

HOW LONG WE HELD THE HILL

By Richard Paul

-*- Stressed Syllables

Our forebears took the North lands from the grasp of evil's spawn
And raised the hill atop the bones of fiends who'd felt our scorn.
Would our hard-earned home could thus have been a place of peace,
Instead we've borne a curse of wars which never once did cease.
From the fiends the first Duke felled
To the Ultik strife compelled,
Year by year we've held the hill.

Sailing south from Ultiana, hunting for our lives,
For murder seemed the only way the Ultik heart could thrive.
And every time we took up arms and drove them to the sea,
They'd just come back the next year for the sport that brought them glee.
Children they would snatch away
And in their evil style raise
Then one day send them back to raid the hill.

Had the kingdom's other counties sent their fighters here,
Long ago we'd see destroyed our constant plight and fear,
Instead the King bid all our best to march down south with haste,
Because a darkness threatened there and time he'd dare not waste.
Yet as so many left to fight,
Few were left to match the plight
Of Ultik wolves who thought to bite the hill.

All the same we staved the Ultiks off for many years,
But undeterred they never ceased to bring their reavers here,
And all the more the King demanded soldiers for the south,
So North-Hill teetered perilous o'er Death's wide-gaping mouth.
Then the Duke himself was called
And his young son was left to hold,
'Gainst the Ultiks overbold, our hill.

Yet fight by fight and theft by theft our strength was cut away,
Till at last the Ultik bastards had the young Lord slain,
And all those who went south to fight won nothing in the end,
For over all and northwards did the fouler foemen wend.
The last of all our fighters
Were lost to deathless monsters
Who swarmed like ants over the hill.

Scant and fleeting was the peace fate deemed we should receive,
Endless runs the count of lives of Hill Folk stalled and rieved
Since the year we settled here our homes have been attacked,
At least it took these centuries for our proud realm to crack.
Now we pass as all things must
From flesh and cities into dust
What shall remain is just a hill.