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Bors Returning

Robert Boenig

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Bors Returning

BORS RETURNING

With Percivale dead and Galahad a legend
and Dindrane's brightness a bloodless pallor
I foot lurching deck
and sniff a northern gale
for anything that smells like Britain.

What flood did once fire will do again,
and ice awaits both king and knight,
and through heaving leagues
incense of Sarras fades from my beard
and makes me fit champion for faded queen.

Image of lost unity:
Britain spelled backwards is only nonsense,
and Ave backwards the devil's tool:
a life backwards an ignoble quest
charged to one not wishing return.

Guinevere and Lancelot to holiness,
Mordred to faith, Arthur to safety
with his table's wood unsplintered:
three tasks given with incense,
one to succeed, two to fade

and mine the choice. If the way
to holiness is retreat from holiness
to find one lasting good among three,
the abyss is open on each side
and me returning with lurching feet.

Robert Boenig