

## **The Martyrdom of St. George**

Dwelling in the darkness  
Of a gray and stony cold  
The evil Diocletian  
Broods upon his throne.

Obsessed about his future  
He fears his own demise  
And calls upon his devils  
To tell him soothing lies.

He calls upon the spirit  
Of the great and dread Apollo  
With imperial voice he summons him  
But the spirit does not follow.

When the devils do not answer  
The king begins to rage  
He sends for his great counselor,  
His priestess, and his sage.

He asks them why the demons  
He relies upon for calm  
Have chosen not to answer  
And withhold consoling balm.

Those three most wicked sorcerers  
Consult one with the other  
And decide to tell the evil king  
The fault lies with another.

They tell the king, "Another force  
Has plugged the spirits' ears.  
A foreign god has interrupted  
Your great and royal prayers."

With madness then the king erupts  
And springs forth from his throne.  
He tears his royal garment  
And throws his royal crown.

"The Christians!" he cries raspily  
"Have quenched the spirits' breath.  
They shall surely all be tortured  
Unto their very death.

“Unless they’re willing to renounce  
Their meek and lowly god  
The earth shall turn incarnadine  
With spilling of their blood.

“Go gather all the vermin  
From every lane and street.  
And bring them to me bound as one  
With shackles on their feet.

“Invent the worst of tortures  
And blast the prison fire  
Their bones and flesh shall feel the pain  
Of Roman heat and iron.”

And then the soldiers gathered all  
To Diocletian’s court  
From citizens to countrymen  
Of every ilk and sort.

Woman, child, and elder man  
Were brought to him in chains.  
The only thing they shared as one  
Was the bearing of Christ’s name...

The blessed name of Jesus  
At which all knees shall bow  
They called upon their loving lord  
To save their lives somehow.

The evil beast looked down upon  
The crowd assembled there for slaughter  
He laughed, “The king is hungry  
Bring forth the tasty fodder.

He took another look upon  
The souls still bravely standing  
And pointed to an aged man  
And yelled at him, commanding...

“This, withered, ugly, tired fool  
Shall be the first to die  
I’ll pull members from his body  
His fingers, ears, and eyes.

“Unless you stupid baah-ing sheep  
Renounce your loathsome god.  
Each one of you shall suffer  
Like this imprudent clod.

The soldiers brought the old man forth  
And threw him to the ground  
Diocletian drew his weapon  
His face an angry frown

He raised the sword to strike the man  
And as his arm began to drop  
A sound emerged from through the crowd  
A voice that shouted, “Stop!”

The emperor in outrage  
Looked up to see the man  
Who had dared to raise objection  
And stop his deadly hand

To his surprise and horror  
He saw the raven hair  
The solid jaw and cobalt eyes  
That met him with a stare

The man that he most loved and hated  
Took his arm by force  
And shook the sword loose from his hand  
And said, “Stop this at once, my lord!”

Heat radiated from his grip  
As pliers from a forge  
The ruler said beneath his breath  
“Why have you come here, George?”

The sovereign first was frightened  
But then regained intent  
“What right have you to come in here  
and halt my punishment?”

“You are my greatest general  
Your life belongs to me  
Your job it is to do my will  
To my commands you must agree

“And why are you concerned with these,

These lowly hateful things  
These servants of a single god  
This filth who shun their king?"

And then the mighty general  
Removed his golden plate  
He shed his cloak, threw down his sword  
And made ready for his fate

"I'm here because an invitation  
Came to my attention  
To scour the land that I control  
In search of every Christian

"I have obeyed your great command  
And present to you your general  
Once commander of your troops  
Now a loathsome criminal ."

The emperor stood in shock  
And pondered for a while  
Then his heinous grimace  
Dissolved into a smile.

"Surely this is some great joke  
You play upon the throne  
You cannot be in earnest  
When you claim this god your own."

"I am a slave of Christ the King!"  
The mighty George responded  
"His blood has washed my mind and soul  
To Him I'm ever bonded.

"I eschew you royal treatments  
Your tyrannous behavior  
Your evil schemings, plots, and snares  
The evil gods you favor

"I hate your pagan dances  
Your prophets are all fools  
You look for truth in entrails  
Of goats and pigs and bulls

"Your gods are none but devils  
Who feign a divine light

While in truth their one desire  
Is to plunge you into night

“You’ll die as did Agrippa  
Consumed by hungry worms  
Your bowels will ache, your stomach wrench  
But you’ll never ease the burn

“Your soul will flame  
Until the end of ages and beyond  
Your legacy is worthless  
Your memory is gone.”

At this, the vile emperor  
Howled like a wounded dog  
Then stared as in a stupor  
Like looking through a fog

And then he mustered up the strength  
To mutter one command  
He said unto his nearest guard  
“Go, put away this man

“See to it that he does not live  
Beyond another day  
Now take him far out of my sight  
Away, away, away.”

The guards bound George and took him down  
Unto a fiery pit  
They threw him in and told themselves  
That is the end of it.

Let’s go and tell the emperor  
His will is done at last  
That George, his famous general  
Is nothing more than ash.

But as they stared into the massive  
Furnace in the ground  
They soon began to notice  
Several figures moving ‘round.

The first was George the general  
Undamaged by the fire  
The others were angelic hosts  
Singing as a choir

They sang, "O Blessed Man of God  
Who for the love of Christ  
Makes here amidst the embers  
The sacrifice of life."

The guards all ran away from there  
Unto the countryside  
"We cannot not kill this Saint of God  
For fear let's run and hide."

And after they departed,  
Out from his would-be pyre  
The righteous George emerged again  
To face the royal liar.

He found his rival  
In the same position as before  
About to kill an innocent  
With raised and ready sword

The victim on the block this time  
Was a young and hairless youth  
Whose only crime was loving God  
And following the truth.

"Unhand that boy and set him free!"  
The righteous general said  
And when Diocletian turned to look  
The child moved his head

The sword fell down and missed the neck  
And hit the wood below  
The angry king then raised his hand  
To strike another blow

"What redemption does it buy you,"  
Asked the noble soul  
"To shed the blood of innocents  
Will it heal or make you whole?"

"If you seek a sacrifice

Look east and see the sign  
That marked the barren hillside  
In holy Palestine

“It’s there you’ll find redemption  
You errant Roman fool  
Not among these tortures  
Sadistic, vile, and cruel.”

“How can you still be standing?”  
Diocletian spoke in fear  
“I had you burned alive  
And pierced with sword and spear.”

“I stand because the strength of Christ  
Sustains my limb and life  
It’s greater than your firey pit  
Or the metal of your knife

