

Date

T: solve Anglo-Saxon riddles

1

A wonderful warrior exists on earth.  
Two dumb creatures make him grow bright between them.  
Enemies use him against one another.  
His strength is fierce but a woman can tame him.  
He will meekly serve both men and women  
If they know the trick of looking after him  
And feeding him properly.  
He makes people happy.  
He makes their lives better.  
But if they let him grow proud  
This ungrateful friend soon turns against them.

2

My home is not quiet but I am not loud.  
The lord has meant us to journey together.  
I am faster than he and sometimes stronger,  
But he keeps on going for longer.  
Sometimes I rest but he runs on.  
For as long as I am alive I live in him.  
If we part from one another  
It is I who will die.

3

A strange thing hangs by man's hip,  
hidden by a garment. It has a hole  
in its head. It is stiff and strong  
and its firm bearing reaps a reward.  
When the retainer hitches his clothing  
high above his knee, he wants the head  
of that hanging thing to find the old hole  
that it, outstretched, has often filled before

4

I am all on my own,  
Wounded by iron weapons and scarred by swords.  
I often see battle.  
I am tired of fighting.  
I do not expect to be allowed to retire from warfare  
Before I am completely done for.  
At the wall of the city, I am knocked about  
And bitten again and again.  
Hard edged things made by the blacksmith's hammer attack me.  
Each time I wait for something worse.  
I have never been able to find a doctor who could make me better  
Or give me medicine made from herbs.  
Instead the sword gashes all over me grow bigger day and night.

5

When I am alive I do not speak.  
Anyone who wants to takes me captive and cuts off my head.  
They bite my bare body  
I do no harm to anyone unless they cut me first.  
Then I soon make them cry.

6

Four dilly-dandies  
Four stick standies  
Two crookers  
Two lookers  
And a wig wag

7

The creature ate its words  
It seemed to me strangely weird when I heard this wonder:  
that it had devoured human speech.  
A thief in the darkness gloriously mouthed the source of  
knowledge  
But the thief was not the least bit wiser for the words in his

8

On the way a miracle: water become bone

(Source: Riddles 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 from <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/english/beowulf/riddle.htm> and 7 from <http://www.thing.net/~grist/ld/young/ky-bkrid.htm> and 3 and 8 from <http://www.stavacademy.co.uk/mimir/riddles.htm>)

See below for clues

## Clues

- 1) It can keep you warm
- 2) An animal and where it lives
- 3) This will help you **unlock** the riddle
- 4) You s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ your eyes from the sun
- 5) A food that upsets people
- 6) Farm animal
- 7) Despite his knowledge he is often eaten by birds
- 8) And from 'bone' it can become liquid

## Choice of answers

- |                    |                  |                  |                |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1) Ice             | Wind             | Fire             | Earth          |
| 2) Fish in a river | Snail in a shell | Monkey in a tree | Duck in a pond |
| 3) Time            | Lock             | Key              | Belt           |
| 4) Stretch         | Shield           | Scratch          | Sword          |
| 5) Onion           | Chilli           | Carrot           | Cabbage        |
| 6) Duck            | Pig              | Dog              | Cow            |
| 7) Bookworm        | Moth             | Slug             | Spider         |
| 8) Bone            | Ice              | Water            | Steam          |