

KALEVALA, SECOND RUNE

Then arose old Wainamoinen,
With his feet upon the island,
On the island washed by ocean,
Broad expanse devoid of verdure;
There remained be many summers,
There he lived as many winters,
On the island vast and vacant,
well considered, long reflected,
Who for him should sow the island,
Who for him the seeds should scatter;
Thought at last of Pellerwoinen,
First-born of the plains and prairies,
When a slender boy, called Sampsa,
Who should sow the vacant island,
Who the forest seeds should scatter.

Pellerwoinen, thus consenting,
Sows with diligence the island,
Seeds upon the lands he scatters,
Seeds in every swamp and lowland,
Forest seeds upon the loose earth,
On the firm soil sows the acorns,
Fir-trees sows he on the mountains,
Pine-trees also on the hill-tops,
Many shrubs in every valley,
Birches sows he in the marshes,
In the loose soil sows the alders,
In the lowlands sows the lindens,
In the moist earth sows the willow,
Mountain-ash in virgin places,
On the banks of streams the hawthorn,
Junipers in hilly regions;
This the work of Pellerwoinen,
Slender Sampsa, in his childhood.

Soon the fertile seeds were sprouting,
Soon the forest trees were growing,
Soon appeared the tops of fir-trees,
And the pines were far outspreading;
Birches rose from all the marshes,
In the loose soil grew the alders,
In the mellow soil the lindens;
Junipers were also growing,

Junipers with clustered berries,
Berries on the hawthorn branches.

Now the hero, Wainamoinen,
Stands aloft to look about him,
How the Sampsa-seeds are growing,
How the crop of Pellerwoinen;
Sees the young trees thickly spreading,
Sees the forest rise in beauty;
But the oak-tree has not sprouted,
Tree of heaven is not growing,
Still within the acorn sleeping,
Its own happiness enjoying.

Then he waited three nights longer,
And as many days he waited,
Waited till a week had vanished,
Then again the work examined;
But the oak-tree was not growing,
Had not left her acorn-dwelling.

Wainamoinen, ancient hero,
Spies four maidens in the distance,
Water-brides, he spies a fifth-one,
On the soft and sandy sea-shore,
In the dewy grass and flowers,
On a point extending seaward,
Near the forests of the island.

Some were mowing, some were raking,
Raking what was mown together,
In a windrow on the meadow.

From the ocean rose a giant,
Mighty Tursas, tall and hardy,
Pressed compactly all the grasses,
That the maidens had been raking,
When a fire within them kindles,
And the flames shot up to heaven,
Till the windrows burned to ashes,
Only ashes now remaining
Of the grasses raked together.

In the ashes of the windrows,
Tender leaves the giant places,
In the leaves he plants an acorn,
From the acorn, quickly sprouting,
Grows the oak-tree, tall and stately,
From the ground enriched by ashes,
Newly raked by water-maidens;
Spread the oak-tree's many branches,
Rounds itself a broad corona,
Raises it above the storm-clouds;
Far it stretches out its branches,
Stops the white-clouds in their courses,
With its branches hides the sunlight,
With its many leaves, the moonbeams,
And the starlight dies in heaven.

Wainamoinen, old and trusty,
Thought awhile, and well considered,
How to kill the mighty oak-tree,
First created for his pleasure,
How to fell the tree majestic,
How to lop its hundred branches.

Sad the lives of man and hero,
Sad the homes of ocean-dwellers,
If the sun shines not upon them,
If the moonlight does not cheer them
Is there not some mighty hero,
Was there never born a giant,
That can fell the mighty oak-tree,
That can lop its hundred branches?

Wainamoinen, deeply thinking,
Spake these words soliloquizing:
"Kape, daughter of the Ether,
Ancient mother of my being,
Luonnotar, my nurse and helper,
Loan to me the water-forces,
Great the powers of the waters;
Loan to me the strength of oceans,
To upset this mighty oak-tree,
To uproot this tree of evil,
That again may shine the sunlight,
That the moon once more may glimmer."

Straightway rose a form from oceans,
Rose a hero from the waters,
Nor belonged he to the largest,
Nor belonged he to the smallest,
Long was he as man's forefinger,
Taller than the hand of woman;
On his head a cap of copper,
Boots upon his feet were copper,
Gloves upon his hands were copper,
And its stripes were copper-colored,
Belt around him made of copper,
Hatchet in his belt was copper;
And the handle of his hatchet
Was as long as hand of woman,
Of a finger's breadth the blade was.

Then the trusty Wainamoinen
Thought awhile and well considered,
And his measures are as follow:
"Art thou, sir, divine or human?
Which of these thou only knowest;
Tell me what thy name and station.
Very like a man thou lookest,
Hast the bearing of a hero,
Though the length of man's first finger,
Scarce as tall as hoof of reindeer."

Then again spake Wainamoinen
To the form from out the ocean:
"Verily I think thee human,
Of the race of pigmy-heroes,
Might as well be dead or dying,
Fit for nothing but to perish."
Answered thus the pigmy-hero,
Spake the small one from the ocean
To the valiant Wainamoinen
"Truly am I god and hero,
From the tribes that rule the ocean;
Come I here to fell the oak-tree,
Lop its branches with my hatchet."

Wainamoinen, old and trusty,
Answers thus the sea-born hero:
"Never hast thou force sufficient,
Not to thee has strength been given,

To uproot this mighty oak-tree,
To upset this thing of evil,
Nor to lop its hundred branches."

Scarcely had he finished speaking,
Scarcely had he moved his eyelids,
Ere the pigmy full unfolding,
Quick becomes a mighty giant.

With one step he leaves the ocean,
Plants himself, a mighty hero,
On the forest-fields surrounding;
With his head the clouds he pierces,
To his knees his beard extending,
And his locks fall to his ankles;
Far apart appear his eyeballs,
Far apart his feet are stationed.
Farther still his mighty shoulders.

Now begins his axe to sharpen,
Quickly to an edge he whets it,
Using six hard blocks of sandstone,
And of softer whetstones, seven.
Straightway to the oak-tree turning,
Thither stalks the mighty giant,
In his raiment long and roomy,
Flapping in the winds of heaven;
With his second step he totters
On the land of darker color;
With his third stop firmly planted,
Reaches he the oak-tree's branches,
Strikes the trunk with sharpened hatchet,
With one mighty swing he strikes it,
With a second blow he cuts it;
As his blade descends the third time,
From his axe the sparks fly upward,
From the oak-tree fire outshooting;
Ere the axe descends a fourth time,
Yields the oak with hundred branches,
Shaking earth and heaven in falling.

Eastward far the trunk extending,
Far to westward flew the tree-tops,
To the South the leaves were scattered,
To the North its hundred branches.

Whosoe'er a branch has taken,
Has obtained eternal welfare;
Who secures himself a tree-top,
He has gained the master magic;
Who the foliage has gathered,
Has delight that never ceases.

Of the chips some had been scattered,
Scattered also many splinters,
On the blue back of the ocean,
Of the ocean smooth and mirrored,
Rocked there by the winds and waters,
Like a boat upon the billows;
Storm-winds blew them to the Northland,
Some the ocean currents carried.

Northland's fair and slender maiden,
Washing on the shore a head-dress,
Beating on the rocks her garments,
Rinsing there her silken raiment,
In the waters of Pohyola,
There beheld the chips and splinters,
Carried by the winds and waters.

In a bag the chips she gathered,
Took them to the ancient court-yard,
There to make enchanted arrows,
Arrows for the great magician,
There to shape them into weapons,
Weapons for the skilful archer,
Since the mighty oak has fallen,
Now has lost its hundred branches,
That the North may see the sunshine,
See the gentle gleam of moonlight,
That the clouds may keep their courses,
May extend the vault of heaven
Over every lake and river,
O'er the banks of every island.

Translated from Finnish by John Martin Crawford

Original text: Elias Lönnrot