

# THE CRUSADER

CARL ROLAND

---

I walked away and left my sword to rust  
A weapon then dishonored, sullied, stained —  
Defiled with villain's blood but in defense  
Of something indefensible and feigned.  
The lords to whom I gave my vassal's trust  
And all my gallant heart's most pure intents  
Proved hollow men and cold and cruel wraiths.  
Like carrion birds perched on their battlements.

I walked with certain stride back to the land  
Of living hearts that served the Living Lord.  
And there beside the pure and living stream  
I forged anew a finer, stronger sword.  
I pledged again that while my life remains  
On this small plot at least the King will reign  
Though all the treacherous captains mock and scorn,  
And all the simpering toadies cringe in vain.

The sword hangs there upon the rough-hewn wall  
The sunlight burnishes the gleaming hilt  
Reflecting His Cross constantly to all  
Who dwell within this haven I have built.  
It hangs there ready to defend His throne  
Though faithless stewards betray the faithless throngs;  
The voices of my children, bright and strong  
Recite His Glory in the fair old songs.