

## On “Helvegen”

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**T**O BE SURE, scientific analysis and logical argument hold sway. And must. But Einar Selvik’s song “Helvegen”<sup>1</sup> speaks to me deeply too, perhaps in other ways, and in ways that no other song has.

“Helvegen” is a song about death, dying, and about remembering. It tells that an antidote to the evanescence of life is language and song. Through language and song, we remember those who come before us, whence we came, and where we go. Language and song are both a mirror and substance of life.

The lyrics hold symbolic reference to Norse’s Odin and to his sacrifice at Mimir’s Well. Mimir is the Norse god of wisdom and knowledge. Through his sacrifice of an eye, Odin learns the magical power of language and song over death.

Someone recently asked if religious unbelief precludes or even prohibits a sense of something spiritual. Selvik’s “Helvegen,” and *Kalandra*’s cover of it in particular, answers.

And so I listen. And I listen.

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<sup>1</sup>*Kalandra*’s cover of Einar Selvik’s, “Helvegen”, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6by9c124Cw>.