

Lansing D. McLoskey

# R i d d l e

4 SOLO MALE VOICES

WRITTEN FOR THE HILLIARD ENSEMBLE

*Dedicated to The Hilliard Ensemble*

*Lansing D. McLoskey*

# *R i d d l e*

(4 SOLO MALE VOICES)

I.	Riddle 74	c.2'45"
II.	Riddle 69	c.0'45"
III.	Riddle 47	c.2'45"
IV.	Riddle 46	c.1'15"

## PERFORMANCE NOTES:

Riddles 74, 46 & 47 are puzzle canons. The realizations are found by solving the accompanying riddle-instructions and applying the answers to the canon. Riddle 69 is not a canon itself, yet is part of a puzzle. Hmmm.

Each movement can be transposed up or down in order to facilitate performance.

Accidentals apply to the octave in which they appear and hold throughout the measure, though in highly chromatic passages courtesy accidentals are given.

The Riddle 74 canon contains many very long phrases and covers a wide range. Being that two singers share each part, breaths can be elided to provide the appearance of unbroken phrases. Likewise, a high voice and a low voice should be paired together so that the entire range is comfortably covered by at least one singer.

Relatively few phrasing or dynamic markings are given. This does not by any means signify that the piece should be performed monotonously without shape, direction, or emotional content; quite the contrary! The exact interpretation may vary from performance to performance, but many of the gestures and emotional climaxes in the piece obviously lend themselves to a certain treatment, and any interpretation of the details sung with conviction will be successful.

The solutions to the riddles should not be printed in the concert program. Rather, the performers should tell the audience the answers after the piece is over; preferably after the applause (assuming there is any!), before exiting the stage or proceeding to the next piece on the program.

Approximate duration: 8 minutes



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*Riddle* is a setting of four riddles from *The Exeter Book* (a.k.a. *Codex Exoniensis* or *Liber Exoniensis*), a collection of Old English religious and secular poetry compiled c.970 and given to Exeter Cathedral by Bishop Leofric (d. 1072).

Though the manuscript was compiled at the end of the 10th century, the 95 riddles contained therein date from much earlier. During the 19th century many scholars believed them all to be written by a single 8th century poet, Cynewulf; this theory has since been unanimously discredited. Many authors presumably wrote them, probably over a period of at least two hundred years; some have been dated to as early as the 8th century.

*The Exeter Book* provides no answers to the riddles. Some of the answers are quite obvious, sometimes there are two or more "correct" answers, and in several cases the answers have been lost in obscurity and contemporary scholars cannot agree on any plausible solution at all.

# Texts and Translations:

## Riddle 74

Ic wæs fæmne geong,      feaxbar cwene,  
ond ænlic rinc      on ane tid;  
fleab mid fuglum      ond on flode swom,  
deaf under yþe      dead mid fiscum,  
ond on foldan stop,      hæfde ferð cwicu.

I was a young maiden,      a grey-haired queen,  
And like a lone warrior      at one time,  
(I) flew with birds      and swam in the sea,  
(I) dived under waves      dead among the fishes  
and on Earth stepped,      holding living spirits.

## Riddle 69

Wundor wearð on wege; wæter wearð to bane.

A wonder on the wave / water became bone.

## Riddle 47

Moððe word frat.      Me þæt þuhte  
wratlicu wyrd,      þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn,  
þæt se wyrm forswæalg      wera gied sumes,  
þeof in þystro,      þrymfæstne cwide  
ond þæs strangan stapol.      Stælgieost ne wæs  
wihste þy gleawra,      þe he þam wordum swealg.

Mote ate words.      It seemed to me  
a curious event,      when I heard of that wonder,  
that the worm swallowed      a man's song,  
a thief in darkness stole      the fine saying  
and its foundation.      The thievish guest was  
not one whit the wiser      for swallowing words.

## Riddle 46

Wer sæt at wine      mid his wifum twam  
ond his twegen suno      ond his twa dohtor,  
swage gesweostor,      ond hyra suno twegen,  
freolico frumbearn;      fæder wæs þær inne  
þara æþelinga      æghwæðres mid,  
eam ond nefa.      Ealra wæron fife  
eorla ond idesa      insittendra.

A man sat at wine      with his two wives  
and his two sons      and his two daughters,  
beloved sisters,      and their two sons,  
beautiful first-borns;      father was there within  
together amidst      both the princes,  
uncle and nephew.      They totaled five  
noblemen & women,      all those sitting within.

These translations are hybrid translations combining elements from the following sources:

Crossley-Holland, Kevin (trans. and ed.). *The Exeter Riddle Book*. London: The Folio Society, 1978.

Krapp, George Philip, and Elliot Van Kirk Dobbie, eds. *The Exeter Book*. New York: Columbia UP, 1936.

Rodrigues, Louis. *65 Anglo-Saxon Riddles*. 2nd ed. Felinfach: Llanerch Publishers, 1988.

Williamson, Craig. *A Feast of Creatures: Anglo-Saxon Riddle Songs*. Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn. Press, 1982.

Answers:  nærlilic sid bna toI ,ðþ ;rtom kood ,ŋþ ;æci ,Qð ;lgeæ-ææ to ærtso ,þŋ

# Riddle 74

Lansing D. McLoskey


With living spirit  $\text{♩} = 64$

Altus & Tenor II *mf*

Ic  
wæs fæm - - - - - ne  
ge - - - - - ong, feax - - - - - har cwe -  
- - - - - ne, ond æn - lic rinc  
on a - ne tid; fle - - - - ah mid  
fug - lum, fle - ah mid fug - - - lum fle - - - - ah,  
ond on flo - de swom, deaf 3  
und - - - - - er

25  

 y - - - - - þe dead mid fisc - - - - - um "o"

28  

 y - þe, y - þe, y - þe, "o" ond on fol - dan stop,

31  

 hæf - de ferð cwi - - - - -


34  

 - cu, hæf - - - - de ferð cwi - - - - -

37  

 - - - - - cu, hæf - de ferð cwi - - - - - cu.  
*rit.*-----

Tenor I/Bassus: After laying dead underwater for three days, rise to fly with the fishes and swim with the birds.


 - cu.

# Riddle 69

With some freedom, but cool ♩ = *c.46*

*mp* ————— *mf*

Altus  
Wun - dor wearð on we - ge;

*mp* ————— *mf*

Tenor I  
Wun - dor wearð on we - ge;

*mp* ————— *mf*

Tenor II  
Wun - dor wearð on we - ge;

*mp* ————— *mf*

Bassus  
Wun - dor wearð on we - ge;

<sup>5</sup> *p* ————— *mf*

wæ - - - - ter wearð to ba - - - ne.

*p* ————— *mf*

wæ - - - - ter wearð to ba - - - ne.

*p* ————— *mf*

wæ - - - - ter wearð to ba - - - ne.

*p* ————— *mf*

wæ - - - - ter wearð to ba - - - ne.

# Riddle 47

Dark & crawling ♩ = c.48


Altus *p*

Moð - ðe word fræt. Me þæt þuh - te wræt - li - cu wryd,  
þa ic þæt wun - dor ge - frægn, þæt se wrym for - swealg  
we - ra gied su - mes, þeof in  
þys - tro þrym - - - fæst - ne cwi - de ond þæs strang - an sta -  
- pol. Stæl - - - giest ne wæs wih - te þy gleaw - - 3 -  
- ra, gleaw - ra, þe he þam wor - dum swealg.


Canon I (Tenor I): Halves and halves alone are halves and half again!



Dark & crawling ♩ = c. 48

Bassus  x 3

Moð - ðe word fræt. Me þæt þuh - te...

*rit.* ----- 

+ ...for - swealg.

Canon II (Tenor II): As a worm crawls, you crawl tailfirst; but you ate your head! (Being headless makes you just a tad lighter, though.)  
And as a moth swallows words, you swallow all but the tail.

# Riddle 46

Quick, but smooth ♩ = 112

*mf*

Canon

Wer sæt æt wi - ne mid his wi - - - fum twam on his

su - no ond his twa doh-tor, swa - se ge - sweo - stor,

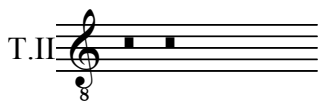
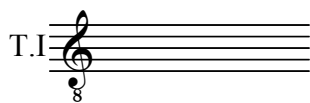
ond<sup>3</sup> hy - ra su - no twe - gen, twe - gen, fri - li - co frum -

(Alto only)  
- bearn, frum-bearn; fæ - - - - - der, fæ -

- - - der wæs þær in - ne pa-ra æ - þe - lin - ga ægh - wæð -

- res mid, e - - - am ond ne - fa. Eal - ra wær<sup>3</sup> - on fi - fe

eor - la ond i - de - sa<sup>3</sup> in - set - ten<sup>3</sup> - - - dra. wær - on<sup>3</sup> fi - fe



Repeat as many times as there are people in the room.  
(The same goes for the other singers, too.)



**All: Remember winter, precisely as it was, one by one.**

Altus: No wine for you!

Tenor I: Your winter memories cause you to forget the beloved sisters & their sons, and to droop 2 1/2 inches.

Tenor II: You're always drooping that much.

Bassus: Face it; you're slow. Half as fast, in fact. You can't even remember anything after the two daughters.  
But hey...at least you're 2 inches taller than Tenor I.

# Riddle 74 solution

With living spirit ♩ = 64

Altus & Tenor II *mf* (elide breaths as needed) 3

Tenor I & Bassus

4

wæs fæm - - - - - ne

*mf* (elide breaths as needed)

Ic

7

ge - - - - - ong, feax - - - - - har cwe -

wæs fæm - - - - - ne

10

ne, ond æn - lic rinc

ge - - - - - ong, feax - - - - - har cwe -

13

on a - ne tid;

- ne, on æn - lic rinc

16

fle - - - ah mid fug - lum, fle - ah mid fug - - - lum

on a - ne tid;

19

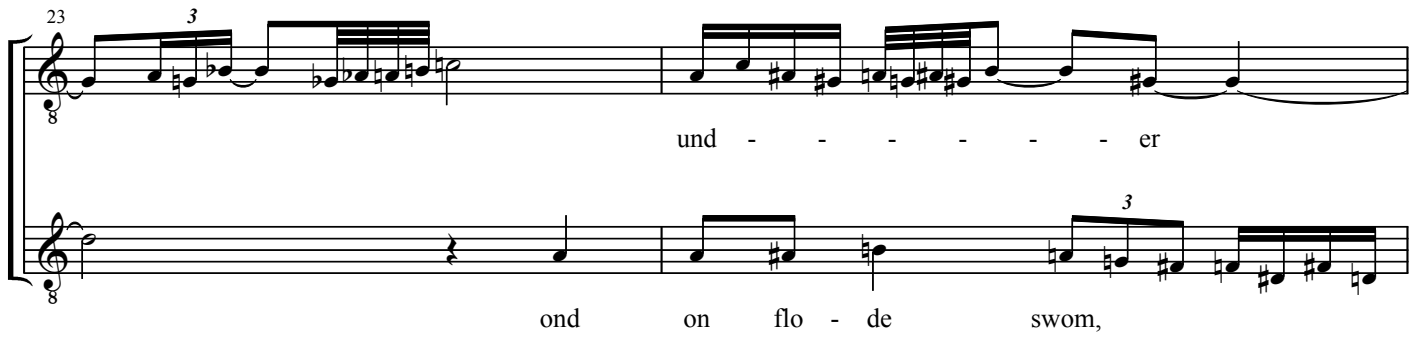
fle - - - - - ah, ond

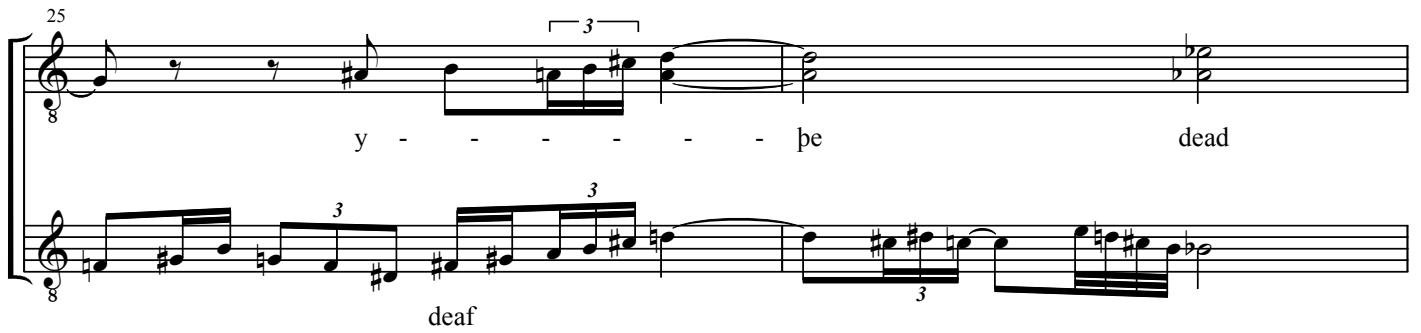
fle - - - - - ah mid fug - lum, fle - ah mid fug -

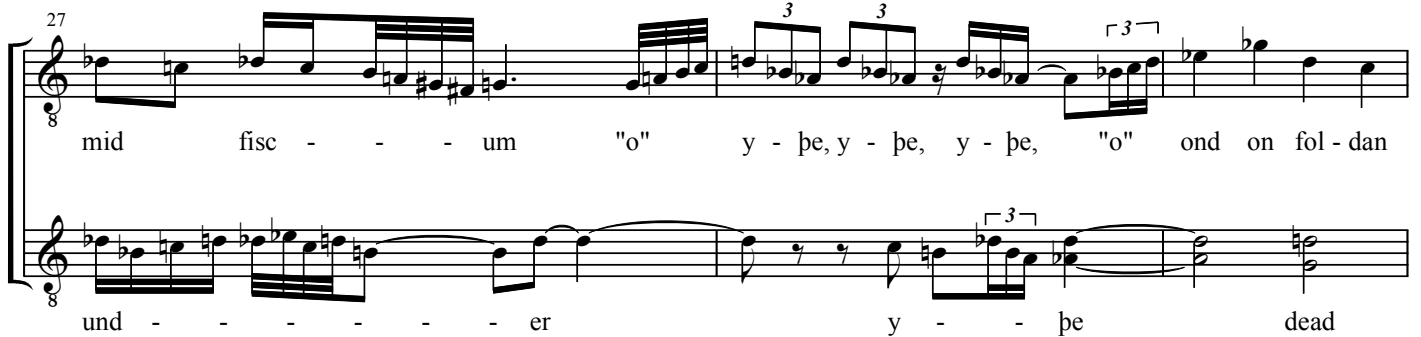
21

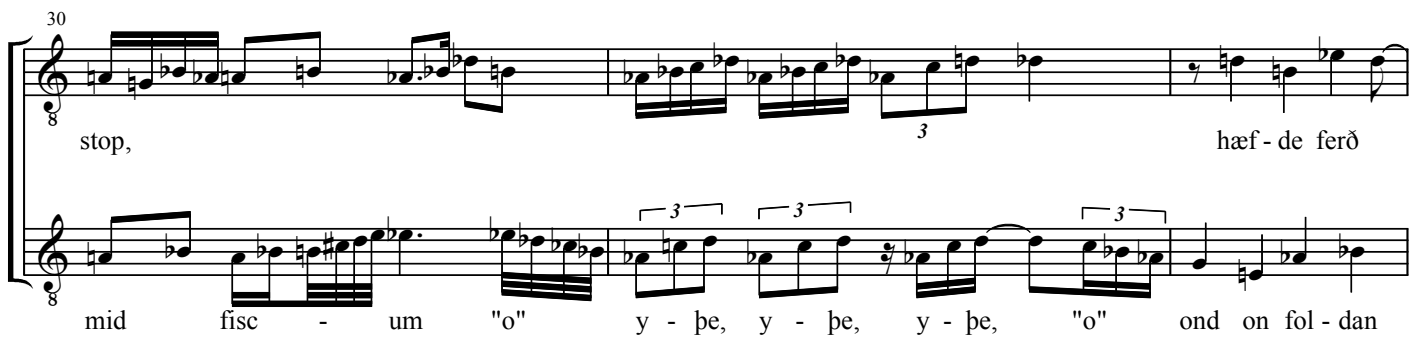
on flo - de swom, deaf

- lum fle - - - - - ah,

23  und - - - - - er  
 ond on flo - de swom,

25  y - - - - - be dead  
 deaf

27  mid fisc - - - um "o" y - þe, y - þe, y - þe, "o" ond on fol - dan  
 und - - - - - er y - - - þe dead

30  stop, hæf - de ferð  
 mid fisc - um "o" y - þe, y - þe, y - þe, "o" ond on fol - dan

33

cwi - - - - - cu, hæf - de ferð cwi -

stop, hæf - de ferð

36

- - - - - cu,

cwi - - - - - cu, hæf - - -

*rit.*

38

hæf - - de ferð cwi - - - - - cu.

- - de ferð cwi - - - - - cu.

# Riddle 47 solution

Dark & crawling ♩ = c.48

Altus *p*  
Moð - ðe word fræt. Me þæt þuh - te wræt - li - cu wryd,

Tenor I *p*  
Moð - ðe word fræt. Me þæt þuh - te

Tenor II

Bassus *p*  
Moð - - - ðe word fræt. Me þæt

7  
þa ic þæt wun - dor ge - frægn, þæt se wrym for - swealg

8  
wræt - li - - - cu wryd, þa ic þæt wun -

8

7  
þuh - - - te wræt - - - -



13

we - ra gied su - mes, þeof in -  
 dor ge - - - frægn, þæt se wyrm for -  
 Stæl - - - - - giest ne wæs

13

- li - - - - cu wyrd, þa ic

18

þys - tro þrym - - - fæst - ne cwi - de ond þæs strang - an sta -  
 - swalg we - ra gied wih - - - te þy

18

þæt wun - - - - -

23

- pol. Stæl - - - giest ne wæs wih - te þy gleaw - - 3 -

su - mes, þeof in þys-tro þrym - - - fæst - ne cwi -

gleaw - - - ra, þe he þam

23

- dor ge - - - frægn, þæt se

28

- ra, gleaw - ra, þe he þam wor - dum swealg.

- de ond þæs strang - - - an sta - þol.

wor - - - dum swealg.

28

wyrm for - - - swealg.

# Riddle 46 solution

Quick, but smooth ♩ = 112

Altus *mf*  
Wun - dor wearð on we - ge; wæ -

Tenor I *mf*  
Wer sæt æt wi - ne mid his wi - - - fum twam

Tenor II *mf*  
Wer sæt æt wi - ne

Bassus

7  
- - ter wearð to ba - - - ne. swa - se ge -

8  
on his su - no ond his twa doh-tor, Wun - - - dor

8  
mid his wi - - - - fum twam ond his su - no

7  
*mf*  
Wer sæt

13

8  
 - sweo - stor, ond<sup>3</sup> hy - ra su - - - no twe - gen,  
 8  
 wearð on we - - - ge;  
 8  
 ond his twa doh-tor, swa - se ge<sup>3</sup> - sweo - stor,  
 13  
 æt wi - - - ne mid his

17

8  
 twe-gen, fri-li-co frum - bearn, frumbearn; fæ - - - - -  
 8  
 wæ - - - - - ter wearð to ba - - - - - ne.  
 8  
 ond<sup>3</sup> hy - ra su - no twe-gen, twe-gen, freo - li - co frum -  
 17  
 wi - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - fum twam

22

- der, fæ - - - - der wæs þær

fæ - - - - - der, fæ - - - - -

- bearn; Wun - - - dor wearð on we - ge; wæ -

22

ond his su - - - no

28

in - ne pa - ra æ - þe - lin - ga ægh - - - wæð - res mid,

- der wæs þær in - ne pa - ra æ - þe - lin - ga

- - - ter wearð to ba - - - ne.

28

ond his twa doh - tor,

32

8 e - - - am ond ne - fa. Eal - ra wær<sup>3</sup> - on fi - fe

8 ægh - - - wæð - res mid, e - - - am ond ne<sup>3</sup> - fa.

8 fæ - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

32

Wun - - - dor wearð on we - - - ge;

37

8 eor - la ond i - de - sa<sup>3</sup> in - set - ten - - - - dra.

8 Eal - ra wær - on fi - fe eor - la on i - de - sa

8 - der, fæ - - - - - der wæs<sup>3</sup> þær in -

37

Wæ - - - - - ter wearð

41

wær - on fi - fe wær - on fi - fe, wær - on

in - sit - ten - - - - dra. wær - on fi - fe,

- ne pa - ra æ - þe - lin - ga ægh - - - - wæð - res

41

to ba - - - - ne.

44

fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe, wær - on...

wær - on fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe, wær - on fi - fe...

(fi - - - fe, fi - - - fe, fi - - - fe, fi - - - fe...)

44