

Two more riddles from the *Exeter Book*, translation by R. K. Gordon (1926). The numbering is according to the edition published by George Krapp and Elliott Dobbie (1936).

34 The *rake* riddle

Ic wiht geseah in wera burgum
seo þæt feoh fedeð hafað fela toþa
nebb biþ hyre æt nytte niþerweard gongeð
hiþeð holdlice 7 to ham tyhð
wæþeð geond weallas wyrte seceð
āa heo þa findeð þa þe fæst ne biþ
læteð hio þa wlitigan wyrtum fæste
stille standan on stapolwonge
beorhte blican blowan 7 growan

I saw a creature in the cities of men who feeds the cattle; it has many teeth; its beak is useful; it goes pointing downward; it plunders gently and returns home; it searches through the slopes, seeks herbs; always it finds those which are not firm; it leaves the fair ones fixed by their roots, quietly standing in their station, gleaming brightly, blowing and growing.

47 The *bookworm* riddle

Moððe word fræt me þæt þuhte
wrætlicu wyrd þa ic þæt wundor gefrægn
þæt se wurm forswalg wera gied sumes
þeof in þystro þrymfæstne cwide
7 þæs strangan stapol stælgieost ne wæs
wihte þy gleawra þe he þam wordū swealg

A moth ate words. That seemed to me a strange event, when I heard of that wonder, that the worm, a thief in the darkness, should devour the song of a man, a famed utterance and a thing founded by a strong man. The thievish visitant was no whit the wiser for swallowing the words.