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The Lay of Aethernad

The Lay of Aethernad

by

Todd W. Swanson

Glorious are the elven lords, who live within forever:
Glist'ning stars, with white-jeweled crowns, who sit upon the sky,
Directing elves upon the earth, who tend the needs of trees,
Which shape the orchards of their land, and pillars of their halls,
Where elf-folk dwell in innocence, safe between the mountains,
Toiling without weariness, remembrance without fading.

Yearly Winter brought the time of orchard's autumn fading;
Even trees enchanted cannot keep their leaves forever --
With Winter snows the valley lies in shadow of the mountains
'Til Aethernad, the summer star, returns to southern sky,
Arises from his winter sleep within the dwarf king's halls,
Bids the elves who tend the earth to wake the slumb'ring trees.

Upon a time, when Aethernad decreed a rest for trees,
When the year was growing old and verdant leaves were fading,
Swart dwarven king now found himself full anxious in his halls --
For fixed return of Aethernad felt set beyond forever,
The starry jewel that lit his mines like sun come from the sky;
So dwarves sent secret gifts to Winter's palace over mountains.

Unaware, fair Aethernad came early to the mountains,
Behind, the giants ravaged rusting boughs of elven trees.
The star descended marble stairs from throne upon the sky,
Distraught that leafy earth below so soon commenced its fading;
Return of greenest springtime seemed to lie beyond forever --
Would Aethernad sleep fitfully within the dwarf king's halls.

So when the portal swung full closed at gate to darkened halls,
Dwarves led the elf-prince Aethernad into their coal-black mountain,
Where dwarf kin craved cage light of stars in iron grasp forever --
Promised to protect the prince from storms that smothered trees;
On golden throne, on treasure trove, sat Aethernad full fading,
Though gathered gems did glitter with the pride of summer sky.

In night-stark time, the prince supposed the sun reclaimed the sky,
But dwarven king had bound him fast in gloom of deepest halls;
So withers Aethernad, spid'ry fingers ever fading,

Languid and recumbent on his seat beneath the mountain,
Where shameless dwarves, they fashioned marble groves of marble trees,
While white-browed elves fled far from frost and left the earth forever.

And ling'ring still is Aethernad in halls beneath the mountain,
With pale eyes crave a glimpse of cobalt sky or verdant trees,
While stories of forever-folk, as misty dreams, are fading.

Matins

by

October Williams

Come, watch beside me, while
An early light begins to filter through:
Soundless, it splits the darkness into earth and sky,
Divides the firmament in two:
Far-off and faint between the spheres, a bird is calling.

The grey things quicken, and take on a greener hue:
The veil is lifting, studded here and there with diamonds, the dew;
The day is like a jewel in a forgotten fountain; He is near
Who wakes the sleepers.

The fountains will be garlanded again, the world will gleam anew
Beneath the waters. Lo: the King is here.
His footsteps, soft and crystal clear
Fall on the courtyard where the leaves accrue —

Come, still your weeping.
Heaven is almost blue;
And gentler rain than yesterday is falling.