

Masque

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Cornered in the bewildering night
Love summoned Dignity to fight,
and Pride, against Despair;
but Pride and Dignity
had touched so little at Love's hand
they did not care to make a stand
against so huge an enemy.

Towards that half-seen enemy
Love walked alone, and presently
found—not indeed Despair
but, huge and grim enough,
the Black Knight of the Question-Mark,
and with him Fear. . . and in the dark
against them, sole and shaking, Love.

Then, almost fore-defeated, Love
sensed at his shoulder something move. . .
so whisper-faint. . . a dream?
No—if intangible,
still a warm presence at his side
to second him: unjustified,
unsummoned, Hope, the loyal fool.