintry storms are raging abroad. This sparrow flies swiftly in through one door and out through another. While he is within, he is safe from the storms; but after a short space of fair weather, he immediately vanishes out of your sight, passing from winter to winter again. So this life of man appears for a little while, but of what is to follow or what went before, we know nothing.”

The Venerable Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (c.731).





***The Witness* (1960) by Jorge Luis Borges (Translated by Mildred Boyer)**

In a stable that stands almost within the shadow of the new stone church a gray-eyed, gray-bearded man, stretched out amid the odors of the animals, humbly seeks death as one seeks for sleep. The day, faithful to vast secret laws, little by little shifts and mingles the shadows in the humble nook. Outside are the plowed fields and a deep ditch clogged with dead leaves and an occasional wolf track in the black earth at the edge of the forest. The man sleeps and dreams, forgotten. The angelus awakens him. By now the sound of the bells is one of the habits of evening in the kingdoms of England. But this man, as a child, saw the face of Woden, the holy dread and exultation, the rude wooden idol weighed down with Roman coins and heavy vestments, the sacrifice of horses, dogs, and prisoners. Before dawn he will die, and in him will die, never to return, the last eye-witness of those pagan rites; the world will be a little poorer when this Saxon dies.

Events far-reaching enough to people all space, whose end is nonetheless tolled when one man dies, may cause us wonder. But something, or an infinite number of things, dies in every death, unless the universe is possessed of a memory, as the theosophists have supposed.

In the course of time there was a day that closed the last eyes to see Christ. The battle of Junin and the love of Helen each died with the death of some one man. What will die with me when I die, what pitiful or perishable form will the world lose? The voice of Macedonio Fernandez? The image of a roan horse on the vacant lot at Serrano and Charcas? A bar of sulphur in the drawer of a mahogany desk?





