

Soul Attack

It was not at all deemed strange
For a fleet of thirty Viking long-boats
To make it's way upriver
The quietness of oar-fall in the still water
Like the stare in the codemned man's eye
As he feels the rough hemp close around his neck.

The monk in his cell bent over his scribbling
Retreating from the holy words so often shaped
Their meaning gone adrift in the scriptures lustre
Blood-red ink scraped unto calf-skin
He'll finish off his doodling before
Returning to the service of the gilded letter.

The thread of this new gospel is spun from solid stone
Declension and gerund hewn and firmly set
The foreign grit gets panned from new soil
Each lightning-struck line scorches the dark memory
Silencing the murky mumbling of the druid
Who knew not the way of light turned into slush.

Mining each word's kith and kin with sharp quill
He tries to track the wind that sent him those fine leaves
Knowing not how long will last the flame-fired fresh vigour
Nor when the mist will descend anew looking like the past
Still he'll pledge his soul yet to the mystery verses
And let their music soar from the white dove's wings.

No gemlike gaze will fall again upon his psalm
For his ear pricks at the slicing sound of steel
The final prayer is quenched by a gory hand
And the day turns into one piteous dark scream.

The playful strokes lie still in midland peat
The terror ended by the sword's sudden cleave.