

## Preface

Let me start by explaining this. If you are, in fact, reading this, then I am assuming that you have somewhere in close proximity a book called *The Norse Myths* by Kevin Crossley Holland, which I ask you treat respectfully. Said book is the vessel in which I have chosen to present my poetry anthology. Said book is not, though, necessarily meant to be read cover to cover. I am expecting a sigh of relief at this point. Said book is for context. This is a poetry anthology about Thor and Loki, who are in fact, Norse deities. I wanted to avoid the confusion with Cain and Abel, as it has been known to happen. Not that Judeo-Christian brothers are not as interesting as pagan brothers, it's just that Thor and Loki offer a more unique perspective. Let me put it into context:

Historically speaking, the Norse people didn't really have a written language for a considerable amount of their history. They were too busy fighting and pillaging and inventing new stories about Thor to even think about writing them down. It really wasn't until the Christian monks interacted with the Vikings that their myths were finally recorded. Until that point, though, the Norse people would remember their stories by ballads and what-not that rhymed. Oral tradition. So when the Christian monks recorded the stories, they were all poems. Fast-forward about a thousand years from the Vikings and an ingenious man by the name of Stan Lee is getting a head start in the comic book business. Around about the year 1962, Stan Lee has the superb idea of introducing Thor to his super-hero line up. (I'm sure the Vikings would have thoroughly enjoyed comic books and would have invented many more interesting things for special effects sounds. 'Bang' and 'Boom' sometimes just don't cut it. I'm thinking something along the lines of 'KRAAAKOOOMMM!!!' That sounds nice. Definitely sounds like Thor.) Jump forwards to 2011 and Marvel comics showcases a Thor movie starring Chris Hemsworth and Tom Hiddleston, two relatively unknown actors. An instant sensation, *Thor* carries its story further in the 2012 *Avengers* and its sequel, the 2013 *Thor: The Dark World*, which is currently in theaters. Now, insert a strange and nerdy teenaged girl from Middle-of-Nowhere, USA who has been known to crank out some poems and is mildly interested in history into the mix and you've got this project. (Welcome to my life.)

Now, say aforementioned teenaged girl is fascinated by these two brothers presented in these three movies. The first time she saw *Thor*, though, she thought it was rather dull and way too short for a decent super-hero movie. Then she walked out of the theater and thought it over. There was something about it that just piqued her interest, though she was unsure as to its nature. It was a peculiar thing. Yes, she decided, it could be the fact that Chris Hemsworth is fairly attractive, but usually she didn't judge movies on such petty assertions. Maybe it was because that Agent Coulson from the *Iron Man* movies had a guest appearance and had some almost-laughable jokes. No, she affirmed. She didn't like Iron Man. Iron Man was arrogant and stupid and shallow. There had to be something else about *Thor* that had caught her attention.

She waited six months for the DVD to come out to decide why it fascinated her so much. She watched it once with her family and still couldn't quite grasp it. Her family was not help at all, turning on *Iron Man* the minute *Thor* was over. She left. She really hated Iron Man. Determined to discover what it was about *Thor* that fascinated her so much, she set up camp a few weeks later when her family wasn't home and put in the DVD. This time, she was going to discover what it was about the then-boring movie that made her want to keep watching it.


Third time's the charm. For her, it was one of those near-impossible moments when something she thought was so dull and uninteresting became the most beautiful, human, and perfect thing she could possibly imagine. She just hadn't seen it at first. The brothers, Loki and Thor, were...human. They weren't gods, really. Loki says, "I love Thor more dearly than any of you,"

then goes to betray him, lie to him, and almost kill him. But he really did love Thor. His lust for power just outweighed it. That was human. And Thor—she'd spend whole nights just marveling at his bravery and sacrifice, never mind his attractiveness. He was the epitome of a true hero. *Sacrifice. That's what it came down to, she decided. It was never his strength or his power or his birthright to be king. It was his willingness to sacrifice himself for the good of everyone, including his brother. It was watching him turn from an arrogant prince to a powerless man quite literally facing a giant (albeit a giant Asgardian robot). It was that moment when he was able to say, "Brother, however I have wronged you, whatever I have done that has led you to do this, I am truly sorry. But these people are innocent. Taking their lives will gain you nothing. So take mine and end this."* Thor became a hero in that instant, in the movie, and to her on a deeply personal level. *She understood it, for the first time.*

She only had to wait a few months, at this point, for Thor to return in *The Avengers*. And Loki, of course. (In her mind, she was convinced that Loki is and was and always will be a tragic hero. Meaning he just doesn't know he is a hero. Tragic.) Midnight premier, Grand Theater, May 4, 2012. Front row seats. Epitome of a perfectly content teenaged girl, complete with the clapping when Thor crashed into the airplane. Over the following summer, she just so happened to accidentally waste all of the available cash within her reach on seeing *The Avengers* another six times in theaters. Yes, *Captain America did great, Coulson came back with some pretty great jokes, and Iron Man redeemed himself in her mind, but she really just kept going back because of Thor and Loki. For that one scene right after Thor arrives, when he grabs Loki and tries to reason with him. For when Loki almost repents in the middle of the final battle. Almost, but she knows he won't. Not yet. Not like that. But he will. She called it after seeing *The Avengers* once.*

Flash-forward over what is left of the summer in Wisconsin (because she *really* doesn't like to talk about that) to the start of her junior year of high school. Third period Senior Writing class. She's the only junior and somehow she *managed* to get stuck in the very back corner. *The Avengers* DVD doesn't come out until September 24. She'd been supplementing with *Thor*. September 24 finally rolls around and her life is complete: She gives up her recent addiction to *Doctor Who* to watch a continuing *Avengers* marathon that night. No sleep, but who cares? Back to third period the next day and she's assigned a poetry anthology. She has no problem whatsoever picking a topic. Two brothers. Thor and Loki. At this point, her confidence is not as high as it could be considering she is in a class with all seniors and is mildly intimidated because she thinks they *know that she is out of place. So she doesn't actually say that her poems are about Thor and Loki. She says two brothers. At this point, she reasons it's probably best to avoid being branded a nerd in the first few weeks of class lest it lead to unnecessary confrontations with annoying people who look down on nerds. So she hands her first poem to her group, they read it, and one of them asks—rather stupidly, if she may add—"So it's like Cain and Abel?" She—also rather stupidly—nodded and then subsequently changed all of her plans to include Cain and Abel references instead of Thor and Loki references, though in her heart, she knew that it was really about Thor and Loki. (After that rotation, it should be noted that she gave up whatever pretenses that she might have had of being a normal, sane, non-nerdy teenaged girl. By the end of the year, she did her final project in AP Lit over *Doctor Who*.)*

Why am I telling you this? Well, first off, I heard the word 'Preface' and my mind immediately went to the introductions that authors put at the beginning of books that usually range from two to a hundred pages, depending on the book. Preface means story and introduction. (Author's note, if you were wondering, means a few paragraphs max, talking only



about the piece. Though, admittedly, I hardly ever listen to that.) Secondly, I thought that it was important that you know where the roots of this story came from and that I am not, in fact, a crazy person with random thoughts zooming about in my head. (Well, actually, disregard the last part of that sentence. There's lots of random thoughts up there.)

Now's the part where I tell you where this particular version of this particular poetry anthology came from. (Don't worry. It won't be much longer. I hope.) This particular reboot is different from the original in that a) I'm explaining it for what it is and b) because I didn't have the whole story last time. *Thor: The Dark World* didn't come out until November 8, 2013. Now, after seeing three times, I believe that I have conducted thorough research and can now complete the story. (No major plot spoilers will be given here or in the anthology. But you should go see the movie anyways.)

This is the most important part of the story. It's about brotherhood and betrayal and hate and love and sacrifice, sure. It was last year too. But this is a story about forgiveness. And it was a story that I had to tell. I had to tell it because it's how Thor and Loki's story should end in a perfect world. It's how every story should end, mine in particular, I suppose. I'm leaving Nebraska next year for college. And if I go on carrying all those old grudges from people who hurt me a long time ago, I'm never going to get anywhere in life. So this is a story about Loki and Thor. This is a story about forgiveness and hope and betrayal and forgiveness again. This is, quite literally, the story of my life.

ON BROTHER'S LOVE

By Carly Twehous

### Before He Fell

This is the beginning of the story narrated from the end, if that makes any sense. Frigga is the Norse goddess of marriage and family. She's Thor's mother and Loki's adoptive mother, at least in the comics. In real Norse mythology, she's Thor's stepmother and Loki's step-sister-in-law or something weird like that. The comics make more sense. Anyway, this poem is narrated by an outside force, probably someone like Odin, who knows the whole story. It's sort of like an overview and it gives a glimpse of Thor and Loki's childhood and the trust they used to have. Loki and Thor are princes of Asgard, grew up as brothers, and if you can't deduce on your own, Loki is the traitor. He is also sometimes referred to as the god of lies. This is where they begin.

In this poem, Loki's cursed blade is first brought up and is addressed in all poems about Loki. I'm not sure if this blade was a thing in the myths, but in the comics, Loki's only weapon was this dagger and his magic. So, in my story, the Asgardians believe that Loki's blade is cursed. Loki believes that *he* is cursed. All the poems narrated by anyone besides Loki have a heavy 7-8 syllable beat with couplet rhymes. Thor and Odin's narration in this one are broken into stanzas of 4 lines, defining their separation from the rest of Asgard. The beat/rhyme thing is to symbolize the heartbeat of the gods and of the reader. It is the central theme, I suppose, and essential when any Asgardian talks. Loki, on the other hand, is the traitor. He doesn't get a beat.

### Before He Fell

Frigga, hark, and tend the mantle.  
Tell the tale of tragic scandal.  
Ere fate shall loose the gates of Hel,  
Tell the tale before he fell.

Oaths were sworn in times gone by.  
Brothers' bond, to do or die.  
Brothers, once, as now or never.  
Break the trust and die forever.

There were days in ages past,  
Before the Traitor breathed his last,  
When gods and men were bound by fate  
And brothers' love was lost to hate.

Brothers, once, in battles' heat,  
Ere the days of his deceit.  
Brothers lost in battles rage  
Could not see the turning page.

Fate then picked the traitor's side,  
Which only fueled his growing pride.  
None dared hope his hate would fade  
When death was dealt by his cursed blade.

He could not see his brother's pain  
Nor the men that he had slain.  
He knows not what cursed blade shall reap.  
He does not know what oaths to keep.

Blind is he to brother's heart  
So much so it broke apart.  
This last tale is left to tell.  
Remember him before he fell.



### Abyss

This is Loki's entrance into the story. In it, he expresses his hatred of Thor, in a way, and basically why he wants to destroy everything. It's his thoughts, one after the other in rapid succession. And it is free verse and doesn't have a beat. (I was terrified to write this, by the way. Free verse is terrifying.) The implied notion, according to the aforementioned made-up Asgardian philosophy, if it doesn't have a beat, then he doesn't have a heart. They don't believe there's any good in him. And at this point, I don't think he believes that there's any good in him.

### Abyss

Am I cursed?  
I never wanted your throne!  
I only ever wanted  
To be your equal!  
We were brothers.  
Once.  
No more.  
Asgard falls.  
This is power,  
This curse,  
This lie,  
Everything.  
I am nothing more  
Than a monster.  
A monster  
That you created.  
Is this what you wanted?  
I could have done it,  
I am a king.  
This is my birthright.  
And my curse.  
No more.

### **Ravens**

Because I had to add them if I was talking about Norse mythology again. I love them. So these are interjections into the story from my lovely raven friends. They are to help push the story along and leave some doubt in your mind at the end, because both comic books and Norse mythology loved to do that. They're all about cliff hangers.

**HOW CAN HE EVER FACE ANOTHER?  
THE TRICKSTER GOD BETRAYED HIS BROTHER!**

### What Does Not Beat

This is the people of Asgard speaking, narrating and dictating their judgment of Loki for his betrayal of their home and his brother. They state quite firmly that he has no heartbeat and conclude, somehow, that he is not one of them anymore.

### What Does Not Beat

Up and down, over, under  
Feel the rage and hear the thunder  
Through the realms and in the rain  
We understand the depths of pain  
The death of kin by traitor's blade  
His brother's love was left betrayed  
Death and blood and hurt and grief  
Does not aid his disbelief  
Feel the rain and catch the storm  
Let him see the traitor's scorn  
What does not beat has no heart  
Brothers' bond was torn apart  
Spite of blood and hate of kin  
Traitor's pride from deep within  
Cursed blade reaped and death was sown  
Damned be prince we called our own!



### Brother's Plea

This is Thor both accusing and imploring his brother to be better. To come back and be the brother he was in the past. Thor, at this point is disregarding everything the other Asgardians are saying. He still believes that Loki is good.



### Brother's Plea

Some have said I should not mourn,  
But were we not both brothers born?  
Brother once, as once before,  
Love you now as once I swore.

I care not for the traitor's brand  
Nor the blade that's in your hand.  
Though the truth's before my eyes,  
I'd rather heed your silver lies.

What hate has fueled your growing pride?  
What blade have you strapped to your side?  
Its curse has wrought this grief and pain,  
The tears of those that you have slain.

No heart have you that's left to beat  
And death you've dealt in your deceit.  
Deserve you fate and ransom's scar,  
Deserve you mark of what you are.

But, brothers once, we fought the tide.  
Proud we stood, once side by side.  
Now they chain you to a rock  
Ere your deeds bring Ragnarok.

My blood may not be recompense,  
But this world won't fall for your offense.  
I stand not by my sword and shield,  
I'll only fight if you will not yield.

What have you left in this broken place?  
What hope is there in your disgrace?  
The path you chose is a promise made.  
Just leave behind that damned cursed blade.

I hold hope that my brother lives  
As you hold hope the dead forgive.  
Just this once, to yourself be true.  
Come now, brother, what say you?

## Retribution

This takes place immediately after the previous poem and is Loki's counterattack to Thor's mercy. In it, he takes his full revenge and claims it's in his nature. Loki doesn't want Thor to believe in him. His rage is actualized and manifested in both his taunts and his growing hatred of Thor.

## Retribution

I do not beg your forgiveness!  
It is not yours to give.  
I have seen things  
That you could never imagine  
*Odinson!*  
I've known pain  
That you couldn't possibly understand!  
And I've held power,  
Life and death,  
Secrets and lies  
That would make  
Thundering gods blaze!  
*So come on then!*  
Take it!  
Take it all!  
Or are you scared  
As cowards always are?  
Trust my rage,  
*Brother!*  
I am a king!  
That is my birthright.  
I mean to rule  
As a benevolent god.  
What I have done,  
I've done in the name  
Of freedom.  
Peace.  
Sanity.  
In the name of power  
You could never understand.  
You are  
All of you  
Beneath me!  
I am a king!  
And this is my reign  
My war against the gods.  
This is my nature.

### God of Lies

In which Loki is officially declared the god of lies. On top of that, the Asgardian justice system is showcased at its best. The Norse really liked that 'eye for an eye' type of mentality. So in this, the people of Asgard decide that Loki should be strapped to a rock and his face scarred for all the people he's killed. Very nice. So, with all the irony they can muster, they scar his face with his cursed blade. Lovely. (Also, if you wanted to know, in the myths, Loki's son was drawn and quartered and they bound Loki to the rock using his son's entrails. The Norse sure love their irony.)

### God of Lies

Land of kings and realm of gods  
See the traitor face his odds  
We are gods by oaths we've taken  
Oaths that he has now forsaken  
Here he stands, destruction's wake  
Bound by bonds no man can break  
This is one we called our own  
A traitor to the golden throne  
His heart is dead, it cannot beat  
So falls the traitor to deceit  
So bind the traitor to a rock  
Ere the fall of Ragnarok  
Mark the traitor on his face  
Scarred be traitor in disgrace  
Traitor's blood on his cursed blade,  
Blood for those that he betrayed.  
Let him die or let him live  
The blood he spilled we can't forgive.  
Heed him not as Odin's son  
Heed him now for what he's done  
See the hate burn in his eyes  
Heed him as the god of lies!

### **Hope No Longer Exists**

This is short and sweet and to the point. Thor gives up on Loki. (He doesn't really, in his heart. He just says it.)



### **Hope No Longer Exists**

In the past, we fought each other  
I held out hope you were my brother  
No longer can such hope live on  
My brother now is too far gone

HOW CAN HE STILL CALL HIM BROTHER  
WHEN THEY HAVE BOTH BETRAYED EACH OTHER?

## Redemption

In which Loki dies saving Thor's life and he finally has a heartbeat again...sort of. This is my attempt at half-rhyme poetry to prove that Loki was good after all. He saved Thor's life. And died because of it. Yay. In other words, he made up for his crimes and betrayal. Now he can be forgiven.



## Redemption

Do you know  
That every breath's the first  
Of the end of my life?  
I could tell you all about the stars  
That fill the wounded skies  
Don't tell me where the road ends  
When no one's left to take my lies  
I just don't want to know.  
This is to one last glimpse of the shadows  
And to know a brother's love  
This is for one last gleam of ambition  
In the rivers of my blood  
This is to all of us  
To both of us.  
Don't tell me if I'm lying  
Because I don't want to go.  
If I can't apologize,  
Then maybe you should know  
It was never just about  
The one choice and then I'm out,  
Don't look at all the blood shed  
When you're the king and I am dead.  
Don't tell me if I'm dying.

### To Die With Honor

This is the final narration, probably by Odin again. Loki's dead and Thor's forgiven him. They were brothers again, in the end, when it came down to it.



### To Die With Honor

Tend the mantle, bring the ember  
Tell the tale of oaths remembered  
Hail the burning fun'ral pyre  
For the god we called a liar

Brothers once, played games with fate  
And one was lost to bitter hate  
Now the war between them ends  
The traitor god has made amends.

Hail the brother left to live  
None can say he won't forgive  
There he stands, though twice betrayed  
His life was saved by once-cursed blade

Heed his brother's sacrifice  
And let that be his ransom price  
The traitor and his beating heart  
Had saved his brother from the start.

The traitor now has saved his life  
The king now holds his brother's knife.  
Redemption's choice between them made  
The price of blood has now been paid

Feel his grief and see him mourn  
Remember oaths that once were sworn  
He saved his life with his last breath  
His lost honor returns in death

BROTHER'S FATE BETWEEN THEM KNOWN

BROTHER'S GHOST UPON THE THRONE

FEW CAN KNOW WHAT LIES AHEAD

WHEN ONE IS KING AND ONE IS DEAD