

Peace, I say!

Sire, what desireth thou?  
 Why longeth thy heart so?  
 Ahh, yes I see ...  
 Tis peace thou cravest - happiness and security.  
 For truly thou lusteth after her,  
 That fair maiden - so splendidly attired;  
 Such divine raiment!  
 Luscious Mademoiselle,  
 Most charmingly displayed.  
 Yes, my friend, such glorious beauty  
 No mortal eye can avert.  
 Such fair damsel that Venus Herself wouldst begrudge!  
 For though attired with the seasons  
 And bathed with enthralling perfumes of rose and myrtle,  
 The patron of love cannot compare.  
 Peace of herself tis a wonderfully, majestic beauty!

Fair 'damoselle Peace is sought for all.  
 Hunted she is, both night and day;  
 By thieves and other knaves alike;  
 By men of old and youth - The wise and the foolish;  
 Braggarts and Meek folks, the same path do tread  
 Dear lady so constantly pursued  
 To the ends of the earth and beyond!  
 Like the hart when tis so vigorously hounded,  
 Ever extending the gap that doth threatens ..  
 Her flight is faster than the most strongest of winds  
 Which do savagely hail from the North.  
 Even faster than a meteor earthward bound!  
 No feet can her pace keep ... neither God nor man;  
 She ever eludes ...

But sire, do not despair!  
 Indeed, there remaineth a way to heart  
 For no being can forever roam,  
 Especially among the woods of the Forests of the Unknown.  
 Sire, running will never do - one must tire.  
 She must rest awhile - at the Crystal Pond;  
 For this is where she doth lay her weary bones  
 In the thickness of the grove!  
 Beyond yon mountains, there she be  
 Basking in the splendor of her worthy being  
 Watching the reflections of her past in the pond portrayed!  
 She is a strange one, dare I say...  
 Strange indeed be the most-dearest desire of mankind.  
 Sire, pursue her if thou wilt, but be careful of her type!

Deadly adventures do thee await on the way to her nest  
 Thou must forever be careful - or death will be certain.  
 Always with mainly fear proceed and much guarded soul do keep.  
 Young fellow be ye warned - the path to her be rugged indeed;  
 Ever strewn with bodies aplenty - all manner of there be!  
 Briars and thorns encompass it about;  
 Snakes lie within, for mankind ever-waiting  
 For mortal wounds to inflict upon their unaccustomed bodies.  
 Ravenous wolves do also their abode, always on the prowl they be  
 For the taste of blood to them is deliciously sweet.  
 Many a brave knight has this task braved and many, failure seen  
 For they neglected the sword of caution, ever necessary!  
 Many a righteous man led astray to utter despair  
 By others who knew nothing of the way! Be ware ...

Thou knoweth how men are easily swayed, by desires numerous..  
 Oft times, such be their downfall - very cruel indeed!  
 Be careful never lax must thou be; never idleness do permit  
 For along this very path others fearsome do tread.  
 There be creatures vile on this way - half beast, half man.  
 Such intellect have they tis always against man they be proved.  
 Their appearance even many doth fear - and off the path they flee  
 Others with these beasts do deals make - only to reap woe.  
 For these creatures know nothing of honesty, truth and loyalty.  
 Still there be others who for money much than their souls be sold  
 Yea, many more do delight in war - shedding of innocent blood  
 To them is gain ... and power too! It matters not!  
 So, be thou careful, many more viler than these do wait  
 Along this rugged path envious lest anyone should pass.

But, when thou reacheth her rest, even more careful must thou be  
 Never must ye attempt approach from her from the back.  
 Walk ye in the open where she doth see - startle her, she flees!  
 Now, must she be wooed with tender words and loving heart.  
 With treaties and armistice must she be tempted - and such like!  
 Thou must make oaths that forever will bind ...yet  
 No false promises must e'en before thy mind's eye be held  
 For she hath a sixth sense about her; she knoweth when ye lie.  
 Faithfully must thou adhere to her demands - though hard be they  
 But ne'er unbearable, for a kind heart hath she!  
 thou must conquer her in all; lover her with all they being  
 With tender caresses be thou rewarded - her happy embrace, thine!  
 Remember what thou doth desire, for it is noble, wise even ...  
 So, hark ye, and PEACE may ye find waiting ...

Mark Ireland

The Dying

by Ann Passmore

After it was all over I sat in the chair and watched them - - the pastor, the undertaker, and my mother. The numbness began in my feet. I remember thinking that it seemed perfectly logical and correct that I should die. My feet were lifeless in their slippers. I was not surprised at what was happening, only at the fact that these others were not dying. I sat and waited as the numbness moved slowly up my legs. My mother and the pastor talked together, they helped the hospital staff to move the body onto the trolley ready to take it away. My mind agreed with the numbness, I had no right to life now that he was dead. I had no life to live. The numbness moved past my knees. I always knew that death for me would be slow and gentle. No fight, nothing to be fought with, just a gentle numbing nothingness. My mother and the pastor talked together quietly. "He would have liked-" "I know that he wanted - - -" "He asked for - -". Slowly the plans were being made, slowly they fitted into place, slowly the funeral evolved as they arranged the little numbing details.

My legs were dead by this time; I did not experiment, did not attempt to move my toes, my feet. Dead limbs can't move, they can only be moved. His body was ready to be wheeled out of the door. He would never move himself again. My body would not move itself either; it was numb, I knew that. I knew that it would never move itself from that chair. Soon I would be as dead as him. Soon I would lie beside him. How could I tell my mother? How could I tell her that I too was dying? -there in that chair, in that room, beside that dead body. How would she take it? She had loved him too, deeply, I knew that. Perhaps she was dying too? But no - -I could see by her actions. Her feet, her hands, her face. They all moved. She was not dying, at least not yet. What would my pastor say at having to bury us both, man and wife, so young, but now so still, so dead. Perhaps I should not tell them. Perhaps I should wait until the numbness had crept its slow way over my body, wait until they were forced to lay it beside him. I knew that I should be there, beside him. It was right for me to die, to be laid, cold, beside him.

They wheeled the body out of the door leaving me to sit. I could not move anyway. The numbness was almost at my heart by the time that they returned, the pastor, and my mother. My heart was growing colder, and even my tongue was numbed when my mother came to me with my shoes.

"Come it's time to go now. It's over." How could I tell her just to wait a little longer, it was not quite over, not quite time to go. How could I tell her that I had no need of shoes for dead feet; dead legs and dead bodies have nowhere to go.

"Put your shoes on." Numb arms obeyed a numbed head. My mother - - how could I expect her to put my shoes on for me after all that she had just done for him? I had to put my own shoes onto my dead feet. Slowly my arms moved to take my shoes from her hands. Even more slowly my numbed legs moved my numbed feet until I could reach them with my arms to take off my slippers. Perhaps the dying was taking longer than I thought. Meanwhile, my mother was standing there.

"Come, we are going now." Slowly I dressed my dead feet ready to go. Slowly I stood on my dead legs. Slowly I left the room.