

THE NECKAN

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Evening's clouds wreath the sky.
In meadows dance the fairies spry,
The Neckan, crown of leaves on head,
Plays his song in the stream's bed.

A boy, in willows upon the shore,
Rests in the scent of blooms and, more,
Hears arise from the water's rill
The song, shouts in the night so still:

“Old man, why play? What will you gain?
Can the song you play dissolve your pain?
Though you freely liven field and wood,
You'll never become a child of God!

The moonlit nights of Paradise
The plains of blooms in Eden's bliss—
The high and mighty Angels of Light
Will never let you see their like.”

The Neckan's face is washed in woe,
Down to the depths of the stream he goes.
His fiddle's dumb. No more will ring
In the silver stream the Neckan's song.

—Translated by Martin Andersson and Phillip A. Ellis