



# THE WORLD OF PELLINOR

## **The Lay of Ardina and Ardhor**

When Arkan deemed an endless cold  
And greenwoods rotted bleak and sere  
The moon wept high above the world  
    To see its beauty dwindling:  
To earth fell down a single tear  
And there stepped forth a shining girl  
Like moonlight that through alabaster  
    Wells, its pallor kindling.

Such beauty made all beauty dim  
And homage called from voiceless stone:  
Like whitest samite was her skin  
    Or seafoam softly glimmering:  
A star that lit the night alone  
She stepped the winter woods within,  
A pearl a-glisten in the gloam,  
    A moonbeam fleetly shimmering.

Then wild amazement fastened on  
The Moonchild's heart, and far she ran,  
Through all the vales of Lirion  
    Her voice like bellnotes echoing:  
And from the branches blossom sprang

In iron groves of leafmeal wan,  
And Spring herself woke up and sang,  
The gentle Summer beckoning.

She passed into the mountain keeps  
Where stormdogs guard the ravined walls,  
A moonbeam piercing dismal deeps,  
Down jagged ridges clambering:  
Until she found a crystal fall,  
A river frozen in its leap,  
And in its depths a marble hall  
Of lofty spires was trembling.

In wonderment she silent fell,  
And stood before the wall of glass  
Enraptured by the citadel,  
Its endless, sparkling mullions:  
Like lilies caught in sudden frost  
Which grow no more, but comely still,  
Forlornly cast those towers of ice  
Their cold and lifeless brilliance.

She knew not that the hours passed  
Nor noticed that the darkness fell;  
And as she looked, she thought at last  
Her heart must break with heaviness:  
She wept, though why she could not tell:  
For love unborn, for beauty lost,  
For all that lives and breathes and will  
Grow cold and lose its loveliness.

And in the icy halls a king  
Woke from his spellbound sleep and saw  
A vision of the banished spring,  
A form so fair and luminous  
That from his frosted eyes the hoar  
Ran down like tears and, marvelling,  
He felt the chains of winter thaw  
And years of thraldom ruinous.

Ardina met his eyes, and through

Her moonlit veins a shudder ran  
That kissed her skin with fiery dew,  
    Its marble pallor chastening:  
A doom it seemed to see this man  
In whose dark eyes such ardour grew,  
A grief stored up through summer's span,  
    From joy to winter hastening.

Between them stood the wall of ice  
And round them barren winter waste,  
But each saw in the other's face  
    The light of springtime lingering:  
Like thunder broke the charméd frost,  
And freed at last to bitter bliss  
Immortal maid and man embraced,  
    Their light and shadow mingling.

So swore Ardina and Ardhor  
That ever would the other cleave,  
And heavy was the doom they bore  
    Through war and clamour perilous:  
Through grief and death they passed alive  
To meet on the immortal shores  
And still in starry glades their love  
    Shines ever strong and sorrowless.

By Tulkan of Lirion, translated from the *inel-*  
*fardhalen* of Old Lironese