

Lament for baldor the brave

An oath had he uttered, to all around,
In Meduseld new-made, mead-emboldened;
no tales of terror this tall one would credit:
'fit but for goodwives, no foes affright me'.

So Baldor the Brave, Brego's Heir of the Mark,
stood at red sundown, stern and alone,
in Dimholt darkling, at Dwimorberg's foot:
he'd vow'd to venture the vale of death.

As light the land fled he leapt on his way:
no faintheart this foebane, he felt his oath yet.
Tho' dreadfill'd darkness like deadweight was on him,
on witbreaking woodpaths his way him betook.

He paused at a pillar which pale there stood,
and darkness of doom on him dropped as a hawk;
but boldly he bent to battle on stubborn,
mindful of mocking if meek back he came.

Then glimpsed he the gate, gaping in blackness,
wide rent in the rock: this road he must take.
There grimoires were graven, gaunt in their fellness;
his heart was held frozen but hard he went on.

He stepped in to stand in a starless night,
in a tunnel of terror, his torch held high:
and the world without seemed well a dream -
only now to go onward, for naught else there was.

Then all slipped away. Alone he stood now.
Great spaces he glimpsed, then gone was last hope:
held his flame high and the hellsprites took it;
blind in blackness he - did his bloodrun chill?

Night shadow fell sharply, shaking his fellness,
and whispers so willful welled all around;
now phantoms him followed, fast round him they wove,
whose mind would not melt now? no man may know.

And sudden he saw them, spectres of Dwimorberg:
a pale host and pitiless so pallid in night -
haggard and hollow faced, half-shades unreal;
a grey host and grim, a-glinting their eyes.

A strangely fine spell, a sorc'ry attractive;
dreadfully drawn he was, drained of his sense.
Past him they paraded, pacing all finely,
and led him on after all lowly behind.

Fain would he follow these fearful spectres,
who in magery had meshed him malevolently:
but designed they death for him to die alone,
envy had eaten them in endless night.

Who knows how they left him - leave him they did;
to dark door they drew him, then drifted on through...
fleeting views false perchance to him they showed;
then dreadsome work done departed their prey.

The sad lords all stern, the sleepless dead,
had caught him and captured him; calling him on
in magic full mighty, 'neath mountain grim.
Alas! he is lost then, to life, and the Mark.

Death slow at him dragged. In dark his soul fled,
till but bones and bright armour in blackness lay.
Long after his lord found him, alone and forlorn,
Baldor son of Brego; brave son of the Mark.

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