

The Road

The road was long and hard
And the sky was cold and grey:
The dead white moon a frozen shard
In the pale dim dawn of day:
But thief and harlot, king and and guard--
Warrior, wizard, knave and bard--
Rode with me all the way.

The wind was sharp as a whetted knife
As it blew from the wet salt seas;
The storm wind stirred to ghostly life
The gaunt black skeletal trees:
But already I had drunk the foaming wine of life--
Wine of plunder and lust and strife--
Down to the bitter dregs.

A boy from the wild country I came...
...West to cities of silk and sin.
With torch and steel, in blood and flames,
I won what a man may win:
Aye, gambled and won at the Devil's game--

Splendor and glory and glittering fame--
...and mocked at Death's skull-grin.

And there were foemen to fight and slay...

And friends to love and trust:

...and crowns to conquer and toss away...

and lips to taste with lust:

And songs to keep the black night at bay--

...And wine to swill to the break of day--

What matter the end be dust?

I've won my share of gems and gold...

They crumble into dust:

I've gorged on the best that life can hold:

And Devil take the odds:

The grave is deep and the night is cold--

The world's a skull-full of ash and dust---

...and I laugh at all the gods!

The long road trailed through many lands
Where the earth were either green or parched.

But we were a merry, jesting, band

Asking nought what track to go:

Rogue and reaver and firebrand--
And Life rode laughing at my side--
... and Death rode at my back.

The road was long and dusty--
Crom, but a man gets dry!--
I'm old and weary and Death is strong
But flesh was born to die:
Hai, Gods! But it was a merry throng
Rode by my side with jest and song--
under an empty sky.

I've heard fat, cunning priestlings tell
How damned souls writhe and moan:
That paradise they buy and sell
For gold and gold alone:
To the flames with priests and scriptures--
I'll stride down the scarlet throat of hell--
--and dice for the Devil's throne!

I faced life boldly and unafraid--
Should I flinch as Death draws near?
Life's but a game Death and I have played

many a wearisome year:

Hai! to the gallant friends I made--

Slave and swordsmen and lusty maids;--

I begrudge no foot of the road I ride upon--

The road in which my body dies and my soul flies free!

These verses below are a variation of Rudyard Kipling's "To Wolcott Balestier ", written during the First World War for a member of his wife's family in the military service. I have substituted some references to Calontir and the SCA in general.

Warrior's Homecoming

Beyond the paths of the outermost suns through utter darkness
hurled-

Further than ever comets flared or vagrant stardust swirled-
Lived those who fought and sailed and ruled and loved and made our
Calontir.

They are purged of pride because they died, they know the worth of
their days,

They sit at wine with the Maidens Nine and the gods of the Elder
Days,

It is their will to serve or be still as fitteth our Lord God's praise.

Tis their path to sweep though the silent deeps of space where
Azrael's outposts are,

Or to fight a path through the Pit's red wrath when God goes out to
war.

Or to hang out with the reckless Seraphim angels on the reins of red-

maned stars.

The Calontiri take their mirth from the joys going on in the Known
World, they dare not grieve in pain-

They know of all toil and the end of toil, the Calontiri know the God's
law is plain,

So the warriors whistle the Devil, their womenfolk supporting them, to
make war against evil
who knows that all sin is in vain.

And oftimes comes our wise Lord God, master of every trade,
And tells all gathered round, lord and commoner, men and women,
tales of his daily toils, of Edens newly made;
And all Calontiri rise to their feet as He passes by,
the people unafraid.

To Calontir warriors cleansed of base desires,
sorrows, lusts and shame-
Warriors who knew the hearts of men, men who stooped to fame.
Borne on the breath of the one called Death, our Calontiri brother'
spirit came.

That brother scarce had need to shed his pride or the dust of the
Earth-

Even as he stood that day before God, so walked he as at the
moment of his birth,

In simpleness, gentleness, clean honor, and joy.

So cups to lips in fellowship, the gathered Calontiri gave him the
welcome high

And made for him a place at the banquet table - the people ranged
nearby,

For him who had done his work, holding his peace, with no fear to die.

Beyond the path of the last lonely star, through open darkness hurled,
Further than flaring comets dared to go or hiving star-swarms swirled,
Sits a Calontir warrior born with those that praise our Lord God for
serving his world.

In service to Calontir

William de La Wolfe