

## A Squire's Lament

Stretched on a bed of sweat and Sand,  
The night brings no rest from heat and Hell.  
Waking, I lie racked between the Power and  
Pride of my Lord and the longing to dwell  
By the hearth of my Love's sweet hand,  
And hie me safe home from this grisly dell.

I mind me well, a scant year just past,  
The pulpit thunder fired my blood too young.  
So to prove my self worthy of a shy kiss cast  
In secret, as well to gain fabled wealth wrung  
From the heathen east in honor of our Savior's past,  
I'd ride soon home to a hero's welcomes gladly sung.

How wondrous he seemed, both grand and bold;  
Halfway up the sky he stood, my father's Lord,  
Glorious, shining, battle-chieftain in armor gold.  
A dozen we were, who went to gain a harness and sword,  
Between his hands, beardless all, our hands to fold  
and swore our fealty and earthly worship, honor's cord.

One died beneath a charger's hooves not two days more;  
Another three our ship killed with grisly skill.  
Two more sickened to death on the foreign shore,  
And a braver one than I was hung to stiffen our will  
Against desertion, and terror chased we five full sore.

One half a year had passed our eyes,  
One half a world beneath our feet  
Was left behind, and memory lies  
That there is green, somewhere, instead of heat,  
Soft food, cool drink, soft beds, soft cries  
Of Love, that arrow swift and aching sweet.

Yet now I stare at sandy stones  
Slicked with the blood of comrades dear, a city  
Far from out Savior's tomb, and groan,  
Another charge, another loss, and without pity  
Ravens will pluck our eyes and kick our bones  
And give the lie to my Crusader's ditty.

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