

**Jennifer Thornburg: English, Liberal Studies**

**Mentor: Jerome Coffey -- English**

***The Dream of the Rood***

For nearly two centuries the massive stones lay like a broken giant in the yard of a Scottish church. Carved with winding vines, elaborate scenes, and strange, cryptic letters, this was the Ruthwell Cross, one of the oldest preaching crosses in Europe. The mysterious linear letters were Viking runes. Their meaning remained a mystery for centuries until the discovery of the Vercelli manuscript in Italy in 1822. It contained the same runic verses, which J.M. Kemble soon translated. *The Dream of the Rood* is one of the earliest and most beautiful pieces of English literature. Rood is the Viking word for cross. This poem details the crucifixion of Christ from the point of view of a “dreamer” who falls asleep and dreams of a cross. The cross personified tells of its service to mankind as the tree on which the Lord was crucified. I have researched the Old English text and am writing a book manuscript. I will use Celtic lettering to illuminate the pages and will collaborate in the illustration process. My vision is to create a beautiful, rhymed manuscript that will educate and entertain adults and children as they read this important, historical text.