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Joe R. Christopher

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THE ART OF HIGH FANTASY

by Joe R. Christopher

Upon a lonely quest the hero goes
Now helped, now hindered, by damsels and by
crows,
By giants, elves, and ancient red-eyed boars,
By paths which wander oddly forest floors.
Perhaps he goes to forge anew a sword,
Wonderfully wrought; or find a dragon's hoard;
Perhaps, down tunnels dwarves have hewn 'yond
count,
He throws a jewel away beneath some mount;
Or else, he gains a princess' hand in love--
A goal which Freudians are suspicious of.

What does he symbolize? What does he mean?
Has he gone chasing after naught between
The holiest secret Superego knows
And most corrupting, which Id alone bestows?
Is every giant but a 'rectus shown,
And every cave its counterpart alone?
Are dragons but his hoarding thoughts concealed,
Which if he kills, their gold is now revealed?

(Or is Freud right on childhood's anal hoard--
And all the gold is but some faeces stored?)
The quest's true end: is it thus shown to be,
Through these old symbols, self-discovery?

Or is this youngest son, who finds the Way,
Journeying through great truths, beneath the sway
Of something far, far older than the swirl
Of cosmic dust which lit our sun in twirl?
Yea, does he travel toward (in tales we've spun)
The good, the true, the beautiful, in One?

Oh, ask me not--I do not know the truth!
My heart goes with him on his journey's ruth--
Of that alone I'm sure; it's lifted high,
When he o'ercomes his labors by and bye.
He's me, I'm him, within the weld of art;
Beyond those simple facts all questions start.
So come, we make the quest our hero's on--
We say goodbye to home some early dawn;
He sings an ancient tune some troubadour
(Before twelfth-century France) has labored o'er:
And we too sing, of glory, love, and honor,
Beneath the folds of his high, wind-caught banner.

