

The Battle's Done Against the Dragon Black

WILLIAM DUNBAR (c. 1465 – c. 1530)

translated by ADAM F MCCUNE

The battle's done against the dragon black;
Our champion Christ confounded all his might.
The gates of hell are broken with a crack;
The cross is raised, the triumph of the light.
The devils tremble with a hideous call;
The souls are brought out and to bliss they go.
Christ paid our ransom; his blood paid it all:
Our Lord is risen from the grave below.

Now Lucifer the dragon is struck down,
The cruel serpent with the mortal sting,
The old keen tiger, with his fangs and frown,
Who lay in wait to seize us and to cling,
To grip us in his strong claws—so he thought.
The Lord in mercy would not let us go,
And made him fail so that we were not caught:
Our Lord is risen from the grave below.

He who for our sake let himself be slain,
Killed like a lamb in sacrificial rite,
Is like a lion risen up again,
And like a giant raised himself on height.
The dawn is springing, radiant and bright,
The glorious sun has gone aloft, aglow,
The blissful day is parted from the night:
Our Lord is risen from the grave below.

Again the victor's risen up on height
Who for our quarrel to the death was wounded;
The sun that had grown pale is shining bright,
And, darkness cleared, our faith is now refounded.
The bell of mercy from the heaven is sounded,
The Christians are delivered from their woe,
The error of rejecting Christ confounded:
Our Lord is risen from the grave below.

The foe is chased, the battle made to cease,
The prison broken, jailers fear and flee;
The war is gone, for he confirmed the peace,
The ransom's made, the prisoners set free,
The dungeon emptied, fetters are unclasped,
The field is won, he overcame the foe,
And took from him the treasure that he grasped:
Our Lord is risen from the grave below.