

John Masefield (1878-1967)

1 *The Ballad of Sir Bors*

Would I could win some quiet and rest, and a little ease,
In the cool grey hush of the dusk, in the dim green place of the trees,
Where the birds are singing, singing, singing, crying aloud
The song of the red, red rose that blossoms beyond the seas.

Would I could see it, the rose, when the light begins to fail, 5
And a lone white star in the West is glimmering on the mail;
The red, red passionate rose of the sacred blood of the Christ,
In the shining chalice of God, the cup of the Holy Grail.

The dusk comes gathering grey, and the darkness dims the West,
The oxen low to the byre, and all bells ring to rest; 10
But I ride over the moors, for the dusk still bides and waits,
That brims my soul with the glow of the rose that ends the Quest.

My horse is spavined and ribbed, and his bones come through his hide,
My sword is rotten with rust, but I shake the reins and ride,
For the bright white birds of God that nest in the rose have called, 15
And never a township now is a town where I can bide.

It will happen at last, at dusk, as my horse limps down the fell,
A star will glow like a note God strikes on a silver bell,
And the bright white birds of God will carry my soul to Christ,
And the sight of the Rose, the Rose, will pay for the years of hell. 20

1910

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