

**Documentation to accompany
the Original Poetry entry
“The Prologue to Double Wars”
by Kareina Talventytär
for the Great Western Alliance
at the First Bardic War, AS LVI**

I wrote this poem for my “Piece in a Period Style” entry for the Norrskensbard competition, held in the Shire of Frostheim, Principality of Nordmark, Kingdom of Drachenwald in AS LI (2016). The style I was emulating was that of Chaucer’s 13th Century Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, of which I had been required to memorize the first 18 lines when I took Middle English Class in high school. That set of lines stands nicely on its own, and is of a length that takes an amount of time to recite that I felt was appropriate for a performance in such a context. Therefore, I chose that length for my own poem.

The structure of the Chaucer’s prologue is iambic pentameter, and the verse describes the changes in the world that happen in the spring in England, how nice these changes are, and how, taken together, they to inspire people to go on pilgrimage during that time of the year, especially to Canterbury, where there are important relics of a saint.

Therefore, when writing my verse, I have chosen to both use the meter and rhyme pattern (rhyming couplets) of the original, and to also present my story with the same approach. First describing the season of spring (as experienced here in Nordmark, which is rather further north than England) and what happens during that time of the year, and then revealing where (and why) we in this Principality are inspired to travel each spring.

Note for people outside of Drachenwald: The event, Double Wars, which takes place each spring in Southern Sweden is the biggest event in the Kingdom. It takes its name from the fact that the event runs for ten days, with two different wars taking place during the course of the event. However, while there are two wars, only the “*Knäckebröd*” War really matters, to everyone in the Kingdom. For that is the war over which side one ought to butter the Swedish hard-bread, or *knäckebröd* (which much like a thick cracker): The Flat side, or the Holey side? Even visitors to Sweden, who have never before seen *knäckebröd* know instinctively upon which side they want to spread the butter, and people can get very passionate about defending the “right” side.

The Prologue to Double Wars

*Come May, when snow has gone from Nordmark
and day has banished months of cold and dark
long hours of sun have worked their magic strong
inspiring us to raise our voice in song
for roads are clear and safe and dry again
now pounding of the drums of war begin
with every meal and breaking of the bread
are families split and wish their siblings dead
on this one point they never can agree:
which side to spread their butter or their brie
the flat or hole y side each will defend
yet 'er they take up arms to rip and rend
first must they clean their swords and polish maille
sew banners bright and build a chest dove tail
in every home across the northern land
folk pack so much the horse can hardly stand
they bring it all; their home away from home
to Double Wars, the place to which we roam.*

The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales

*Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour,
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halve cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(so priketh hem Nature in hir corages),
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,
And palmeres for to seken straunge strondes,
To ferne halwes, kowthe in sondry londes;
And specially from every shires ende
Of Engelond to Caunterbury they wende,
The hooly blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.*