

# Winter

## Hesiod's "Works and Days"

### 504–535

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Hesiod does not indulge in the descriptive similes so characteristic of the Homeric poems, nor does he usually go in for extended scenic passages. Nonetheless, in the *Works and Days* he devotes 36 lines to a vivid and memorable description of winter.

505 μῆνα δὲ Ληναίωννα, κάκ' ἡματα, βουδόρα πάντα,  
τοῦτον ἀλεῦασθαι, καὶ πηγάδας, αἶ τ' ἐπὶ γαίαν  
πνεύσαντος Βορέαο δυσηλεγέες τελέθουσιν,  
ὅς τε διὰ Θρήκης ἵπποτρόφου εὐρέι πόντῳ  
ἐμπνεύσας ὄρινε· μέμυκε δὲ γαῖα καὶ ὕλη·

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<sup>504</sup> μείς μηνός ὁ month. Ληναίων ὠνος ὁ Lenaion, the name of a month in several Greek calendars; December–January. ἡμαρ ἡματος τό (Epic) day. βουδόρος ὄν flaying (the skin off) oxen.

<sup>505</sup> τοῦτον i.e. μῆνα, summing up the previous line. ἀλέομαι avoid aor.inf. acting as imperative (which construction Hesiod is fond of). πηγάς ἄδος ἡ frost. γαῖα ἡ earth.

<sup>506</sup> πνέω, πνεύσομαι, ἔπνευσα blow; breathe. Βορέας ὄν ὁ Boreas, the north wind; Βορέαο Epic gen.sg. forming gen. absolute with πνεύσαντος. δυσηλεγής ἐς cruel, ruthless, bringing bitter grief. τελέθω become.

<sup>507</sup> Θρήκη ἡ Thrace. ἵπποτρόφος ὄν horse-feeding. εὐρύς εἶα ὕ wide, broad. πόντος ὁ the sea, dat. of location.

<sup>508</sup> ἐμ-πνέω Epic contraction of εο to ευ, blow in, upon + dat. ὀρίνω (ῖ) stir, raise, excite. μυκάομαι pf. μέμυκα bellow, groan. ὕλη ἡ (ῦ) wood, woods.

- πολλὰς δὲ δρυὶς ὑψικόμους ἐλάτας τε παχείας  
 510 οὔρεος ἐν βήσσης πιλνῶ χθονὶ πουλυβοτείρῃ  
 ἐμπίπτων, καὶ πᾶσα βοῶ τότε νήριτος ὕλη.  
 θῆρες δὲ φρίσσουσ', οὐράς δ' ὑπὸ μέξε' ἔθεντο,  
 τῶν καὶ λάχνη δέρμα κατάσκιον· ἀλλὰ νυ καὶ τῶν  
 ψυχρὸς ἐὼν διάησι δασυστέρνων περ ἐόντων.  
 515 καὶ τε διὰ ῥινοῦ βοδὸς ἔρχεται, οὐδέ μιν ἴσχει·  
 καὶ τε δι' αἶγα ἄησι τανύτριχα· πάεα δ' οὔτι,  
 οὔνεκ' ἐπηεταναὶ τρίχες αὐτῶν, οὐ διάησιν  
 ἴς ἀνέμου Βορέου· τροχαλὸν δὲ γέροντα τίθησιν.  
 καὶ διὰ παρθενικῆς ἀπαλόχροος οὐ διάησιν,  
 520 ἢ τε δόμων ἔντοσθε φίλη παρὰ μητέρι μίμνει  
 οὐ πω ἔργα ἰδυῖα πολυχρύσου Ἀφροδίτης·  
 εὔ τε λοεσσαμένη τέρενα χροῖα καὶ λίπ' ἐλαίῳ

<sup>509</sup>δρυὶς δρυός ἢ acc.pl. oak. ὑψικόμος on high and leafy. ἐλάτη fir. παχύς εἶα ὕ thick, stout.

<sup>510</sup>ῥος εὖς τό mountain; hill, with metrical lengthening, οὔρ-. βήσσα ἢ glen, dell. πιλνάω bring close (to), to make to touch + dat. χθών χθονός ἢ earth. πολυβότειρα ἢ nourishing many, also with metrical lengthening in the first syllable.

<sup>511</sup>ἐμ-πίπτω fall in, upon often with hostile sense. πᾶσα here "entire, whole." βοῶ shout. τότε then. νήριτος on immense; countless.

<sup>512</sup>θήρ θηρός ὁ wild animal. φρίσσω pres.3pl. bristle; shiver; shudder. οὐρά ἢ tail. ὑπό under. μέξεα τὰ genitals. τίθημι aor.mid.3pl. put, place.

<sup>513</sup>τῶν καὶ "even (those) whose..." λάχνη ἢ soft woolly hair; down. δέρμα ατος τό skin. κατάσκιος on shaded, covered with + dat. τῶν with 514 δασυστέρνων περ ἐόντων

<sup>514</sup>ψυχρὸς ἢ ὄν cold; here agreeing with implicit Βορέας. εἰμί Epic pres.act.part. nom.sg.m. to be. δι-άημι pres.3sg. blow through + gen. δασύστερνος on shaggy-breasted. περ very.

<sup>515</sup>καὶ τε and even. ῥίνος ὁ hide. βοῦς ἢ, ὁ gen.sg. βοός bull, ox, cow. μιν enclitic 3rd person acc. pronoun, him, her, it, i.e. Boreas. ἴσχω hold, keep back, restrain.

<sup>516</sup>δι' ... ἄησι tmesis, cf. 514. αἶς αἰγός ὁ, ἢ goat. τανύτριξ τανύτριχος long-haired. πῶν τό flock, esp. of sheep. οὔτι "not at all."

<sup>517</sup>οὔνεκα because. ἐπηετανός (ἢ) ὄν abundant, enough. θρίξ τριχός ἢ hair.

<sup>518</sup>ἴς ἰνός ἢ (ἰ) strength, force; tendon. ἄνεμος ὁ wind. τροχαλός ἢ ὄν running; rolling. γέρων, γέροντος, ὁ old man. τίθημι here make.

<sup>519</sup>παρθενική ἢ maiden. ἀπαλόχροος on also with 3rd. decl. forms, gen. -χροος, soft-skinned.

<sup>520</sup>δόμος ὁ home, house, often in pl. ἔντοσθε(ν) from within; within + gen. φίλος ἢ on dear, beloved; friend in Epic often "one's own," as here. μίμνω stay, remain, wait.

<sup>521</sup>πω encl. yet, up to this time. ἔργον τό work, action, matter. οἶδα perf.act.part. nom.sg.f. know. πολυχρύσος on rich in gold, golden. Ἀφροδίτη Aphrodite, scan ~--.

<sup>522</sup>λοέω (λούω) bathe. τέρεν ἢ ενος m.f.; τέρεν, τέρενος neut. round, full. χροῖα, χροός, χροῖ, χροῖα, ὁ flesh, body, complexion. λίπα adv. richly, unctuously. ἔλαιον τό olive-oil, esp. for anointing.

- χρισαμένη μυχίη καταλέξεται ἔνδοθι οἴκου  
 ἦματι χειμερίῳ, ὅτ' ἀνόστεος ὄν πόδα τένδει  
 525 ἔν τ' ἀπύρῳ οἴκῳ καὶ ἦθεσι λευγαλέοισιν.  
 οὐδέ οἱ ἥελιος δείκνυ νομὸν ὄρμηθῆναι·  
 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ κυανέων ἀνδρῶν δῆμόν τε πόλιν τε  
 στρωφᾶται, βράδιον δὲ Πανελλήνεσσι φαίνει.  
 καὶ τότε δὴ κεραοὶ καὶ νήκεροι ὕληκοῖται  
 530 λυγρὸν μυλιόωντες ἀνὰ δρία βησσήεντα  
 φεύγουσιν· καὶ πᾶσιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ τοῦτο μέμηλεν,  
 ὡς σκέπα μαιόμενοι πυκινοὺς κευθμῶνας ἔχωσι  
 καὶ γλάφῳ πετρήεν· τότε δὴ τρίποδι βροτῶ ἴσοι,  
 οὗ τ' ἐπὶ νῶτα ἔαγε, κάρη δ' εἰς οὐδας ὄρᾶται,  
 535 τῷ ἴκελοι φοιτῶσιν, ἀλευόμενοι νίφα λευκῆν.

<sup>523</sup> χρίω (ῖ) annoint. μύχιος η on innermost. κατα-λέγομαι lie down. ἔνδοθι within + gen.

<sup>524</sup> χειμέριος α on wintry. ἀνόστεος on boneless. ἑός ἐή ἐόν; ὅς ἦ ὄν his, her, its (own). πούς ποδός ὁ foot. τένδω gnaw (at). Commentators go wild over this and the following two lines. The “boneless one” is the octopus.

<sup>525</sup> ἄπυρος on without fire. ἦθος εος τό abode; customary place; character. λευγαλέος η on in a sad state, wretched.

<sup>526</sup> οἶ 3sg. dat., i.e. the octopus. ἥελιος ὁ sun. δείκνυμι bring to light, display; sense requires a present and text critics offer various remedies. West suggests it's an “old Aeolic form” from \*δείκνυτ, others δεικνύει. νομός ὁ feeding-place. ὄρμάω aor.pass.inf. rush towards, be eager.

<sup>527</sup> ἐπί + acc. with δῆμον... to, at, goal of motion. κυάνεος η on dark-blue; dark, black. δῆμος ὁ district, land. πόλις εως ἡ city.

<sup>528</sup> στρωφάομαι pres.mid.3sg. (re)turn constantly, roam, visit. βραδύς εἶα ὕ comparative adv. slow. Πανέλληνες οἱ all the Greeks. φαίνω give light, shine.

<sup>529</sup> καὶ τότε δὴ H. is done with the octopus and has moved back to the general discussion. κεραός ἡ ὄν horned. νήκερος epic nom.pl. hornless, not horned. ὕλοκοίτης ου ὁ (ῦ) one who lives in a forest.

<sup>530</sup> λυγρός ἄ ὄν baneful, miserable, here adv. μυλιάω pres.act.part. nom.pl.m. (-οω-: Smyth §642–646) grind the teeth. δρία τό, δρία τά thicket. βησσήεις εσσα εν of a glen, woody.

<sup>531</sup> φεύγω flee. ἐνὶ = ἐν. φρήν φρενός ἡ dat.pl. midriff but usually heart, mind. μέλω μελήσω ἐμέλησα μέμηλα concern, be an object of care + dat.

<sup>532</sup> ὡς indirect question, how. σκέπας αος τό poet. nom. and acc.pl. σκέπα covering, shelter. μαιόμαι seek. πυκινός ἡ ὄν close, thick, well fitted together. κευθμών ὠνος ὁ hiding place. ἔχω pres.act.subj. 3pl.

<sup>533</sup> γλάφῳ τό cavern. πετρήεις εσσα εν rocky. τρίπους ποδος ὁ ἡ three-footed, i.e. walking with a cane. βροτός ὁ mortal, human. ἴσος -η -ον equal, the same as + dat. Supply εἰσί.

<sup>534</sup> οὗ whose, Smyth §325. ἐπ-άγνυμι perf.3sg. with tmesis break, intrans. νῶτον τό back, often pl. κάρη κρᾶτος τό head. οὐδας τό surface of the ground. εἰσ-οράω tmesis look (at).

<sup>535</sup> τῷ i.e., the old man. ἴκελος η on resembling, like + dat. φοιτάω go to and fro. ἀλεύομαι avoid. νίφα τῆν (no nom.) snow. λευκός ἡ ὄν white, bright.