

The Waning Of The Middle Ages

**Lurching from their quarters into the courtyard,
The knights raise their eyes to exhausted
Movements in the banners; lower them and watch
The rash of rust marching across the mail.**

**At the armory, shields will not shine,
Arrows point, or swords leave the scabbard
In their stalls, horses throw the saddle and
Lock their yellow teeth against the bit.**

**A squire says something has passed across the sun.
At the cave, the dragon raises the temperature,
Inhales, and leaves a lizard in the ash.
The princess feels only she can save herself,**

**While the fool hears nausea in every laugh.
Well within the dungeon, the king,
Bolted to a sweating wall, watches a rat
Raise a boil and begins to understand.**