Beowulf Boast Project

Beowulf had no shame about boasting. In fact, the Anglo-Saxons warriors saw nothing wrong with letting the world know who they were, who their noble parents were, what great feats they had accomplished, and what they planned to do next. This boasting was perfectly polite, even expected.

Reread lines 236-284 of Beowulf in our text. These lines are Beowulf’s finest boast in which he introduces himself to Hrothgar and declares he will defeat the monstrous Grendel.

Assignment: Write a formal boast about yourself in the style of Anglo-Saxon poetry.

Guidelines: Your boast must show your understanding of Anglo-Saxon poetry by following the Anglo-Saxon poetic format:

- Self-identification (I am ______, daughter/son of ________)
- Your immediate ancestry and something about your lineage (daddy/mama)
- Your bravery (not gonna take nothin’ from nobody)
- Your beliefs (honor, glory, loyalty, honesty, decency, etc.)
- Boasts of at least 3 past achievements (academic, athletic, musical, social, artistic, complete lies, etc.)
- Boast of achievements to come (you can make these as outlandish as you like)
- Include at least 3 identifiable kennings (compound expression w/ metaphorical meaning: oar-steed = ship; whale-road = ocean)
- Include at least 3 alliterative phrases (repeated first consonant sound: monster-mashing, dealer; brain-basher)
- 25 lines in length – approximate verse form (no need to rhyme)
- Freely decorate your poem with images, borders, fonts, colors, and artisanal paper of your choice

Be ready to read it aloud in class!
Here’s an example from an anonymous student:

I am Samantha, the only descendant of the Great Grammar Goddess and the Baron of Banking. Baking every snowfall has made me marvelous. I prepare precise parcels for all I love. Gift giving, I got it from Grandma, She slaved away, Sundays mostly, to be sure we were content. I, the sweet-toothed teenager, was tempted by the luscious idea of baking. I started off small, Saturdays with mom. Soon enough the Matron of Molasses mounds made me move on. Dad, devourer of my developments, decided my delicacies were delectable. The edges brown & crispy, while the inside fluffy and flavorful. Fresh out of the oven these savory temptations melt in mouths. Cookies, the sweetest sin, are what I’ve come to love. But now that I have a new tasty trial, the temptations of a better life have haunted me. I plan to provide plenty of cookies for all. The next Martha Stewart, that’s who I’ll be! I’ll sneak up on them all, Kevin’s cupcakes will be no competition. I’ll beat those Pepperidge Farm people next. Then when she least expects it, I’ll take on Betty Crocker, the mother of all good cookies. The doughboy of Pillsbury will be no match for me! Finally I’ll take on that perfectionist criminal herself. Martha won’t know what hit her. My cookies and treats will rock this world! No one will stop me! Stealth is my secret weapon. Slowly their businesses will suffer. Until at last there is one ruler left – me.