

The Knight of Death by Gabriele D'Annunzio

Translated from the Italian
by [Michael Shindler](#) (October 2025)



Knight, Death, and the Devil (Albrecht Dürer, 1513-14)

In an antique engraving of Dürer,

ripe to battle against monster and mage,
there is a knight all-arrayed in armor
riding the big dapple-gray horse onstage:

and flanking him, there is a squire at back,
DEATH, who attends with neither mail nor shield,
and following, there is a page in black,
SIN; and there's darkness in the brake afield.

And so I go, once again, to take hold
of ART and of LOVE—into life I go;
that grim squire could never make this heart cold,

and that page's laugh just gives me more gusto;
there's not a card trick that could make me fold;
I've got you now—BEAUTY; I'm in your shadow.

Il Cavaliere della Morte

In un'antica stampa de 'l Durero
va contro maghi e draghi a la battaglia
tutto chiuso ne l'arme un Cavaliere
su 'l gran cavallo coperto di scaglia:

a 'l fianco l'accompagna da scudiero
la Morte senza piastra e senza maglia,
dietro gli segue da valletto il nero
Peccato; e fosca innanzi è la boscaglia.

Io così, nuovamente, a la conquista
de l'Arte e de l'Amor, salgo la vita;
ma il mio bieco scudier non mi rattrista,

ma il valletto ridendo alto m'incita
ed incanto non v'ha che mi resista,
poi che già in groppa, o Bella, io t'ho rapita.

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Michael Shindler is a writer living in Washington, DC. His work has appeared in publications including *The American Conservative*, *The American Spectator*, *National Review Online*, *New English Review*, *University Bookman*, and *Providence*. Follow him on Twitter [@MichaelShindler](#).

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