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CECIL ROBERT LLOYD

QUEST AND ENCOUNTER

a legend from a tapestry

Wise hermits know that those black knights they meet
are likely champions in disguise, who choose
a shattered wood with stinking ponds as home
for fears they vanquish riding forth in quest.

a wise hermit knows black armour holds a guest

Black knights seek no dragons but one they serve
who slumbers in his swamp and ravishes no more,
but only stretches in his portal cave
to blink at spawning silver in his pool.

a wise hermit shelters a black knight as his quest

A champion in disguise craves mortal stain
on pure armour he encounters yet untried,
but hungry, share a fire with naked skin
and tatters penance while his armour rests.

a wise hermit serves the fish he knows to catch

"This wilderness of rocks and foetid groves
is for my hardened soles and raptured eyes
and not for you. What challenger dwells here?
Ride out and stir the virtue on the plain."

a wise hermit knows the crimson on what shines

"Too often, holy man, I search vain rest
so dreary on return from futile conquest.
I crave to crash that equal never vanquished
who seeks me from dark legends of home famished."

a wise hermit knows his armour will not fit

Where does he pleasure with his fellow man,
what woman's banner does he fly and pledge
great vengeance? Why does he delay our fate
to tally easy virtue in the dust?"

a wise hermit buries many fallen cleansed for graves

"You crave too much unless you venture roads and towns.
He seeks no blood of yours, but that of him you serve.
His vengeance is that sleeping horror, your dark pet,
and he would feed these fish we dine on with that blood."

a wise hermit coffins himself to ride once more

"So let him find me then and dare to stir
what I have tamed. One cry of fear and he is mine!
Then you choke on what fed fish, fishfood and fish-spine.
I ride to drain his armour that the pool may blur!"

a black knight seeks his brother unto death

Wise champions who have laid old arms aside
to heal livid scars naked to the sun
yet will be roused to serve and die again
another wound that hatches death to life.

a black knight knows his brother who will slay

Wise champions undisguised but long unknown
keep no weird beasts and serve no vengeance heard.
No unicorn, no dragon sleeps for them who once more bear
the dented armour they must not disclose.

*a wise hermit buries the disguised in his own pain
that black knight's armour he exchanged when he lay slain*

AFTERSONG

Slumberworm lies slain!
Sing news about the plain!
 The Hermit in the wood
 wakens all our good.
Good Hermit in the wood!

Slumberscum runs clear!
Bright as any tear!
 All its fishes bite,
 feed us our delight
Your blessing, Eremite!

Slumberform lies dead!
The Black Knight pierced his head.
 His armour is empty now
 the Hermit kept his vow.
O Hermit, bless your vow!

Slumbermurk is green
and birds there to be seen!
 Couples each to nest
 now sing their very best.
O may that knight be blessed!