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**Origami Poetry Project™**

**EGIL**  
Variations on a Saga  
Nancy Jasper © 2014  
Random Acts of Poetry



The OPP is a 501 (c) 3 non profit

**EGIL**  
Variations on a Saga



**Nancy Jasper**

**Egil's Mouth**

He is intimate  
and specific,  
wants us to know  
his mouth  
from the inside,  
before  
words come,  
when the throat  
is stunned,  
when the tongue  
labors.  
Earlier,  
after violence,  
he had improvised  
a poem  
about how his mouth  
could bite.  
This is different.

**Egil Is Baffled By Grief**

For Egil,  
revenge  
was the final stage of grief.  
When his son  
drowned,  
he didn't know who to hurt.  
He couldn't hurt the sea.  
Odin  
was beyond his reach.  
So he stopped,  
he simply  
stopped.  
His daughter  
had to tell him  
there was a poem  
caught  
in his throat.

**Bear**

A bear has wandered into Egil's story.  
It is not an avatar of Odin,  
although Odin can be called Bear.  
It is not the pelt of a berserker,  
although it is true that Egil is angry.  
No,  
the bear seems to have come from a fairy tale  
to frighten children.  
The children are guarding sheep  
and they tell Egil about the bear.  
He is hiding in the woods.  
They have been told to watch out for him.  
They think Egil must not be very clever,  
because he has not heard about the bear.  
Egil is delighted by this.  
He will use it in a ruse.  
He has come for a child.  
Not these children,  
he will be friendly with them,  
but for the king's son.  
The king's son is ten years old.  
He is sleeping.  
Not even at the edges of his dream  
does he hear the branches moving.

**Egil Swims Away From Europe**

Those were the days  
in which Harold Fairhair  
locked up Norway,  
consolidated his hegemony,  
combed down cowlicks.  
Egil was unmanageable,  
he was always starting up.  
He could escape from anything.  
He was a regular Houdini.  
Once, his enemies tied him up,  
left him to stew all night  
over what they would do to him in the morning.  
His large head schemed.  
He threw the knots  
into other-dimensioned space  
until they loosened.  
He escaped,  
burned down the house.

Egil got tired of Europe.  
He was an independent man.  
He preferred the integrity of revenge  
to law or social usage.  
He dived into the water,  
swam  
until he heard the basaltic muttering,  
the tectonic plates  
where Europe bumps up against North America.