Hear me! We've heard of Danish heroes,
ancient kings and the glory they cut
for themselves, swinging mighty swords!

How Shild made slaves of soldiers from every
land, crowds of captives he'd beaten
into terror; he'd travelled to Denmark alone,
an abandoned child, but changed his own fate,
lived to be rich and much honored. He ruled
lands on all sides: wherever the sea
would take them his soldiers sailed, returned
with tribute and obedience. There was a brave
King! And he gave them more than his glory,
conceived a son for the Danes, a new leader
allowed them by the grace of the God. They had lived,
before his coming, kingless and miserable; now the Lord of all life, Ruler
of glory, blessed them with a prince, Beo,
whose power and fame soon spread through the world.
Shild's strong son was the glory of Denmark;
his father's warriors were wound round his heart
with golden rings, bound to their prince
by his father's treasure. So young man build
the future, wisely open-handed in peace,
protected in war; so warriors earn
their fame, and wealth is shaped with a sword.

When his time was come the old king died,
still strong but called to the Lord's hands.
His comrades carried him down to the shore,
bore him as their leader had asked, their lord
and companion, while words could move on his tongue.
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Shild's reign had been long; he'd ruled them well.
There in the harbor was a ring-prowed fighting
ship, its timbers icy, waiting,
and there they brought the beloved body
of their ring-giving lord, and laid him near
the mast. Next to that noble corpse
they heaped up treasures, jeweled helmets,
hooked swords and coats of mail, armor
carried from the ends of the earth: no ship
had ever sailed so brightly fitted,
no king sent forth more deeply mourned.
Forced to set him adrift, floating
as far as the tide might run, they refused
to give him less from their hoards of gold
than those who'd shipped him away, an orphan
and a beggar, to cross the waves alone.
High up over his head they flew
his shining banner, then sadly let
the water pull at the ship, watched it
slowly sliding to where neither rulers
nor heroes nor anyone can say whose hands
opened to take that motionless cargo