

MISSIVE FROM A KNIGHT

Afar from wintry wills and goading gales
of home, remembrance conjures nothing warm
about those sleety isles but your small hand.

I crave a dreamless sleep from dusk to dawn,
bone-weary as my mount. He carried me
too long today, caparisoned in silk
and silver, rider fully armored, armed
with sword and blazoned shield, escutcheoned boasts
to mean-eyed peasants idling by the road.

My love, your token prods my flagging heart
beneath this vest of mail, else it would stop.
Despair invades our camp. The men are faint
from meager food. And even if this quest
were holy as the Grail, our hope has fled.
Disease has claimed another friend, my squire,
and three more horses. Visors hide our fear

that God has turned His back. The king grows old.
And what of noble visions? Dreams that lacked
the substance to sustain them? Faithless queen
and bannered halls no warriors have won,
now slowly coated with heraldic rust?

My dreams are not of Avalon, but you.
My last chimera lurks between my vow
and you. That said, truth's champion am I.
Yes, I will keep my oath. But you are why.