



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 11
Number 2

Article 13

Fall 10-15-1984

The High King of England

Paul Kocher

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kocher, Paul (1984) "The High King of England," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 11 : No. 2 , Article 13.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol11/iss2/13>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSUTM

Online Winter Seminar

February 4-5, 2022 (Friday evening, Saturday all day)

<https://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/ows-2022.htm>

Online Winter Seminar



Online Winter Seminar

The Inklings and Horror: Fantasy's Dark Corners

February 4-5, 2022 (Friday evening, Saturday all day)

Via Zoom and Discord

Mythcon 52: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico; July 29 - August 1, 2022

<http://www.mythsoc.org/mythcon/mythcon-52.htm>

- Joyce, James
36. *The Artist as Magician: Yeats, Joyce, and Tolkien* (Dominic Manganiello)
- The Kalevala
31-32. *A Jungian Reading of The Kalevala* (Bettina Knapp)
(last two parts)
- MacDonald, George
36. *The Harmony Within* by Rolland Hein (reviewed by Roderick McGillis)
- Morganwg, Iolo
35. *New Myths for Old* (Alexei Kondratiev) (part one)
- Sage of Mentor (poem)
36. *From the White House to Olympus* (Cavalier Treatment by Lee Speth)
- Sayers, Dorothy L.
34. *Dorothy L. Sayers* by Dawson Gaillard (reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson)
34. *Matteau's Shepherds* by Leroy Lad Panek (reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson)
37. *Dorothy L. Sayers: A Reference Guide* by Ruth Tanis Youngberg (reviewed by Nancy-Lou Patterson)
37. *Beneath That Ancient Roof: The House as Symbol in Dorothy L. Sayers' Esmam's Honeymoon* (Nancy-Lou Patterson)
- Unicorns! (anthology)
34. review (Thomas M. Egan)
- Villemarque, Hersard de la
36. *New Myths for Old* (Alexei Kondratiev) (part two)
- Yeats, W.B.
36. *The Artist as Magician: Yeats, Joyce, and Tolkien* (Dominic Manganiello)
- Motion pictures
31. review of *Excalibur* (Jessica Yates)
32. *The Dragon in Summer* (reviewed by Nichols Grimes) (*Excalibur*, *Raiders of the Lost Arc*, *Clash of the Titans*, and *Dragonslayer*)
35. review of *The Dark Crystal* (Benjamin Urrutia)
35. review of *Dragonslayer* (Jessica Yates)
37. review of *Return of the Jedi* (Benjamin Urrutia)

The High King of England

by Paul Kocher

The High King of Engeland
Was striding round his cliffs.
He could smell the tempest rushing down
From Iceland's bergs and mists.
The balefires of the Boreal Eye
Waved in the sky like flags of fire,
And ocean's bottom naked lay
Bare as a field new-harvested.

"Angus, old Angus!" then shouted Engeland,
"Can ye still guard the blessed land
Though faded and bent ye be?
Speak up! I'll lend ye a helping hand
And the strength of my fine young back."

"My Laird, my Laird!" old Angus yelled,
"I have been at this post ten thousand years,
I'll be here ten thousand others.
But I grant ye 'tis a braw, braw night
When young ones should sleep tight and warm
Away from this winter dither."

So Engeland doffed his royal robes
And donned his garb of labor.
His breeks were of a goatish skin
That hung down to his knee cap,
And goatish was the vest he wore
To keep his mighty chest from ham.

Wherever spume flew highest
Or reefs lurked dark and fanged
He kicked them with his feet apart
So the boats could come in nigher;
And where the breakers climbed the cliffs
To sport among the farmlands
He heaved some stony barriers up,
Amid the scree beneath his feet
Where boulders clanked and clattered
He blindly groped and lifted them.
Blood made wine of that water.
And when he could he fed them back
To the place whence they had fallen,
Putting them where they still belonged
With hands both strong and gentle.

Dawn cracked, sun rose, hush fell,
For the storm had rushed away
Across the straits to Erin land.
Then did old Angus say,
"She's gone, my Laird. I'll take my rest
In my cave beneath the sea,
And you take yours in your castle tall
For other broils like this there'll be."

But Engeland thought a private thought:
I'll have a word with the Irish prince
Who needs many a word with me.
Then sweeter than a lark he called,
"O Bryan, dear, how do you fare
Among your green, green dales and dells?"

"Why well enough, if ye'd leave me be.
What with thinking this and thinking that
And hating what I loved before,
My brains are like to fry!"

But Engeland shook his heavy head:
"Son of my soul, 'tis not your thoughts,
Your surface thoughts, that break your peace.
Your loyalty's impure. And that's the worst;
For deep it waits, that silent pool
Where we quaff health or poison up,
Till life's a joy that eye endures
Or naught but a sullen game.
Now Ireland has too many kings.
One must prevail while the others die;
Choose well whom you will die with, if need be
For that's the art--to make a gladsome choice.
Have naught to do with traitors
On the shore or on the ships
But stand your ground and hold it
Where your true Lord sits.
O earth's no place of safety
For life is never safe,
And the arrow storm can sleet you down
From any compass point."

Farewell, then, waved High Engeland,
And wrapping well in his woolen robes,
Slept like a king whose duty's done
Till the next storm calls him out again.