

Summary of Arne Garborg's *Haugtussa*

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Arne Garborg's verse novel, *Haugtussa*, has been in print since 1895, but it has not been translated into English. For this reason, I provide here my own English summary. I have tried to preserve the character of Garborg's storytelling, and the summary is, therefore, written in a casual style. It is, insofar as is possible, a simple presentation of the content of the novel without analysis; I have endeavored to restrict commentary to the headings and footnotes.

The majority of the summary is an abridgement in prose style, but certain passages are direct translations. For example, for the prologue, I summarize the first five stanzas of the poem in the first paragraph, quoting only a few words. I quote the sixth stanza directly in the next paragraph then summarize the three that follow. Finally, I quote the last two stanzas directly.

The novel consists of twelve unnumbered sections plus a prologue or preface, and most sections include several individual poems, also unnumbered. I have numbered each section and each individual poem within sections for the ease and convenience of the reader. At the beginning of each poem, I give the Norwegian title with an English translation, and I also indicate who is speaking. Explanatory headings are included after the title and speaker information for many poems and at the beginning of some sections. I have also identified each poem that Grieg selected for his song cycle, noted whether the poem was included in Opus 67, and if it was not included, the stage of completion of the song or sketch.

Prologue

First line: Til deg, du heid og bleike myr [To you, heath and pale marsh]
Speaker: Unnamed—generally understood to be Garborg himself.¹

This single poem serves as a preface to the rest of the verse novel. The poem's ultimate message is optimistic; in spite of the horrors experienced by the speaker and by the spirit that he addresses, there is, finally, the promise of spring. In other words, good will triumph over evil in the end.

Edvard Grieg began a song using the text from this poem but did not complete it. The poem itself has no title, but Grieg, appropriately, gave it the simple title of "Prologue."

The poem begins with the speaker addressing the moor where birds fly and heather grows, saying "To you... I give my song." In the next four verses, the speaker turns to a darker side of nature as he declares: "I know you," addressing a different mischievous or sinister aspect of nature—the gray troll dwelling, the shadowy night, ghosts, the roar of the sea and frightening magic chants. He says he also knows of the painful struggle against the tyranny of the trolls, and he laments the loss of life.

In the sixth verse, the poet declares: "I know you – I know you / who *did not* win! – I saw your struggle, I know your path / in the shadow-land." The speaker continues to address the "poor spirit" who has lost the battle in the next verse, saying he has experienced the awful struggle for many years. The poor spirit hovers around him and sits with him; it is as if, within the speaker himself, this poor spirit still struggles in its bonds. The speaker knows well what it is like to battle against the power of the trolls like a boat caught in the rapids.

¹ Olav Midttun and Åsfrid Svensen, "Tillegg" [Supplement] to *Haugtussa* by Arne Garborg, ed. Olav Midttun, 18th ed. [school edition] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1974), 170. Midttun and Svensen write: "Here an *I*, whom we must believe is the poet himself, is speaking to a *you* that is first a landscape, then a person who has succumbed to life's struggle. We can certainly understand the poem as a dedication, partly to Jæren [Garborg's home community], partly to Arne Garborg's father [who committed suicide]... The poem lies outside the story of Veslemøy and is more personal in tone than the rest of the work." [Her talar eit *eg* som vi må tru er dikteren sjølv, til eit *du* som snart er eit landskap, snart eit menneske som har gått under i livsstriden. Vi kan vel oppfatte diktet som ei tileigning dels til Jæren, dels til Arne Garborgs far... Dikta står utafør forteljinga om Veslemøy og er meir personleg i tonen enn resten av verket.]

The tone changes in the last two verses: “But the lark ascends from the forgotten grave / with the song of the victorious; / and the wind rushes in from the sea / so refreshing and good. // And though we know tears and angst / and sore want / still we must believe the lark’s song / that promises spring.”

[I] Section title: Heime [At Home]

[1.] Title: Veslemøy ved rokken [Veslemøy at the spinning wheel]
Speaker: Narrator, then Veslemøy

Grieg began a sketch of this poem, but he did not complete the song. This lyric poem tells a story within a story. It does not advance the narrative of the *Haugtussa* tale itself, for the narrative of this poem is in Veslemøy’s imagination.

It is a rainy, windy autumn day, and Mons, the old cat, lies on a pillow under the stove and dreams. Veslemøy speaks to her sleeping cat, wondering what he is dreaming about.

Perhaps, she imagines, the dreams are old memories from the time when he was the most handsome prince in the world, thinking about the beautiful maiden who was picking berries. Then came the troll-witch. The prince jumped back, but the witch cast a spell on him and turned him into a cat, forever separating him from the maiden.

The poem returns, in the final stanza, to the rain and wind outside the window and Mons sleeping comfortably on his pillow.

[2.] Title: Kvelding [Evening]
Speaker: Narrator

Grieg began a sketch of this poem, but he did not complete the song.

Snow is falling on a still, gray night. Goblins are out and elf songs can be heard. Veslemøy comes out to feed the animals and milk the cow. There is an old elf, a good

spirit, guarding the barn.² The elf knows he can expect a cup of milk from the nice girl, who is always good to the animals and does not fear the elves. Once fed, the animals settle down for the night. The goblin comes with another small herd and dances with the cat.

[3.] Title: I omnskråi [In the corner by the oven]
Speaker: Narrator, then Veslemøy

This lyric poem is another in which there is a story within the larger narrative.

Two children come from a neighboring farm to hear Veslemøy, the best storyteller in the district. Veslemøy tells the story of Helge Haaland, a hunter. One day on his way home, Helge is bewitched and loses his way. He wanders until he comes to a magnificent, opulent farm where everything glitters. The beautiful inhabitants all have pearls around their necks. He falls immediately for the daughter, and the wedding takes place that very night. Helge is promised the farm when the father passes away. Once in the bridal bed, Helge realizes he has married a “hulder”³. He is suddenly fearful, but he is laughing at the same time. He draws a knife, hears a shriek, and then everything grows dark and disappears. He awakens under a familiar ridge near his home—he is freezing and his head aches. He realizes then that he forgot to recite the Lord’s Prayer the day before. He looks up and sees the hulder, who has tears in her eyes. She laments: “you could have saved both me and yourself. There are many in the hills who long for sun and daylight, but must waste away in the domain of goblins and gnomes.”

² According to Norwegian folk legend, these elves lived on every farm and were helpful as long as people treated them well. Midttun, 170.

³ A “hulder” is a beautiful but wicked siren with a cow-like tail.

- [4.] Title: Sporven [the Sparrow]
Speaker: Narrator and the Sparrow

Grieg set this poem, but he did not include it in Op. 67. Grieg also arranged the song for SSA choir. Both versions are included in the GGA. The solo arrangement is identified as EG 152d. This poem presents an image that is significant throughout *Haugtussa*. Veslemøy is often likened to a bird, and the bird image is an icon for Veslemøy. This poem about a sparrow on Veslemøy's farm also reminds the reader of Veslemøy herself.

The sparrow flits happily around the farm picking grain and playing in the straw. She is unafraid of any cat, but she hides when the hawk comes. Life is light and happy; she does not worry about getting enough to eat because there is a bountiful supply. At Christmas, she often gets something tasty from Veslemøy. When it gets cold, she finds shelter in the warm straw. When spring returns, she wings happily away and builds a nest out on the island.

- [5.] Title: Det syng [It sings]
English song title: "The Enticement"
Speaker: Narrator and a hill creature (unseen)

This poem is in two parts. Part one is a narrative description of the scene, while part two is a song of enticement addressed to Veslemøy. Grieg set part two of "Det syng," and it is the first song of the cycle, *Haugtussa*, Op. 67.

It is a foggy, mild night. All is dreamy, sleepy and quiet. Veslemøy is in her bed in a sleeplike trance she is powerless to escape, but she sees shadows in the moonlight. A "bukkeetråv"⁴ walks softly under the window, and wind whistles in the corners of the house. A soft, trembling song—a song like those of the Hill people—drifts in on the wind.

The unseen singer is an otherworldly creature, and he tries to entice Veslemøy to come live with him. He sings: "Oh, do you know the dream, and do you know the

⁴ A bukkeetråv is a male, otherworldly creature, probably part man and part goat.

song, / then you will treasure the tones; / and as it seduced you so many times, / you can certainly never forget it. / Oh you bewitching one! / With me you shall dwell; / in the Blue-hill you shall turn your silver spinning wheel.” He tells her not to fear the cool night, the soft night, the deep night, or the wild love that sins, cries, and forgets. His embrace is hot and his soul is mild, and he tames the angry bear. The poem ends with a repeat of the enticement to Veslemøy to come to the Blue-hill.

[6.] Title: Fyrivarsl [Forewarning]
Speaker: Narrator and Veslemøy’s deceased sister, Lisabet

Grieg began two separate sketches of this poem, but he completed only a few measures in each.

It is early morning before dawn, and Veslemøy lies asleep, dreaming. She sees her deceased sister standing at the end of the bed, wearing a shimmering, white garment. In her hand is a silver goblet, and she looks at Veslemøy with sadness, saying: “here is the deep chalice that you shall empty. You have the hardest fate that anyone can receive. You will see and discern those who hide themselves in the night.” Veslemøy’s sister tells her that these dark spirits will lay a treacherous obstacle in her path and bewitch her young mind. She warns her to be careful but says she will never be far away. The way will be slippery and dark, but after the difficult night will come the light of morning.

Veslemøy awakens with gladness to greet her sister, but Lisabet drifts away in a twinkle of light. A sigh is heard, but it quickly dies in the morning wind.

[7.] Title: Sundagsro [Sunday’s peace]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy, and other young people

The scene is a winter day inside. There is frost in the corners of the house and on

the wall. Gamlemor⁵ sits reading a book and thinking. Young people sit around the stove roasting slices (of apple or potato). “It is the best in the world.” Veslemøy acts as the “gåtemester” [master of riddles], posing several riddles that the others answer.⁶

One example is from the last two stanzas of the poem. “It grows rootless from long roots. / During the day it walks / on two, but in the morning on four feet, / in the evening on three? / Man grows rootless from long roots / from Adam onward. / And first he crawls; then walks on his feet, / but finally with a cane.”

[III] Section title: Veslemøy synsk [Veslemøy [is] clairvoyant]

This poem is important to the narrative in that it describes the first clairvoyant experience Veslemøy has after having seen a vision of her deceased sister.

[1.] Title: Gamlemor ventar [Old mother waits]
Speaker: Narrator

Gamlemor sits and spins in the light of a lantern. She is thin, her clothes are worn, and she is bent and wrinkled. On the floor, it seems as if there is a “bøyg” (a giant, invisible serpentine being) opening its mouth wide and swallowing everything. It has dragged itself up from the underworld.

Gamlemor’s shadow flickers on the wall like a spirit from the grave. Shadows on the wall and a lifeless, blue light from the lantern lead her into painful thoughts. She wonders: “is something wrong tonight?” The spinning wheel stops suddenly, and she listens, her body stiff. She hears someone running as if it is a matter of life and death. She hears moaning, strangled breathing, a prayer, and something like a heartbeat.

Gamlemor gets up, walks anxiously back and forth, crosses herself, and prays. Time

⁵ Literally, “old mother.” The term often connotes “grandmother,” but in *Haugtussa*, it always refers to Veslemøy’s mother.

⁶ Midttun writes, “Posing riddles is an old practice for strengthening one’s ability to fantasize and think.” [Å spørje gåter er ein gammal skikk til å øve opp fantasi og tenkjeevne.] See Midttun, 171. Some of the riddles are taken from old Norwegian folk traditions, and almost all are well known in Norway. Some, as in the example here, are also known in the United States.

goes slowly and seems to stop. It is dark and ugly out. She prays: “give us peace and safety. A poor girl runs, nearly flying through the black heath, her spine cold with fear. Oh, send her home in peace. I hear nothing more... Oh, I pray from my heart, send my Veslemøy home to her mother in peace.”

Gamlemor hears the frightened steps, breathing and running again. The door flies open, and in rushes Veslemøy. She is pale and her eyes appear senseless. She cries: “mother, mother, I am so scared. It is so ugly and black here. And on the heath, I saw something so strange.” Gamlemor assures Veslemøy that she is safe here. She heard Veslemøy running and asks if she was frightened. She gives her some milk and tells her to sit and relax, but then she adds: “I was startled: I have certainly never heard your ‘fylgje’⁷ before.”

[2.] Title: Veslemøy
Speaker: Narrator

Grieg set this poem, and it is the second song of the song cycle. It gives a physical description of Veslemøy—it is the only poem that does—but her physical appearance is influenced, and probably altered, by the encounter she has had on the heath with her uncle.

She is slender and dark with clean features, deep, gray eyes and an unassuming manner. She seems half asleep and has a calm peacefulness in her movements, speech and everything about her. Beneath her beautiful, low forehead, her eyes shine as if through a vapor, and she seems to be gazing into another world.

She goes to her bed and sits, but hardly knows it. She takes the cup of milk and sits there, quietly lost and resigned. Only her breast moves quickly and heavily, and her mouth trembles. She is shaking, frail and weak, even though she is fair and young.

⁷ A good spirit guide. According to Norwegian folk legend, each person had one, and it would warn and protect. See *Ibid.*, 172. In this case, Gamlemor heard Veslemøy, in the form of her “fylgje” before she actually arrived at home.

[3.] Title: Synet [The vision]
Speaker: Veslemøy and Gamlemor in conversation

Veslemøy tells her mother that she has not lost her mind, and what she saw on the heath was not a dream. She saw through a narrow rift into the other world.

Gamlemor replies: “you received the doomed man’s sorcery.”⁸

Veslemøy tells her mother not to fear—she is not dying, but they have lost her uncle, Gamlemor’s brother tonight. She saw him in the valley, glowing. Her mother replies: “God will have mercy on him.”

Veslemøy tells Gamlemor that she walked with God in her thoughts as it grew dark. It was as quiet as a grave, and it seemed as if the world had passed away. There was a throbbing in her ears. Gamlemor answers: “Everything walks, hidden in darkness.”

Veslemøy explains further that she was not afraid at the time, and she wondered only a little when, out of the dense darkness, came a man in a shroud that seemed to glow like moonlight. She knew him well and waited quietly. He whispered: “farewell” and drifted away in the moonlight. Gamlemor prays: “God in Heaven, take him.”

After her uncle disappeared, Veslemøy says it was if she could smell death, and there was a shriek on the heath. She ran, frightened, senseless, and confused until she reached home and found Gamlemor. She adds, however, that she is glad for the memory. Gamlemor agrees, saying: “God make the soul to rejoice eternally.”

⁸ In other words, Gamlemor fears that the vision is a sign that Veslemøy will die.

- [4.] Title: Haugtussa [Hill sprite⁹]
Speaker: Narrator

One day the people learned that Veslemøy's uncle died at the exact time Veslemøy saw him in vision. She trembled as she replied that since then she has seen all kinds of otherworldly beings. Someone answered: "God comfort you, Veslemøy. It would have been better if you had died; then you would find some peace in the earth." Veslemøy responded that she would rather see with her eyes than go through life deaf and blind, not knowing the truth. From that time on, she saw trolls and ghosts and other underworld creatures. She often muttered dark words as she wandered, and at times, frightened her own mother. The people said she had lost her senses. Now she spent most of her time with her flocks between the three hills in the north. And from that time she was called Haugtussa.

[III] Section title: Jol [Christmas]

- [1.] Title: Ungdom [Youth]
Speaker: Narrator

It is the second day of Christmas¹⁰ (Dec. 26), and there is a dance at Gamlemor's house. The roads are wet with snow and mud, but the scene in the house is merry and boisterous. The young men and women are shy at first, but they are soon caught up in

⁹ The English translation of Grieg's song cycle, *Haugtussa*, is *The Mountain Maid*, but the title is not quite accurate. A "Haugtussa" is a woman who sees and has dealings with the inhabitants of the underworld or the Blue-hill. The nickname is derisive.

¹⁰ Though the poems in this section are set during Christmas, there is little or no element of the Christian holiday. The images are much more indicative of a celebration of the pagan holiday, "Yule," that was merged with Christmas when the Nordic countries were Christianized. Midttun writes: "Yule was, according to old beliefs, the time when divinity, mankind, and all evil spirits were near each other, could associate with one another and communicate with one another in many mysterious ways. The deceased returned, people could see the future, especially one's future spouse, and do many other things that were, at other times, impossible." [Jula var etter gammal tru den tida da gude- og manneheimen og alle vonde vette stod kvarandre nær, kunne ferdast i lag og komme i samband med kvarandre på mange slag løyndomsfulle måtar. Dei bortfarne gjekk att, ein kunne få sjå inn i framtida, særleg kven ein skulle verte gift med, og gjere mangt som ein elles ikkje makta.] See Midttun, 173.

the festive atmosphere. The boys drink a little courage and become bolder. The girls respond with smirks and smiles and laughter. They become more and more joyful, forgetting the cares of daily life. Their hearts pound and glow with love—these are times they will never forget. But if there is too much drinking and mischief, the fun will turn to fighting and struggle, and then the “evil man” will come. He will sit in the corner, laughing derisively as he watches. Suffering and murder will follow to the even greater delight of the devil. Then so many boys will suffer misfortune, and the girls will leave in shame and sorrow. Joy will turn to despair. Thus we must always make merry in the proper way and give praise to our Lord, who grants us life and grace.

[2.] Title: Laget [The Party]
Speaker: Narrator

This is a very long poem in several sections. Many meters, borrowed from Norwegian folkdance rhythms, are employed. The narrator describes the party and the visions Veslemøy sees as she watches the dance. Garborg uses the rhythms of the “gangar” (a duple-meter dance with a walking tempo) and the “halling” (similar to a “gangar,” but wilder) in the first section of the poem.

The first section is a conversation between a young man and his dance partner and a description of their lively, flirtatious dance.

The second section describes Veslemøy sitting in a corner and watching all the young men and women as they dance, but each person has a “fylgje” in the form of an animal that follows like a shadow. Some are black, some are white, and each one is uglier than the one before. If only the others could see them and turn away from the evil. The next several verses of this section describe the dancers and their accompanying ugly animal spirits.¹¹

¹¹ This poem has roots in Norwegian folk legend. A nearly identical tale of a woman who arrived at a dance late, looked in the window and saw each dancer shadowed by his or her evil “fylgje” was collected by Edvard Kruken in Leksvik, Nord-Trøndelag, Norway. See Reimund Kvideland and

Veslemøy's attention then turns to a gathering of trolls, sprites, and other creatures from the underworld who are dancing and making noise and music that no one else can hear. The meter shifts again to a triple pattern, and Veslemøy watches as the trolls' dance grows wilder and wilder. The next section seems to shift back and forth between the trolls and the people—both dances are rowdy and suggestive.

In the next section, Veslemøy sits staring as if bewitched and breaths heavily. Now everything is falling apart as trolls and people blend together. The light diminishes, darkness increases, and more trolls appear. A new dance begins—a “springar” (a triple-meter dance, but the third beat is much shorter than the first two). Veslemøy hears a song, but does not know who is singing.¹² Phrases from the earlier poem, “Det syng” [It Sings] reappear—“Oh you bewitching one...with me you shall dwell.” The song here contains many rhyming nonsense words that have a musical sound, such as “Haukeli-hei” and “dudeli-dei.” The singer also tells Veslemøy what her life will be like with him—happy, carefree, almost fairytale-like. The last words, as the song fades away, are: “Most beautiful one / oh wait for me / now I will come to you.”

As the song ends, a new section begins: “Softly as with tears / the harp song sounds / singing lightly and softly / like summer wind / rocks gently / flows strong and free / floats away in dream and stillness / awakens meekly / surges forth with power / ignites into fire / like the roar of the sea / sweetly as in sleep / a beautiful melody arises / warm love, with a sorrowful, gentle song...”

Now the troll appears. He is a beautiful, blue mountain ogre with a gold ring

Henning K. Sehmsdorf, eds., *Scandinavian Folk Belief and Legend*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 67-8.

¹² Remember that Veslemøy did not see the singer the first time she heard him in “Det syng” either—the music simply floated in on the wind.

around his flowing hair. He dances seductively before Veslemøy and repeats again the allurements from “Det syng.” He also tells her that during the day he is the brown bear that bounds through the forests, wades in the water, plays on the bank and reigns over the land as far as the eye can see. But when midnight nears and Veslemøy hears graceful music like the softest song from a violin string, then he comes to her and sleeps in her arms. One day, he tells her, she will sit in the Blue-hill as his bride, dressed in silk and silver, and never know sorrow. He reaches out his pale blue hand to her, and she trembles with anxiety. But just as she is about to kiss him, it suddenly appears as if he has a mouth like a rat. She prays to Jesus for salvation and peace and sinks back down onto the bench, unconscious.

[IV] Section title: I Gjøtlebakken [On Gjøtle hill]

[1.] Title: Vindtrolli [the wind trolls]
Speaker: Narrator

This poem describes several creatures that rule over the elements in different quarters of the earth. The first is “northern whitebeard” who rises suddenly with dark wings. The wind howls and shrieks, and the ridges and meadows become white. The second is the “northwest ice troll” who overturns ships and causes storms on the sea. The next creature is the “western merman” who plays in the sea and sings in the sun and the gentle blue, but things usually end in tears. The “eastern mountain ogre” is very sharp. He comes down from the mountain peaks with a snow hat on his closely cropped hair. Next is the “southern friendly elf” who breezes through the foliage and heather. He has flowers in his flaming hair, he plays on a flute, and he sings. When it is warm and the sun shines, it is good to have fun. Then he sleeps his best sleep in the heather and awakens without tears.

[2.] Title: D'er kje greidt [It isn't good]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy is out with her flock on a rainy, windy day. She speaks to her poor, shivering animals of an “elf stone” and says there is a sheltered corner there where they might find some relief. The cow wants to go home—it is so unpleasant out in the field on such a day. But the stacks are empty there this time of year—it would be better to find something where they are. Under the round hill, things are not so bad. Perhaps they could go there, and the hulder might even let them in for a while. She knows, after all, how they are suffering, those like her.

Water runs down her back, her feet are soaked, and there are holes in her socks. She is freezing, and soon she will be chilled to the bone. She will hurry home to mother where it is warm. Then she can change clothes and rest for a while, and the animals can have grain and something warm to drink.

[3.] Title: Fuglar [Birds]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy is not named specifically, but it is clear toward the end of the poem that she is the speaker. In this poem, she imitates the songs of several birds and comments on their particular temperaments. A few are mentioned in this summary.

The starling hops around like a happy child. His dark green feathers shine in the sun, and he is surely as fine as a pearl. The lark ascends higher and higher toward the clouds, and every time she chirps, the world becomes new again. Veslemøy confesses that she once took the lapwing's beautiful eggs from the nest, but Gamlemor pled with her never to do it again. The beautiful, brown golden plover, when she flies, both warms Veslemøy's heart and saddens it.¹³

¹³ The paradox is not explained.

[4.] Title: Under jonsok [During midsummer day]
Speaker: Part one: Narrator, part two: Veslemøy

Part one is in three verses of unequal length. The first stanza describes the rain and dew that cool the scorched earth and cover the burned hills and the wonderful scents that come from many fragrant plants. There are thousands of fresh, lovely fragrances that flow into the air like balsam. A vapor of love and warmth wraps the earth.

The second verse describes Veslemøy with her animals. They are making their way north around marshes and ponds and through some treacherous land. On the marshy bottom, a man-eating serpent sleeps heavily, but on the hill the cattle graze, tasting the young tops of heather. Lambs dance around, then seek out their mothers. As evening falls, the smoke makes a bewitching, dim haze.¹⁴ Veslemøy wanders in the calm evening, her thoughts scattered—she sinks down and begins to dream. She sees things come to life and things awaken. She looks at the lovely grass bordering the fields and the beautiful herd. “Haugmøy,”¹⁵ adorned with fine silver leaf, sits on the mound and beams happily at her cows.

She stands up and begins to sing; her hair falls over her shoulder. The herd lines up and begins the walk toward the mountain. The third verse is only four lines long, and it describes the nightfall. The fires grow dark and the clouds fade. The world, dreaming, listens, and there seems to be a song in the night.

Part two is a “ku-lokk”¹⁶ that Veslemøy sings to her herd. She sings about the long time they have been at the home pasture—now they leave for the summer farm.

¹⁴ On midsummer evening, people light huge bonfires on the mountain.

¹⁵ A hill maiden, understood here to be yet another name or title for the protagonist.

¹⁶ A “ku-lokk” is a song sung by a shepherd to the flock or herd. Each ku-lokk is unique, and the animals recognize it and come when it is sung.

The greenest grazing is in the mountains, and there the nights are cool. They are also sheltered on the mountain from fury and haste. Veslemøy then sings about the giants that dwell in the mountains. She is safe and free there, and the giant seduces her—he has promised his whole mountain if she wants it, but she cannot imagine that awful troll as her husband. The hulder burns with love for that fair boy that she will never come to know, and she would gladly trade both form and sense for him. The sun rises and sets, and winter draws near. Without a friend or a bridal bed, she wanders aimlessly. The fire of longing is painful and lingering, and the fair man never comes.

In the final verse, Veslemøy returns to her cows, calling them to go with her to the green grazing on the mountain.

[V] Section title: I slåttén [In the hayfield]

[1.] First line: No ljåen han syng på den saftige voll
[Now the scythe sings on the moist meadow]
Speaker: Unnamed

Grieg completed a setting of this poem and gave it the title, “I slåttén.” He did not include the song in Op. 67, but it is printed in the GGA as EG 152 f.

This poem is a description of the sights, sounds and smells of the haying season. Verse one speaks of the song the scythe makes as it cuts the hay and the rustling sound of the boys walking through the fields. The second verse describes the sweet smell of the newly cut hay. The perfume permeates both the hills and the town. It is the scent of summer. Verse three is a prayer for a successful crop, time to gather in the hay, and fast drying. Then they will not have to fear the coming autumn, and the Christmas celebration will be a happy one.

[2.] Title: Veslemøy undrast [Veslemøy wonders]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Grieg did a fairly complete song sketch for this poem. It has been reconstructed by the editors and printed in the GGA as EG 152g.

Veslemøy observes the girls and boys during the haying season, and her thoughts turn to male-female relationships. Each verse of this poem ends with the phrase (we know it is meant to be so). The girls spread the hay as the boys cut it. There is laughter and joking as they work. Veslemøy does not participate but muses that she may join in one day. She wonders if she will ever meet a boy who will think she is sweet and who will not mock “Haugtussa.” She imagines that most of these girls will marry, but she is not sure about herself. Boys may be fine, but they become disagreeable when they grow up. Even though they may behave well at times, they can be like trolls. Nevertheless, most people head for the church to marry. The girls know that they have only trouble ahead, but still, none of them wants to stay single. Girls have fun while women have only drudgery, but they still do not understand. Veslemøy thinks she might continue tending flocks for a hundred years before she changes her single status. Before she accepts the grief of marriage and the responsibility of children, she will have fun. Jokes and pranks aside, however, she cannot imagine kissing a beard.

[VI] Section title: Dømd [Condemned/Doomed]

This section contains only one poem. It is outside the main narrative of *Haugtussa*, but it is another illustration of Veslemøy’s clairvoyant gift. Grieg began two sketches of part one of this poem, but did not complete either sketch. He did complete a setting of part two of this poem but did not include the song in the published song cycle. It is printed in the GGA as EG 152 h.

[1.] First line: Det kveldar um haust yvi låge land
[Evening falls over the low land in autumn]
Speaker: Part one: Narrator, Part two: a condemned dead man

Part one describes the autumn evening. Waves are breaking on the northern coast; there are cold, blue clouds in the west, and the marsh sleeps, covered in fog. Sorcery sleeps in the moist vapors of the earth—Veslemøy hurries home with the sheep. Down on a farm by the riverbank she sees a strange old man. He is wearing knee pants and a loose farmer’s coat—he does not belong to this time. She is terribly frightened and freezes in her tracks. The man walks on the riverbank behind the only boundary marker, struggles to move the marker, but it will not budge; the stones of the wall stand fast. He screams and cries until his cries become a song.

Part two is the tortured song of the man. He is Mammon’s slave—he has sold his soul for gain. For that wretched piece of land, he cast away both peace and salvation. Now he can never find home or harbor, and he prays: “God help me in Jesus’ name.” Those who have been deceitful in life are doomed by heaven. They cannot face their friends, and they wander, broken. He acted without honor and moved the boundary marker—he broke his word and his faith, and now he will never find peace.¹⁷

[VII] Section title: Dei vil ta henne [They want to take her]

[1.] Title: Måneskinsmøyane [the moonlight maidens]
Speaker: Narrator

It is winter again, and the earth sleeps in its winter clothing. The moon shines, and the frozen landscape twinkles like a thousand diamonds. Veslemøy stands gazing at the scene, insensible. She suddenly sees white maidens dancing—it is a dreamlike dance, kept in time by the chime of silver bells. The maidens are made of blue air and wear dresses of moonlight embroidered with stardust. Their hair flows down over their

¹⁷ Folk tradition holds that if a person moves a boundary marker to dishonestly obtain more land, he is cursed eternally after death to struggle and toil without success, trying to move the marker back. Midttun, 175.

backs like a silver-gray stream. They have never seen a warm day. They smile stiffly as they dance, and their features are cold and sleepy. Veslemøy stands there for a long time, bewitched, gazing at the dance. Then the maidens bow as if in greeting and disappear in a frosty vapor.

[2.] Title: Heilagbrøt [Sacilege]
Speaker: Narrator

Veslemøy walks, dejected and cold, and thinks of various horrible things. Will she soon go away and live on the island of ghosts and dead men? What do the pale moonlight maidens want with her? She walks in the cold wind but is burning inside, and she feels a painful sting. She walks among the cows and lambs in confusion, forgetting everything.

One Sunday, she goes with her mother to church, hoping that sacred words will ease her discouragement. Mist and moisture drift in from the sea, and the clock sounds, muted by thick fog. She wanders slowly among the graves in the churchyard and sees a bone, which she takes. She clutches it to her breast carefully and with respect. It will drive the evil forces away from her.

[3.] Title: Kravsmannen [The creditor]
Speaker: Narrator

It is night, and Veslemøy lies in bed listening to the strong wind. She freezes and shivers then burns, and she is never able to sleep. As she lies there weary and confused, she hears a loud knock on the outside door. She gets up and looks around, calling: "are people out in this weather?" She gets no answer. Three times she gets up, but she never sees anyone. As her anxiety rises, she hides herself under the bed covers and recites the Lord's Prayer three times.

As she lies there bathed in sweat, a ghost rises up out of the floor. He stands there staring, then hobbles over to her bed; he is dragging one leg. Veslemøy is paralyzed with fear and cold, and she feels the dead man's power over her. Her throat tightens up. He stretches out his feeble arm, reaches toward her breast and touches the bone she took from the cemetery. He mutters hoarsely: "It is mine! It is mine! You broke the sanctity of the grave and stole my leg bone." He tells her to put the bone back; otherwise he will never be able to rest in peace but will have to wander as a ghost.

He disappears, and Veslemøy slowly comes to her senses. She runs, crying, to Gamlemor and hides herself in the big bed. She must tell her everything. Now she can find peace; now she knows what to do. Soon she falls asleep.

[4.] Title: I skodda [In the mist]
Speaker: Narrator

Veslemøy stands in front of the window watching the rain. She has a mark on her breast from the dead man's grasp. Once again, her terrible soul angst rises, and she pulls on her church clothes. She wraps the bone in a linen cloth and hurries through mist and wind to the churchyard. There she digs a safe nest for the bone, but when she turns and reaches for the bone, it has disappeared. She stands there bewildered, searches and prays, but the bone and the cloth are gone. She grows wild with fear, searching and digging until her fingers bleed under the nails. Then she hears a rustle in the corner of the churchyard, and she sees the gray elf shaking with laughter. "Is this what you want?" he laughs. "Yesterday you forgot my milk."¹⁸ He runs away, and the wind howls. She stands alone in confused terror. From the earth she hears: "come, bring my bone." She does not know what to do, and it is growing dark. An arm

¹⁸ See the poem entitled "Kvelding" (Evening), p. 20, and the accompanying footnote.

reaches out from the ground, and Veslemøy screams with fear and runs away.

[5.] Title: Veslemøy sjuk [Veslemøy [is] sick]
Speaker: Narrator, Gamlemor

In this poem, Veslemøy is referred to for the first time by her given name, Gislaug.

Veslemøy has been in bed with a fever for many days and nights. Gamlemor takes care of her the best she can. She cries quietly and offers a prayer. Gamlemor begs God not to take Gislaug from her, as she is the only one left. Her son, who really was not very industrious, went to sea. Her oldest daughter went to the city and is now a prostitute. Her other daughter, Lisabet,¹⁹ died, and it nearly broke her heart. She has no more children left, and she asks God to be merciful and let her and Gislaug stay together in peace until she, herself, returns to heaven.

Despite Gamlemor's pleas, Veslemøy lies delirious, lamenting and moaning in pain. She struggles against ghosts and illusions and mumbles about moon maidens.²⁰

[6.] Title: Snøstorm [Snowstorm]
Speaker: Narrator

There is a heavy, rumbling noise outside—thick darkness and heavy snow. Loose powers throng the earth, and the storm surges, closing all the roads and pathways. Wolves howl on the rocky slope with blood in their mouths, and a water sprite lies in wait under the ice. A pale sea spirit bends in the sea spray, mocking, shouting, and laughing coldly. Now he will get everything. He will cover the seashores with corpses.

¹⁹ Lisabet is the sister that appeared to Veslemøy in a vision. See the poem, "Fyrivarsl" (Forewarning), p. 22.

²⁰ These are the maidens that she saw dancing in the snow and has been worrying about since she first saw them.

Heaven, hills, and the gray knolls all disappear in mist. The mountains rumble and water boils up against the reef. The loose powers will destroy the earth, all creeping things retreat. Will life be extinguished and die?

Veslemøy lies trembling and cries out in pain, gazing at the gray window. She sees terrible giants tumbling out of the mist, and she shudders. They stagger around like shadows, their heads veiled by clouds. They will combine heaven and sea and everything into mire. One stands in the abyss of the sea churning it up from the bottom. Another is in the north, blowing like a bellows with icy gusts—such a gaping mouth has never before been seen. Another stands in the far northwest, pulling in heavy clouds, and a giantess does her best to blow a snowdrift.

At “Skara hollow”²¹ where a hideous dance took place at Yule, twelve troll women chant in a row. They are trying to extinguish the sun. If they succeed, the giants will win, all life will be snuffed out, and everything will become ice-bound.

But the sun shines from above the clouds. Veslemøy believes she can go on. The trolls do not succeed despite all their fussing and terrible chants—but they can never seem to learn.

[7.] Title: Draken [the Dragon]
Speaker: Narrator

“Saintly” Per Aase loves wealth; he owns farms and land all over, but there is one spot he has not been able to obtain. The land that Gamlemor owns is such a nice little parcel, and he has had his eye on it for a long time. Now he can count just about everything as his own; he helped the widow [Gamlemor] many times by lending her

²¹ Skara seems to be a geographic name, but it is unclear whether there is an actual “Skare” in the Jæren district or whether it is fictional. The word is used throughout *Haugtussa* in connection with places, such as Skare-hollow, Skare-ridge, Skare-mountain, and so forth.

money after her husband died. The interest has accumulated, and now, as he had hoped, she will be forced to sell the farm at auction in the spring, and he will buy the property. He sits there, smug and immovable, as he demands the entire debt from Gamlemor, saying: "I cannot cover you any longer." Gamlemor does not know what to do, or what will become of her and Veslemøy when they are driven off their land. Suddenly she is startled, and she stops her cries. Veslemøy lies like a corpse on the bed, the color drained from her face, and she is staring at something. Gamlemor turns to the creditor and says: "you can take both the house and land; go ahead—with our lives on your conscience!"

Per's face turns gray and he asks: "what is it—what is she staring at? She sees something! Oh, I am afraid!" Gamlemor turns to Veslemøy saying: "my poor child, be calm! We will have enough to eat after all. I will take care of things." But Veslemøy gasps: "See the dragon—see the dragon with his gaping mouth and a crest of fire from head to tail—Oh Father...Jesus...who defeated the devil..." Per grabs for his silver cane and hat and dives for the door in a frenzy.

[8.] Title: Hjelpi [Help]
Speaker: Narrator

The nights are so hard and painful; that is when the cold dead men come out of the graveyard and encircle her. They wave their arms and strike the air with their fists. Their mouths gape open showing their cracked jawbones and sparse teeth and they cry: "You stole the dead man's bone...you used the dead man's bone... you disturbed the peace of the dead..." Veslemøy flails about in choked fear, squirming and lamenting; Gamlemor can find no peace in her heart because of all these dark thoughts. She sends a message to the priest. He can defeat the evil powers with his strong, holy words.

The priest stands before the bed; he knows these evil powers well, and anger burns in his heart. He reads from the holy book prayers and powerful oaths. There is a loud noise in the house. Gamlemor cries tears of joy; she knows the evil has retreated. Veslemøy opens her blue eyes, and they shine so beautifully. Then the priest blesses her with his white hands; it does the heart good. “The Lord bless and protect you,” he prays so beautifully. “May he make his face shine upon you and give you peace!” The priest turns to Gamlemor and tells her he believes everything will be fine now. Then he rides away. Veslemøy feels secure and at peace. God bless that priest! He defeated the evil powers.

[VIII] Section title: Det vårer [Spring comes]

In this section, it is clear that Veslemøy has been released, for the time being, from the dark powers that have bound and terrified her. The coming of spring signals not only the end of winter’s darkness, but also an end to the darkness of the underworld that nearly destroyed Veslemøy. Just as spring is temporary, however, Veslemøy’s relief is also fleeting.

The two poems in this section are both lyric poems, but they are important to the story in that they show how Veslemøy has recovered from her ordeal.

[1.] Title: Mot soleglad [At Sunset]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This poem is a lyric that praises nature and the sea. Veslemøy sings of a fairyland off in the horizon. She has often seen it wrapped in ocean mist—a lovely, hallowed, unattainable home.

The majestic mountain peaks sleep and dream, but at sunset they ignite. When the day sinks like fire and blood in the blue moor, it flames up and glows in fairytale splendor. Then the flame dies like an extinguished ember, and the land lies in a peaceful evening blue. Veslemøy often longs for that fairyland which reveals itself when the sun goes down.

- [2.] Title: Vårdag [Spring day]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy sings: “Oh, what a perfect, clear sky! I am so blessed, now it is spring!” She notices the beautiful mountains, the clean air, and the sunshine that bathes the earth. She hears birdsong and watches the birds playing in the trees and the farmyard. The river runs quietly and envelops her like a flood of warmth. There is also the motion of waves from the sea. The leaves of grain are sprouting, and the buds are swelling; such a sweet savor is awakening. She is blessed to be so young.

[IX] Section title: Sùmar i fjellet [Summer on the mountain]

- [1.] Title: På fjellveg [on the mountain path]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This poem indicates that, although the priest has supposedly defeated the evil forces that overpowered Veslemøy, her struggle against darkness is not over. There are no references to specific otherworldly creatures in this poem, but her apprehension is palpable.

Veslemøy feels choked with fear and confined as she walks on the mountain. Her chest is tight, and she can hardly breathe. It seems as if the dark powers are trying to take her again, it is as if the mountain winds want to engulf her. There is neither space nor air, but there are muffled echoes coming up from the canyons and crevices. She looks around in alarm; it is so dark and desolate and still. She feels as if she is buried.

- [2.] Title: Den snilde guten [The nice boy]
Speaker: Narrator

This poem describes Veslemøy’s first encounter with the young man, Jon. The meter of

the poem, six-line iambic pentameter, appears here for the first time in the poem cycle.²² Only five of the *Haugtussa* poems employ this meter, and each of them is about the relationship between Veslemøy and Jon. Grieg began a sketch using this poem, but he did not complete the song.

Jon is the oldest son of Aamund, who lives up in Skare quarry. He has been shepherding until now, but he is grown and will soon leave. He has a round face, thick, light-colored hair, a faint bit of hair on his upper lip and white teeth. He is high-spirited, and he sings and whistles as he hops effortlessly over stones and logs. He will stay for the first week to show Veslemøy the paths and boundaries so that she can become familiar with this wild, uninhabited country. She must also get to know the animals and let them become familiar with her.

Jon is somewhere between boyhood and manhood, and he is smart and confident. He tells her all about each of the animals, but especially “Dolly,” the bell cow. Veslemøy feels so free and happy as she becomes acquainted and chats comfortably with him. He is not like those awful boys in town that have a kind of cold sneer. He addresses her plainly and politely, calling her by her name. He obviously does not know about the “Haugtussa” nickname.

He shows her every hill and valley and tells her stories about the land. She asks, half in jest, if there are trolls here. “Oh sure,” he answers, with no hint of sarcasm in his voice. He takes a book from his coat pocket and tells her that more than one man has seen trolls—it is written in the book.²³ Veslemøy can hardly contain her happiness. She knows today that a young man can, indeed, be a friend. Jon reads from the book about

²² Iambic pentameter is not a traditional Norwegian folk verse form. In *Norsk VersLære* [Norwegian Verse Theory], Hallvard Lie writes: “Iambic pentameter was, for all practical purposes, unknown in Nordic poetry before the middle of the 1700s.” [Den jambiske 5-takter var praktisk talt ukjent i Nordisk diktning før midten av 1700-tallet.] (Oslo: Universitetsforlag, 1967), 639.

²³ The book referred to is, most likely, *Norske Sagn* [Norwegian Legends] by Andreas Faye, first published in 1833. The book deals primarily with the “underworld,” and most of the creatures from *Haugtussa* are mentioned there. See Midttun, 178.

water sprites and trolls and says: “these cannot just be poems.” The two laugh and smile, they wander on the mountain and share their lunch. Jon sits and sits and completely forgets to leave. Veslemøy tells him she has the gift of second sight and that, if he will keep her confidence, she will tell him about it. He extends his hand with respect and listens as if bewitched while she tells him everything.

Finally evening comes, and they must get to their duties. Jon says goodbye to the animals for the last time and caresses the sweet “Dolly.” Then he must leave, and Veslemøy stands there alone, but she loves Dolly from that moment forward.

[3.] Title: På Gjøtlemberg-nut [On Gjøtlem Mountain Peak]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This lyric poem is a vivid description, through Veslemøy’s eyes, of the wild and rocky mountain where she is to stay with the animals. In this poem, as in “På fjellveg,” [On the mountain path] we see again how fearful Veslemøy is of the dark powers of the trolls and otherworldly creatures that inhabit the land.

Veslemøy describes the terrain as the wildest jumble of rocks and stones. She describes boulders, piles of stone and rocky slopes. Thankfully, she can turn and see the ocean. She asks a blessing on the sea and all the sailors and vessels on the water. Returning then to thoughts of the mountain, she muses that it looks as if a mob of plundering trolls had flung rocks and stones in every direction. They must have fought with all their might against various gods and strong youths, falling with crashing sounds and breaking the mountain into pieces.

Unearthly creatures also dominate the water. Though it may appear calm, there is a gaping chasm under the surface of the dark water, and it is much deeper than it looks—Veslemøy describes it as having a “false bottom.” When the rain falls quietly during the dark night, the water sprite drifts along on the water’s surface between the desolate mountains. He will howl terribly when someone is about to drown.

In the last verse of the poem, Veslemøy exclaims: “Oh, what a frightening, rocky slope of gray stones! It wants to bind me with the trolls’ powers. But thankfully, when I turn right around, I can find the ocean.”

[4.] Title: «Dokka» [“Dolly”]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This is one of the five poems in *Haugtussa* that employ iambic pentameter. The structure of this poem is, however, slightly different from the other four poems in that it contains eight lines in a single stanza. The other poems with the meter have six-line stanza. The short lyric reveals the tender feelings Veslemøy is beginning to have for Jon.

Veslemøy admits that she is occupied with thoughts of Jon. She speaks to “Dolly,” the bell cow, who comes and snuggles up to her when tears come—she [Dolly] has such a good, kind temperament. Dolly is the only one who follows her on the mountainside, so at least she is not completely alone. Then she asks Dolly “tell me, do you think there is hope... can you believe I am thinking about Jon?”

[5.] Title: Veslemøy lengtar [Veslemøy [is] longing]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This poem is a tender expression from Veslemøy, and it conveys the love she and her mother have for one another. Grieg composed a song using this text. He did not include it in Op. 67, but the song is complete, and it is printed in the GGA as 152j.

Veslemøy is homesick and thinking about her mother. She can imagine what Gamlemor is doing and what she is thinking about. First, Veslemøy sees her working in her kitchen, and she wishes she could be the cat who gets to snuggle up to her mother like a child. Next she imagines her mother preparing food for the hay mowers. She wishes she could be in the place of Breitle-Brit, the girl who spreads the hay out to dry and who gets to chatter with Veslemøy’s mother during the rest breaks. Then she

pictures her mother out in the farmyard and wants to be the sparrow that hops about happily at her feet. She even imagines that it would be nice if she could be the cool sea breeze that blows around her mother. Gamlemor is old and has arthritis that is made worse when the cold wind blows through the house, but if Veslemøy were that old door, she would stay tightly closed and shelter her well.

Veslemøy knows what her mother thinks about as she bends works at the hearth. Though exhausted, Gamlemor sometimes forgets her troubles as she stares up at the mountain and wonders how Veslemøy is.

Veslemøy then speaks to her mother as if she can hear her. She says: “Oh if you knew how I am longing here, mother!” She had grown to love the brown heath at home, and she cries herself to sleep every night. Everything is so new and unfamiliar and hard. It is as if there are cold eyes staring at her. There is no one that she can believe in up there, and there is no one like her mother. Time seems to stand still, and she counts every hour, every minute. She wishes she could leap with one giant stride and sit for just a short time with her mother.

[6.] Title: Blåbær-lid [Blueberry slope]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This poem is the first one from this section (“Summer on the Mountain”) in which Veslemøy is alone but still happy. Except for the week that Jon spent with her (see “Den snilde guten”), she has been frightened, unhappy, and homesick. Certainly her growing affection for Jon is part of the reason that she now begins to find beauty on the wild, rock-strewn mountain. Grieg set this poem and included all but the second stanza in the song. It is the third song of the cycle, Op. 67.

Veslemøy comes upon a large patch of blueberries and exclaims that she has never seen such beautiful berries. There is something good to be found on the mountain after all. She will rest here and eat until she is full. She could, in fact, stay for

days. It is almost like being in the king's palace, and these berries are as good as the finest wine—so sweet and delicious.

In the next several verses, Veslemøy imagines how she will react if different animals come upon the blueberries. If the big bear comes, she will simply move aside and let him eat all he wants; she would not dare say a word. If the red fox came, though, she would beat him dead, and she would not care even if he were the Pope's own brother. He steals both goats and lambs, yet he acts as if he is so refined and well mannered, and he has no shame. If the ugly, greedy wolf came, she would get a club from a birch tree and give him a good wallop on the snout. He has killed her mother's sheep and lambs so many times. But if that nice boy from Skare quarry came, he would get one on the snout too—but in an entirely different way. Now Veslemøy pulls herself out of her reverie, exclaiming: "Oh nonsense, what am I thinking?!" She must get back to work and look after her animals.

[7.] Title: Møte [Meeting]
English song title: "The Tryst"
Speaker: Narrator

This poem is one of the most important in the verse novel. It is, in fact the climax of the entire narrative. In "Møte," Veslemøy and Jon realize their feelings for one another and kiss for the first time. The speaker is the narrator, but he/she is privy to Veslemøy's thoughts, and the narration is, therefore, frequently from Veslemøy's perspective. The poem is in six-line iambic pentameter—the meter Garborg uses exclusively for narrating the relationship between Veslemøy and Jon. Grieg's setting of this poem is number four of Op. 67. He set only the first, second and last verses, however, so a lot of details are missing from the song.

Veslemøy sits waiting for Jon on a Sunday. Her thoughts are sweet, like an awakening, gentle dream, and her heart beats heavily. From over the mountain peak, Jon appears like a vision. Veslemøy feels dazed and confused—she wants to hide, but she cannot; she is bewitched. The two take each other by the hand and stand there, not

knowing what to do or say. Veslemøy finally says: “you sweet thing...you are so tall!”

They are both a little embarrassed. They laugh and make small talk, but they feel awkward. Still, despite all this, it is wonderful being together. Veslemøy notices that when she is with Jon, she is not troubled by her “gift” of second sight. She can, in fact, hardly remember all her terrible visions. She says, partly to Jon, partly as a plea: “Let the trolls go on their way. Today I would rather listen to you.” Jon tells her about Skare quarry, where he grew up. They talk about the animals, walk along the shore, and catch fish. They cook and eat the fish and the food that Jon brought with him. It is wonderful to be together—if only there was not this awkwardness. Neither is as comfortable as last time they were together. If it were not for that, this would be so nice.

Suddenly there is the sound of distant thunder rumbling in the mountains. It will start to rain soon, and they must find shelter. They find a protected cave and crawl into the tiny space.

As evening approaches, each feels more and more drawn to the other. Suddenly Jon embraces Veslemøy, and their trembling lips come together. Everything else fades away, and there in the warm evening, Veslemøy, in passionate bliss, falls asleep in his arms.

[8.] Title: Killingdans [Kidlings’ dance]
Speaker: unidentified

Grieg set the poem, Killingdans, and it appears in Op. 67 as the sixth song of the cycle. Though the speaker is unidentified, it is reasonable to assume that Veslemøy is singing about her animals—as if she were one of them—while she watches them play.

This amusing poem expresses springtime exuberance. It uses many nonsense, rhyming words, but the imagery is unambiguous. The words evoke the picture of

young goats hopping playfully, chasing each other, and basking in the sun. The mood is joyful and high-spirited, and the enthusiasm is contagious.

[9.] Title: Elsk [Love]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Grieg also set this poem, and it, together with “Møte” forms the climax of the song cycle. It is the fifth song in Op. 67. This poem is in “nystev” meter.²⁴ The literal translation of “nystev” is “new verse.” There is also a form known as “gamlestev” [old verse]. The two forms probably existed simultaneously, but “gamlestev” eventually gave way to “nystev.” The verse form is characterized by four-line stanzas with rhyming couplets—the first two lines usually have feminine endings while the last two have masculine endings. It is interesting that Garborg chose “nystev” meter for this poem rather than six-line iambic pentameter, the meter used most often in poems about Veslemøy and Jon. This particular verse form, “nystev,” frequently set erotic poems, however, and while this poem is not necessarily erotic, Veslemøy’s love for Jon, as expressed here, is passionate and wild. In this poem, we see clearly how deep Veslemøy’s feelings are for Jon.

Veslemøy begins: “That reckless boy has bewitched my soul; I am captive like a bird in a snare....” She wishes that he would bind her with cords of fire and draw her to him so that the rest of the world would just fade away. If she knew her troll spells, she would sing a chant that would make her grow inside him so she could be with him always. She then speaks to Jon as if he were present saying: “You who abide in my heart, you have gotten power over all my memories; every little thought that comes forth whispers only of you.” She thinks of him all the day long, and as twilight falls, she wonders if he is thinking of her. She imagines she sees him, first in the wind, then the rain. She wishes time would pass more quickly, but she will sing and be happy because on Sunday, he is coming back again.

²⁴ “Elsk is one of five poems written in “nystev” meter; the others are “I Omskraai,” “Den som fekk gløyme,” “Vinter-Storm,” and “Uro.” Each of these poems addresses the subject of love in some way, although most are tragic.

[10.] Title: Skog-glad [Forest joy]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Grieg began a sketch using this poem, but he completed only four bars.

Veslemøy addresses a hare in this poem. He is elegant in his silky, brown summer coat, but he is much too skittish, bounding from place to place, and then diving into his hole. She suggests that they enjoy the summer day together, playing for a while, and then being lazy. He is too frail to be her beau, but she will be happy if they can always be friends.

[11.] Title: Eit spørsmål [A question]
Speaker: Narrator

Here is a comical conversation between an old man and his wife about whether or not there are really trolls.

The old man contends that only a fool would believe all the talk about trolls. If there really were such a mischievous bunch with as much power as people say, the world would not stand a chance. The trolls would have gotten power over the whole earth with all their spells and witchcraft. His wife responds with laughter and says, tongue in cheek, that men are so smart, but they are always getting into trouble. She contends that the trolls are too busy with their own work to be of any concern to people, no matter how many of them there are. The trolls simply do not pay any attention to people, but it is foolish to think they are not there.

[12.] Title: Ku-lokk [Cow call]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Grieg set this song, but he did not include it in the published cycle. It is printed in the GGA as EG 152L. A Ku-lokk is a song sung by a shepherd or shepherdess to call in the animals. In this particular ku-lokk, Veslemøy seems to be addressing or referring only to Dolly, the bell cow. Each person had his or her own unique song, and the animals would recognize the song and come when their caretaker sang it. In this Ku-lokk,

Veslemøy addresses a single cow, and we may assume that she sings to “Dolly,” the bell cow.

Veslemøy’s song is a narration of the day—she sings about where they will go and where they will rest. She will chase away the snakes and insects that bite, and they will be content on the mountain. When they return in the fall to the village, the regal animal will impress the people.

[13.] Title: Vond dag [Hurtful day]
Speaker: Narrator

This poem is another one of the most important in the verse-novel, and it is closely connected to the climactic poem, “Møte.” “Vond dag” also employs iambic pentameter. Grieg set this poem, and it is song number seven of Op. 67; he emphasizes the interrelationship between this poem and “Møte” by using the same rhythmic figures in both songs.

In this poem, as in “Møte,” Veslemøy sits waiting on the mountain for Jon on a Sunday. She counts the days and hours, but on this second Sunday, Jon does not come as agreed. He had promised faithfully that they would meet even if it were raining stones. As the day comes and goes with rain and wind, Veslemøy sits alone, crying under a bush. She knows that she can never forsake Jon and that she will not be able to recover if she loses him. Her heart is heavy, and she cannot restrain her tears.

There is now a temporal jump from the summer day that Veslemøy sits waiting for Jon to an autumn evening when she returns home from her summer on the mountain. This day has also been rainy, and she has had to trudge through near flood conditions to get home. She is weary and anxious and only wants to crawl into bed, but just at that moment “the old man” (not identified by name) comes home from the church, and he says he has seen Jon there with “that haughty rich girl.” Now Veslemøy must hear more than she wants to about Jon—he apparently broke his promise to her

with little thought and has been flirting with all the stylish girls. Lately he has been courting the large, self-important, rich girl from the township of Aas, who is the most marriageable young woman in the district. She has pursued him in front of everyone, and now it seems she has won him—none of the other girls are even paying attention to Jon now.

The last stanza uses vivid imagery to depict Veslemøy's suffering: "Like a bird wounded under her warm wing / Blood drips like the hot tear, / She drags herself, sick and trembling, into bed / and writhes through the long night in painful weeping. / It tears in the heart and it burns on the cheek. / Now she must die; she has lost her boy."

[14.] Title: Ved Gjætle-bekken [At Gjætle Brook]
English song title: "At the Brook"
Speaker: Part one: Veslemøy; Part two: Narrator; Part three: a Hulder

Grieg set part one of this poem, and it is the eighth and last song of Op. 67. It is also the latest poem in Garborg's cycle that Grieg sketched; he, apparently, did not plan to include any settings of later poems.

This poem, in three parts, is the concluding poem of the section, "Sùmar i fjellet" [Summer on the mountain]. The first part is a song by Veslemøy, addressed to a brook where she comes to rest. In the first three stanzas, Veslemøy sings of the rippling, peaceful brook that wanders gently through the trees, moss, and flowers. She concludes the verses with: "Oh, here I will rest; Oh here I will dream; O here I will remember." The melancholy mood grows heavier in the third stanza, and then in the fourth stanza, Veslemøy asks the brook: "Do you believe you have ever seen anyone as lonely as I?" She concludes the stanza with: "Oh, here I will forget." Finally, Veslemøy implores: "Oh do not sing about what I am thinking. Oh, let me sleep."

The next part of the poem is a direct quote from an earlier section of *Haugtussa*. It first appeared in the long poem "Laget," and it seemed out of place there. Here, it seems

much more appropriate for the situation, and with hindsight, we understand that, in its first appearance, this stanza was a foreshadowing of sorrowful things to come.

“Softly as with tears/ the harp song sounds / singing lightly and softly / like summer wind / rocks gently / flows strong and free / floats away in dream and stillness / awakens meekly / surges forth with power / ignites into fire / like the roar of the sea / sweetly as in sleep / a beautiful melody arises / warm love, with a sorrowful, gentle song....”

The last part of the poem is sung to Veslemøy by a hulder. The first stanza is a description of the woman, who has dark, flowing hair, full breasts, and is adorned with silver. The stanzas that follow are in six-line iambic pentameter, and there is a clear interrelationship between these stanzas and the other poems of the same meter. The hulder begins, “Do not cry because your love has forsaken you; and do not continue with these painful thoughts.” The second line reminds the reader immediately of the poem, “Møte.” In that poem, Veslemøy entertains sweet thoughts, but in this poem, she experiences painful thoughts. The hulder tells Veslemøy that Jon remembers her, even now, and deeply regrets his weakness.

In the third stanza, the hulder tells Veslemøy that there is someone who understands her pain and longing—a fair one who cries for her and whose music Veslemøy hears. It is the hulder’s brother, the mountain ogre who has tried to entice Veslemøy from the beginning. He and the other unseen beings will lighten Veslemøy’s spirits, and she will behold things that no one else has. The hulder then fades away, and Veslemøy begins to come out of her dreamlike state. She is spellbound, having forgotten what she was thinking of before.

[X] **Section title: På Skare-kula [At Skare hollow]**

Garborg alludes in this section to some of the political issues that angered him, including the union with Sweden. He felt betrayed by certain men whom he once considered political allies but who had changed their positions. Critics have, from the time *Haugtussa* was first published, viewed this section, "På Skare-kula," as a societal satire.²⁵ It is the darkest, most frightening section of the entire cycle, and the setting is a meeting of the devil and his followers for a kind of "witches' sabbath." We may assume that Veslemøy is a witness to all of the goings on in Skare hollow although she is not mentioned until near the end of the section.

[1.] Title: Det vaknar [Awakening]
Speaker: Narrator

The meter and rhyme scheme in this poem are used several times throughout the section. The meter is the same as that of a well-known Norse comic ballad, "Ramnarbrudlaupet i Kråkelund" [The Raven's Wedding in Kråkelund], that dates back to at least the seventeenth century and is found in many variants.

The poem is divided into two sections, the first of which is a description of a bleak winter night. All dwellers of the underworld will gather in a hall that has been decorated and prepared for the occasion.

In the second part of the poem the herald's trumpet sounds as the devil enters. All types of ghosts, trolls and other evil creatures follow.

[2.] Title: Dei hyller sin herre [They hail their master]
Speaker: All the evil forces sing together

This poem is a dark parody of the "Kongesang" [song for the King], titled: "Gud sign vår konge god" [God bless our good king]. Norwegians sing this song to the same melody as for "God Save the King" or "My Country, 'Tis of Thee." The poem is in the same meter as the "Kongesang," and it is, as the title makes clear, a song of praise to the lord of the underworld.

²⁵ See Midttun, 181-2.

[3.] Title: Prøve [Test]
Speaker: Narrator

The same meter is used here as in “Awakening.” Here, the new recruits come before the devil and petition to join the flock. Garborg borrows from the Christian idea of a “Book of Life.”

The devil sits writing with blood in his book, which is a record of the living and the dead. The last to come in are the petitioners who wish to join the flock. They line up as if at confirmation, and the devil asks them, one by one, if they wish to join the flock. Each answers “yes,” but they must pass a test before they are admitted.

[4.] Title: Svarte-katekisma [Black Catechism]
Speaker: The devil and his prospective subjects

As one would expect in a catechism, the student is questioned by the devil about the requirements of discipleship.

Some of the questions and answers of the black catechism are:

The first requirement is?
Appear like everyone else in all your conduct.

The second if you can?
Curse in your heart God and man.

Do you know my third profession?
Go to church each Sunday.

What do you believe?
I believe that evil will always win in the end.

What do you pray for?
That never, ever will evil become good.

At the end of each catechism, the devil lifts his claw and swears an oath, accepting the petitioner into the flock. The last two stanzas again employ the “Awakening” meter. The catechism is finished and the new candidates are accepted. The last two stanzas read: “The prospective troll bows the knee / A shout of joy is

raised / As strong as a windstorm through the old trees. / Up from the whole
congregation comes the cry / He has the faith! He is like us! / Into the flock! // The
devil lifts his four-fingered claw / Swears by the great nameless one²⁶ / From this night
you receive of my power / Here you have sworn it! / Now I take you for all your life /
Into the flock!"

[5.] Title: Stjernefall [Star fall]
Speaker: Narrator and various evil creatures.

The fictional figures in this poem are, according to Olav Midttun, meant to represent political ideologies, movements and opinions that Garborg opposed. Some critics believed that the "Skare-kula" section of *Haugtussa*, and this poem in particular, went too far away from the storyline. Garborg did, in fact, remove certain verses from this poem in some later editions.²⁷ Current editions reflect those deletions. The first stanza and the last three stanzas of this poem also use the "Awakening" meter.

Once the newcomers are finished with their catechism, there is a long procession of old followers who come to give a report of their evil deeds. All manner of creatures, trolls, and wicked people file by in a long procession. They are individually identified by sub-titles such as "old Gypsy woman," "naked troll," "troll with a hatchet," and "preachers" to name a few. Each gives his or her report to the lord of the underworld. At the end of this very long report, the delighted devil praises his servants for their excellent work.

[6.] Title: Ein sökjar [An applicant]
Speaker: Narrator and a down-trodden king

The applicant may refer to King Oskar II of Sweden. His actions in the union conflict between Norway and Sweden were, apparently, suspicious.²⁸ The reference to Oskar, however, is not certain or explicit.

²⁶ The devil swears by God, but according to old belief, the devil could not speak the name of God out loud. Midttun, 183.

²⁷ Ibid., 183-4.

²⁸ Ibid., 185.

A king comes before the devil. He wears a gold crown, but he has a cloth wrapped around his forehead, and his robe is badly soiled. He confesses that he has betrayed those whom he was sworn to protect, and that now he wears the mark of a traitor on his forehead. He asks the devil to remove the mark so he can again lift his head without shame. The devil writes the king's name in his book, kisses him, and says that he is now entered in the book along with Judas. The devil cannot, however, do anything to remove the traitor's mark—it will remain even in the flames of hell.

[7.] Title: Høg gjest [Honored guest]
Speaker: Narrator, death, and the devil

The “Awakening” meter appears once again in this poem—employed in the stanzas in which the speaker is the narrator or the devil. The stanzas in which death is the speaker do not follow the same meter or rhyme scheme, but are in an ancient verse form called *fornyrðislag*. In this verse form, each line has large spaces that divide the text into half lines, and the half line is the basic metric unit. *Fornyrðislag* is the verse form employed in the Old Norse Poetic Edda.

Death is depicted as a skeleton in a long, black cloak with a sickle at his side. He coughs and sputters when he speaks. Death bows to the devil, says he is glad to be there, and asks for a seat, which the devil gladly offers. Death is tired of working; he wants to take a break and dance the dance of death. The devil indulges him and joins in the dance.

[8.] Title: Trolldans [Troll dance]
Speaker: Narrator, an old troll woman, Veslemøy's hopeful troll suitor, Veslemøy

Here is the first poem in this section in which Veslemøy is mentioned. It is rather long and convoluted, and it is divided into three sections.

The first segment begins with a description of the noise and the awful racket of the troll dance. It is heard throughout the mountain—there are crashes and shrieks as

well as the screechy, raspy sound of an old troll woman's song. The next several stanzas comprise a song about a woman who, unhappy in her marriage, became both vulgar and violent. She killed her husband's children and fed them to him. Still unhappy, she finally locked her husband in the cellar and set it on fire. As he burned, she sang an invitation to any trolls who might be interested in her—she was now free.

The next section is Veslemøy's reaction to what she has seen and heard. "She has never heard such an ugly song, but the trolls all laugh and dance."²⁹

The last section is a dialog between Veslemøy and the blue mountain ogre who has been trying to seduce her. The first stanza is almost an exact repeat of the stanza in the poem "Laget" [The Party] where the mountain ogre appears to Veslemøy for the first time at a Christmas party. Here, it is as if the troll picks up where he left off at the party.

The troll sings detailed descriptions of their splendid life together. She will sit and sing and spin on a silver spinning wheel, and troll maidens will tend to her every want and need.

Veslemøy breaks in and exclaims that the Blue-hill with its glimmering halls holds no allure for her. She wishes to see her fair one, Jon. She sings to Jon in the same meter and rhyme scheme as the troll sang to her: "Oh you, my love / in you I will trust / with you I will always dwell." The troll tells Veslemøy that he can show Jon to her—she must simply look over her shoulder. There she will see Jon in his loft with his new girl. They are happy together, Jon has forgotten her, and now he ridicules "Haugtussa."

Veslemøy stands like a stone in the cold dawn, and her heart turns icy. She remembers everything now, and her world fades away. She turns to the troll and says he can have her. The mountain ogre leaps for joy, praising his good luck. He tells

²⁹ Midttun explains that what Veslemøy has just witnessed is probably a warning to her of what could happen if she stays with the trolls in the Blue-hill. See *Ibid.*, 185.

Veslemøy: “But now you must forget and be glad! / Follow me, and I shall show you / my great kingdom.” He says he will also introduce her to wise old Gumle.³⁰

[9.] Title: Bergtroll [Mountain troll]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy, the mountain ogre, various troll slaves

Veslemøy and the mountain ogre enter a dark, unpleasant room with low ceilings, frost, and cold gusts that seem to be blowing up from the cellar. In the room are all manner of unkempt, slovenly, ill-mannered trolls. They move about sluggishly, grunt and growl.

Veslemøy exclaims: “What a malicious lie you told, Hill-Man! I think your followers are disgusting!” The mountain ogre replies that these are not his followers but, rather, his slaves. She asks if he has such power that he can enslave others, and he answers that dark ignorance is powerless—he will show Veslemøy that these trolls are ignorant and, therefore, deserve to be enslaved. The ogre tests them with some simple questions such as “why does the farmer plant seeds in the spring?” but none of the trolls are able to answer this or any other question posed to them. One giantess, unable to answer a question, glares maliciously at Veslemøy, grimaces, and bares her teeth.

The ogre, having proved his point to his own satisfaction says to Veslemøy: “Such is the legion of slaves. The giants do not comprehend the questions, and they cannot answer.” He says that it is better to descend into the depths and hear the raging songs and angry words from old Gumle.

³⁰ Used here as a personal pronoun, it means, literally, toothless.

[10.] Title: Gnavlehol [cave of muttering]
Speaker: Narrator, the mountain ogre

Deep inside the mountain is an old hall. Its green copper walls and dome glimmer with water drops. There is the sound of dripping and trickling in the dark corners and the throttled sound of a man-eating serpent that is coiled up asleep. Gumle sits in the darkest, most-hidden corner, and it appears as if he has been there a long time. He looks like a dried tree root with his twisted and gnarled limbs, and there are roots and moss growing on his head.

The mountain ogre calls to Gumle in song asking him to awaken and sing the Gumle-saga—it must not be forgotten. Gumle rouses slowly, grinds into motion, and begins the saga.

[11.] Title: Gumlemål [Gumle's saga]
Speaker: Gumle

This poem is patterned after the ancient Norse sagas such as Eirik's saga, Håkon's saga, and others.³¹ There are similarities between the narrative of this poem and that of the Norse "Voluspá" [creation myth] from the Poetic Edda.

Gumle sings a tale of an ancient time when giants ruled the earthly realm. There were neither moon nor stars; the glaciers were lighted by a gleam from the north, and the valleys slept in quiet.

Then mountains began to crack and break apart, fires broke out, storms arose and thunder rumbled. The giants enjoyed the chaos, and they idled away their days with little care. They were never troubled by sun or pleasant fragrances or the smoke of hearth fires. Day slept the sleep of death. White frost covered the giants' domain, and all was calm. Time stood still and all was quiet.

³¹ See Midttun, 186.

Then, the age of giants was destroyed. Elves and Norse gods appeared, the sun awakened, and day was created. The giants' reign was over—all sank into the underworld. The terrible winter melted with the coming of spring. Water flowed, vegetation grew, and men and women appeared. The sun sank and rose, and now day ruled the earthly realm. This brought strife and unrest. Now everything spiritual grew up while everything of trolls was thrust down.

The magnificent giant hid himself in a mountain crevice and cursed the day. He took advantage of the night to do his work. He stifled the spring with winter gusts and unleashed snowdrifts and terrible storms. Fog, mist, and darkness hid the sun. He thrust the young, green branches down deep into the rocky soil. He tore up roots and brought storms upon the sea.

But the sun burst forth and dispersed the fog. Ice and snow melted, replaced by green grass. Life danced again over all the land. One by one the old clan was destroyed, deathly afraid of the lithe hammer and the white cross. Some of the giants stay in the mountains and curse the day. Others mingle and breed with men or produce offspring with elves. The mountain troll is the clan's chieftain, but there are few left of the old lineage, and they continue to diminish.

Gumle now pleads: "Hear me, young ones / that you learn hate! / The magnificent giant / must have help." He urges them to make alliances with tramps and vagrants, those that practice sorcery, and any others who will help in the cause. "Up!" he cries, "with youthfulness in your blood. Up reckless ones, for the glory of the giant!" The saga ends as Gumle declares that no giant should rest until the sun is torn down and the end of the world finally brings peace back to the realm of giants.

In the darkness, there are snorts, gasping, and strange groaning sounds. There is also scratching, hissing, and clawing. Someone exclaims: "Aha! I smell the blood of a

Christian here!" Veslemøy, bewildered and helpless, makes the sign of the cross. Suddenly she hears the sound of the sea and waterfalls. Day breaks, and she finds herself standing alone under Skare ridge.

[XI] Section title: Den store strid [The great struggle]

[1.] Title: Haust [Autumn]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This lyric poem is in the spirit of a lamentation. Veslemøy is alone and still grieving deeply over Jon's betrayal. In her sorrowful state, she is particularly aware of the signs of autumn—harbingers of ending and death.

Veslemøy begins: "Now the ocean rolls heavily toward the land / with froth and cresting waves / and breaks with a crash on the desolate strand, / where only the wind-troll dwells. / And the storm shrieks with wild terror / over the deep where he pursues / with snow and storm over the reefs / in these dark, autumn days."

She hears confusing, sorrowful, sometimes scornful songs, and cries that seem to warn. They are frightening. The earth shudders in the roar of the sea, and this desolate region freezes. The last wild geese have flown south and all living things retreat into their winter lairs. Leaves fall from their branches, and the flowers that once bloomed wither and die.

Something also dies within her—warm hope is extinguished with salty tears and struggle. She cries: "It dies away, it dies out, / my life and all my dreams, / when love is turned to grief and sorrow / and my boy has forgotten me. // Here it is gloomy, here it is cold, / and I am burdened always; / my defeated dreams took everything from me, / and my heart burns and bleeds. / And the ocean rolls forcefully toward the land, / and the rain drives against the window panes; / there is singing and sighing on the desolate strand / that now everything is over."

[2.] Title: Rådlaus [Bewildered]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy's lament continues, now addressed to Jon, though he is not present.

Veslemøy tells Jon she will never be able to endure without him—everything seems to draw her to him, and she is always thinking of him no matter where she is. She will never be happy again. Veslemøy continues: “Oh my sweet boy, / oh my splendid boy, / for you I would have given my all. / Had you been good to me, / I would have given my blood, / Had I been your wife, / I would have given my life / with you I was free from the tiniest care / —Oh you in whom I believed with all my heart.” She does not know where to go or what to do. Everything has turned to distress and she wants to die. Jon was all she had, and she will never feel gladness again.

[3.] Title: Den som fekk gløyme [The one who could forget]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy talks of how much easier her life would be if she could only forget Jon. As it is, every little thing reminds her of him. She muses: “I would not have to hide my sorrow, / if only I could forget; / I would not wander, sick, / If I could forget that one thing.”

[4.] Title: Kor hev det seg? [How can it be?]
Speaker: Veslemøy

In this poem, Veslemøy looks with perplexity on her present circumstances and the drastic change from the way things once were.

“What has become of Veslemøy now? / I do not know myself. I was not so before. / I felt safe and played and ran / and did not notice how long the day was.”

Veslemøy is now dejected when once she was joyful. Everything seems foreign to her now—her home, the animals, even her own mother. She sits and stares out of the window, despondent. This home, where she was once so happy, is not the same—she can never be happy here again because her soul is in another place.

[5.] Title: Vinterstorm [Winter storm]
Speaker: Veslemøy

Veslemøy welcomes the distraction of a violent storm. It might, at least, take her mind off her sorrows for a while. She says: “Oh let it roar, let it thunder, / let the house shake and the gnomes tremble! / Let everything break that can break! / It deadens the thoughts a little.” If everything crumbled around her, then the world would end, and there would be peace.

[6.] Title: I kyrkja [In church]
Speaker: Veslemøy

This poem is also addressed to Jon although she is not speaking to him—only the hope of him.

Veslemøy sits in church, but she feels out of place, even like a parasite, because she has forgotten the word of God. She would, in fact pile up sin after sin just to be able to get a glimpse of Jon. When she does see him, her blood burns in her breast, and all her hopes are awakened again. But he is gone and everything is destroyed. She is dejected and distraught, and her thoughts wander aimlessly. When she sees the woman who stole Jon from her, she does not even know her own thoughts. Suddenly, Veslemøy realizes, to her surprise, that the service is over, and people are leaving church. Her last thought is: “Oh, deliver us from evil!”

[7.] Title: Ein bêle [A suitor]
Speaker: Narrator, a billy goat, Veslemøy

A mountain billy goat crawls out from under a stone and approaches Veslemøy. He says he has been romping on the mountain for nine hundred years, and he has never seen such a pretty woman, but she is just a shepherdess, not a very becoming vocation. He also comments on her age—she is already eighteen and still unmarried. She had better do something about this soon. The goat knows that the mountain ogre wants her for his wife, but he [the goat] would like to have her for himself. He also says he can do something for her. If she will give him the scarf from around her neck, he will be able to work magic with it, draw out all of her consuming hate, and use it to kill the woman who stole Jon away. Tempted, Veslemøy loosens the scarf and hands it to the goat. He takes it, but he tells her there is a price for such a service. “When the lady from Aas is brought to the cemetery,” he says, Veslemøy must marry him. This should not make her sad, however, because the goat will lavish her with gold and fineries. He tells her further: “You will never marry anyone better / a rich man and dashing, and in the prime of life!” Veslemøy is shocked and repentant. She replies: “I do not want to! No; she shall not die!” Veslemøy utters a prayer, crosses herself, and tells the goat to return the scarf. He disappears, and the scarf is left lying on the ground. Veslemøy shudders at her wicked thought.

[8.] Title: Uro [Unrest]
Speaker: Veslemøy

“What shall become of me when I forget God / and my heart, longing, dreams of love? / What, truly, will become of me / when I have so completely lost myself? / / And never can I regain myself, / and never again can I find myself; / truly all hope and

every avenue is closed; / —would that I might find myself in Thee.”

[9.] Title: Bøn [Prayer]
Speaker: Veslemøy

“Oh help me you who can help! / You see how bitterly I struggle. / My heart,
weary, without hope, / writhes in heavy bonds. / My distress I cannot fully express; /
the evil gained such great power; / it burns like a fire in my breast. // Yes, help me you
who can help! / To you I send my prayer. / You struggled yourself and overcame; /
you know the power of evil. / My distress is great, my struggle is terrible; / be with me
you who wish me well! / Then I know things will change.”

[10.] Title: På vildring [In confusion]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy, a troll witch

This poem begins with a description of nature’s condition and of Veslemøy’s emotional state. As is frequently the case in *Haugtussa*, the conditions of nature and people are intertwined.

Time drags slowly by until it is exhausted; so it is with Veslemøy, who has lost her hope. Winter has engulfed the desolate land; Veslemøy is also desolate—she has lost her faith.

In great turmoil and confusion, Veslemøy wanders off. She finds herself walking toward the moor where an old troll witch dwells. She tells the witch that she is ready to enter her name in the book, but she wants the witch to make a love potion that will turn Jon’s heart. She wants only to possess him for one night, then she will drown herself in the deep pool.

The troll witch begins making the potion, dropping horns, plants and other secret ingredients into the cauldron, and she chants a spell as she mixes the brew. She

takes blood from Veslemøy and adds three drops to the potion,³² then she mixes in some blood from her cat. She finishes the magic chant and proclaims that Jon's heart will turn to Gislaug³³ when he drinks the potion, and the cauldron begins to crackle and sputter. The witch calls upon the devil three times and declares that the two are now harnessed together. As the witch lifts her scorched hand, Veslemøy is overcome with fear, and she grows dizzy. Everything seems to be darting about, twisting, and writhing. Veslemøy does not come to herself until she is far down the mountain, running over stones and hillocks.

[11.] Title: Ho vaknar [She awakens]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy, and Veslemøy's deceased sister

Veslemøy hears something—she is certain it is her mother's whisper. What was she thinking? Where will she go? She can never let her mother see her again. There is nothing left to consider—she must leap into the deep pool and die. She feels shattered by sin and shame.

Then a figure appears, whiter than any snowdrift, clothed in a shining mantle. Veslemøy lets out a cry and sinks to her knees—she recognizes her sister, and she exclaims: "Oh dear sister, blessed maiden! / Oh help! Now I must die; / I gave power to evil. I am encompassed by sin and in Satan's power. / He has so strong a hold on me. / I fell asleep at my watch; / I have sworn the evil pact."

Veslemøy's sister tells her to turn to the one who created the sun—she is not yet completely lost. She must arise, tear herself away, and return the evil potion. She must

³² This part of the story is borrowed from folk legend. In *Scandinavian Folk Legend*, we find the story of a man who received an apple from a girl. "When he cut it open, he found three drops of blood inside. He quickly threw the apple away, because he understood right away that the girl wanted to turn his 'hug' [soul] to her." See Kvideland, 47.

³³ Veslemøy's given name.

learn patience, for she is “chosen for glory.”

The vision vanishes, and Gislaug³⁴ stands alone and weak, but her hope has returned. She has finally overcome the bitter struggle; courage awakens within her tired mind. She will emerge from sin and danger! She recites the Lord’s Prayer aloud, turns around and, though weary, finds her way back to the troll witch. Veslemøy throws open the door and hurls the potion inside saying that she will not accept help from the witch. She is turning away from this path.

[12.] Title: Ei tung stund [A difficult time]
Speaker: Narrator

Winter is finally beginning to draw to a close. Patches of brown are beginning to show through the white on the hills, and the rivers are gushing with water. Driving rain pummels the hills and farms. In the old parlor, Gislaug lies sick in confused sleep. She sleeps to the sound of mournful songs, sung by many voices that seem to be carried in on the wind. She believes, and truly hopes, that the song is her own funeral dirge, and that when the bridegroom rides by with his false wife, they will find the black coffin with Gislaug lying, cold and stiff, inside. But sleep fortifies young people, just as night does the delicate bud. When the boy rides to the church, Gislaug arises. She sits by the road and looks northward—when the bridal procession passes by, the sun breaks through the clouds.

Gislaug returns to her bed, miserable and weak. Hot tears burn as they run down her pale cheeks. She struggles day and night, finding no rest, and she cries bitterly because she must continue to live.

Hail, icy rain, and snowdrifts cover houses and farms. This is the gloomy late

³⁴ Garborg alternates, in the next few poems, between the given name, Gislaug and the nickname, Veslemøy. This prose summary follows the author’s usage.

winter—a wretched time of year with shifting weather before spring finally takes hold.

[13.] Title: I Blåhaug [In the Blue-hill]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy, maidens in white linen

The air is wet and heavy with fog, and moisture drips from branches and bushes. Buildings and steeples are swallowed up in the mist, covered by a sea of fog, as if everything lies on the bottom of the ocean.

Out in a dark field of heather, Veslemøy gathers her sheep. There is the sound of waves crashing, the buzz of voices, and heavy thoughts. In the fog, Veslemøy thinks she hears distant echoes and the murmur of rivers. The wilderness seems to be alive with trolls and elves. Water sprites and trolls approach. As Veslemøy wanders, consumed by painful memories, she finds herself encircled by dancing elves.

She lifts her eyes cautiously and sees that she is on the grounds of a regal palace. All is still in the garden, and everything shines in moonlight. The palace is ornamented with gold and silver, and the tower reaches to the sky. As she stands there, bewitched, she notices rows of courtiers and beautiful maidens in white linen with gold and silver adornments. Veslemøy hears the tinkle of bells; the sound is so lovely that she begins to cry. Next a wild dance commences, and then, finally, a happy, gentle melody. She feels she has never been so happy in all her life. The maidens approach her and tell her that here she can always be happy. They turn her attention to the king; it is the blue mountain ogre. His crown and staff glow like fire, and he is magnificent and handsome. Veslemøy desires all this greatness for herself. “Never was she so ecstatic and happy; / when the maidens asked, she answered yes. // It is the maidens in white linen; / they hand her a goblet brimming with wine.” They tell her: “Drink, and the king’s fortress will open! / Drink, and you will forget all your sorrow.” They also tell

her that it is the last time she will be offered this chance.

Veslemøy turns pale, and she feels a chill go through her. Her thoughts reawaken, and she is ensnared by memories. She asks the maidens: "Shall I forget all the sorrow of my heart?" and they tell her that they will extinguish all her grief. Veslemøy then asks: "Will the hot fire be extinguished?" and they reply that once she empties the goblet, she will not feel any pain. Veslemøy exclaims that she cannot, for anything, let go of her pain. She chooses to hold onto both her sorrow and her memories. She cries out: "No other will ever embrace me; / now I tear myself free in Jesus' name." Everything vanishes.

[XII] Section title: Fri [Free]

This section consists of a single poem. It is an appropriate epilogue.

[1.] First line: Um natti still ved sengjekrå [in the still night in the bed chamber]
Speaker: Narrator, Veslemøy's deceased sister

Veslemøy has finally overcome the evil powers that have fought so hard to possess her. Her sister returns to tell her that she has passed the test.

During the quiet night, Veslemøy sees a woman standing at her bedside, clothed in long, black robes. Next to the woman is Veslemøy's deceased sister, who is beautiful and bright and wears a smile of hallowed joy. She sings softly to Veslemøy: "Arise, arise, dear sister! / You are now released to a better journey. / Listen, the Sabbath bell is ringing! / You won your freedom from all the trolls. / And in your sorrow, you found yourself. / Now up to higher things / your strengthened soul compels you." She bids Veslemøy to follow them on a new path that will eventually bring her up out of the world of darkness. The way will be steep and difficult, but no one has ever regretted the journey, and in spite of obstacles, all will be well in the end. The woman dressed in

black is a sibyl of wisdom, and she will be Veslemøy's guide; she will show her great things. The sibyl will lead her through the mists of the underworld where she will get a glimpse of the laws of life, and through her fear, Veslemøy will come to know of the work she has to do—the work that will become her glory.