

LOOSE, LOSE, LOST

The longbowman practiced on Dunster eve alone among the curly target bows,
Deliberate the action of his draw and aim,
and fast the loose that arcs the arrows flight,
That speeds at first, then at the apex of its path,
floats it seems, and then descends upon the mark.

Again and yet again for ends of twice times three,
The hand crafted timber bends and thrusts as smoothly as when it was a living
wind-tossed tree,
To protect its cedar shafts, each bedecked with crests and feathered plumes,
Toward the targets eye of gold.

Each successive strike upon the boss inflating the more the archer's pride,
Until he struts, with breast puffed out, and arrogantly
Anticipates the morrows winning score,
His mind's eye sees the trophy silvered in his grasp, as to the head
The next shaft he draws, one final surge of energy, and then the loose.
A crack, as paradox besets the shaft with dreadful shock against the bow,
And severs cedar just behind the pile, the point drops short,
but string thrust shaft impales the archer's hand, not stopping till the fletching
strikes the flesh, and blood spreads slowly over still quivering lower limb.

No shooting now, no medals from a lady's congratulating hand,
Just pain, and ego punctured by that fatal loose,
The year was 1979, and the archer's name was Druce.