And soon it stood there
finished and ready, in full view,
the hall of halls. Heorot was the name
he had settled on it, whose utterance was law.
Nor did he renege, but doled out rings
and torques at the table. The hall towered,
its gables wide and high and awaiting
a barbarous burning. That doom abided,
but in time it would come: the killer instinct
unleashed among in-laws, the blood-lust rampant.

Then a powerful demon, a prowler through the dark,
nursed a hard grievance. It harrowed him
to hear the din of the loud banquet
every day in the hall, the harp being struck
and the clear song of a skilled poet
telling with mastery of man's beginnings,
how the Almighty had made the earth
a gleaming plain girdled with waters;
in His splendor He set the sun and the moon
to be earth's lamplight, lanterns for men,
and filled the broad lap of the world
with branches and leaves; and quickened life
in every other thing that moved.

So times were pleasant for the people there
until finally one, a fiend out of hell,
began to work his evil in the world.
Grendel was the name of this grim demon
haunting the marshes, marauding around the heath
and the desolate fens; he had dwelt for a time
in misery among the banished monsters,
Cain's clan, whom the Creator had outlawed
and condemned as outcasts. For the killing of Abel
the Eternal Lord had exacted a price:
Cain got no good from committing that murder
because the Almighty made him anathema,
and out of the curse of his exile there sprang
ogres and elves and evil phantoms
and the giants too who strove with God
time and again until He gave them their reward.

Sometimes at pagan shrines they vowed
offerings to idols, swore oaths
that the killer of souls might come to their aid
and save the people. That was their way,
their heathenish hope; deep in their hearts they remembered hell. The Almighty Judge of good deeds and bad, the Lord God, Head of the Heavens and High King of the World, was unknown to them. Oh, cursed is he who in time of trouble has to thrust his soul in the fire's embrace, forfeiting help; he has nowhere to turn. But blessed is he who after death can approach the Lord and find friendship in the Father's embrace.
Beowulf 433-55

"I have heard moreover that the monster scorns in his reckless way to use weapons; therefore, to heighten Hygelac's fame and gladden his heart, I hereby renounce sword and the shelter of the broad shield, the heavy war-board: hand-to-hand is how it will be, a life-and-death fight with the fiend. Whichever one death fells must deem it a just judgment by God.

...Fate goes ever as fate must." [Gæð a wyrd swa hio sceal!]

Beowulf 671-87

He began to remove his iron breast-mail, took off the helmet and handed his attendant the patterned sword, a smith's masterpiece, ordering him to keep the equipment guarded. And before he bedded down, Beowulf, that prince of goodness, proudly asserted: "When it comes to fighting, I count myself as dangerous any day as Grendel. So it won't be a cutting edge I'll wield to mow him down, easily as I might. He has no idea of the arts of war, of shield or sword-play, although he does possess a wild strength. No weapons, therefore, for either this night: unarmed he shall face me if face me he dares. And may the Divine Lord in His wisdom grant the glory of victory to whichever side He sees fit."

Beowulf 694-702

They knew too well the way it was before, how often the Danes had fallen prey to death in the mead-hall. But the Lord was weaving a victory on his war-loom for the Weather-Geats. Through the strength of one they all prevailed; they would crush their enemy and come through in triumph and goodness. The truth is clear: Almighty God rules over mankind and always has.