

WIDSITH'S LONGING

LAURA EPPICH BRYCE

Long nights I spend in the hall,
the polished wood and strings silent
across my lap.
Every night, no exception.
When the shadows stretch into dusk and
the mead starts flowing,
the thanes too deep in their cups
to really listen,
that's when they hammer their fists
on the benches and call for me,
when I have only half their attention.
Widsith, give us some music!
Like mead and fighting and fame,
I'm always in their thoughts,
even when they don't understand.
I stand with my harp by the greasy hearth,
touch my fingers to the strings,
and pretend the blood spilled by these men
is worth something,
that death and joy are one,
that the wheel of vengeance is spinning
toward some destination I can name.
Every night they call out for a different song,
and yet every song is the same.