

The Bard's Tale

(a rejected segment of the Canterbury Tales)

Not very far from where we now sit
A young man lived who was full of wit.
Clean and strong he was by God's grace
'twas said there was not fear he'd not face.
Call it chance or fate, or what'er you may,
But there came to him a glorious day
When his heart found his first love true.
He swore that for'er he would love her
And if ever in his life it were to occur
He'd gladly lay down his life in her place.
Then before her answer, at her female pace,
(Which needless to say was quite awhile.
Of this I speak with a sideways smile.)
A fierce dragon to their kingdom did come,
And slay the girl whose heart he'd won.
Sorrow struck and pierced his heart,
But as the weeks passed, they apart
Fierce anger did burn deep in his soul
And his mind and reason it did pull,
'till at last he sought the dragon to face.
He entered it's lair-a hideous place
And prepared for battle unto death,
To avenge alast his dear sweet Beth.
The dragon charged. He stood with no fear.
As the beast past he struck with spear.
The dragon turned to face the lad
And slashed and wounded our hero.
'tis sad that from the lair he did retreat.
That an early death he'd no meet.
Short paces from the dragon's lair
He came across a lovely unicorn mare
"Oh mare," he cried. His voice a gasp,
"Let not my life escape my grasp!
I must avenge the death of my love
Before I return to my God above.
Oh pure creature give magic to me!"
Some would say he'd paid his fee,
But the unicorn here did not.
She stood awhile in the same spot
Watching this pitiful man—a sight—
Mutter of the final day of fight
When vengeance would alast be his—

Ignorant of what honor truly is.
“My poor mortal,” she answered back,
“It’s not the magic of courage you lack,
But in blindness you refuse to see
Just how vital knowledge can be.
‘Tis not glory or honor that you seek
But the true peace of those who’re meek.”
Then with motion from shoulder to horn,
Without ever showing a portion of scorn,
She healed him and then went her way
To return later on yet another day.
He tried to thank her, but she was gone.

Starting then early at very next dawn
He studied the way of the ancient dragon.
That with Wisdom wrought he’d move on.
He consulted master of every kind
To open his eyes and sharpen his mind.
Then with knowledge and courage anew,
He withstood the challenge face by few,
But this time as a young lad no more
For by learning, he’s passed the door
That leads not all boys to manhood
In the way that all lads really should.
He faced again that horrible beast
Of an hundred cubits length at least
And in a fit of confidence so large
He waited not for demon to charge.
With speed of which I may not jest
He found it’s weak spot in it’s chest
And with lance did he stop it’s heart.
And then from him, did vengeance part.

But on revenge resides a bitter edge
And this tore through his soul as a wedge.
For now that the mighty dragon was gone,
His heart he felt, love could not spawn.
Lonely were the days that did follow
For his soul it felt, had been hollowed
In anguish he sought again the unicorn,
Starting his journey on wintery mourn.
He started with hope and tattered pride
With desire from his true God to hide.
The first town in which he stayed
He came across a beautiful young maid.

Though her father wished them to marry
He felt that there he should not tarry.
He left the lovely young maid behind
Without a thought of paying her mind.
'Next town found him the same place,
With young maid's father granting grace
But again he depart and went his way
And stayed there not even another day.
And so it went through the rest of his life
But never did he find way to end his strife.
Yet in almost every single town he stayed
He met at least one beautiful young maid
Whose father granted they could marry
If he would but there awhile tarry.
Leaving with the thought—'Twas not to be
The man's a simple fool if one asks me.
Because one day he did die all alone
Far away from his parent's home.
Only a unicorn mare came to his grave
Wishing that he'd seen the gift she gave.
I can't help but wonder her thoughts ,
As beneath the earth he sits and rots,
For all the hopes of love she gave him
During that final part of his life so dim.
'Twas not her horn that 'scaped his death
Only it was, his undying love of Beth.
The unicorn's magic came from this
And granted him the true wish of his,
That her love did 'round him glow
And unto maids and father's show.
This was the unicorn's magical gift,
That fate'd have him away from drift.

What good is knowledge if not shared?
For no one has ever had cause to care
To simply think that you know it,
While outwardly you never show it.
Unused knowledge is as stale bread:
It takes up space, but none are fed.
In knowledge the only foolish abides
In the parts of the unused mind.
Heed my words, my gentle friends,
May by this, you never meet your end.
This is the voice of experience, I say,
For in my life there did come a day

When one was able to give me her love
As granted to almost from God above.
Unjustly from her love, did I turn.
In anger, not love, did my heart burn.
And from that I nearly lost my life,
By my own hands in bitter strife.
(Look not my face: I do not cry;
Although there're times I lie.)
I knowledge I need to live was in me
If only I'd taken the time to see.
Remember my tale from this day hence,
For it is the voice of experience.