“To ‘revive the vanished voices of makers’:  
Adapting Tolkien’s Beren and Lúthien Story in Alliterative Meter”

Rebecca Power

My thesis provides an in-depth analysis of the intricacies of alliterative meter, which is a poetic form that is now rarely used. Tolkien was a strong advocate for the revival of alliterative meter, and adhered to the form strictly, despite limitations due to the changes of language and syntax from Old English to modern English.

I am also analyzing the four different versions Tolkien wrote of the Beren and Lúthien story in The Silmarillion, the “Tale of Tinuviel,” “The Lay of Leithian,” and The Lord of the Rings. In comparing these versions, I will examine how their different genres affect the story and contribute to the body of myths about Beren and Lúthien that Tolkien himself created. Within this analysis of the texts, I am looking at the various modes of adaptation and how they work to build Tolkien’s mythology.

Ultimately, utilizing the information about alliterative meter and Tolkien’s Beren and Lúthien stories, I am writing an adaptation of this story in alliterative meter in modern English. My goal is to demonstrate that alliterative meter is well-suited to modern English, as well as to add to Tolkien’s mythology by producing another adaptation of his Beren and Lúthien story.