



JOHN C. MORRISON

## BERSERKERS

“In a dream last night I cut your head in two with an axe”

*text from my 21 year old son*

The blade cleaves my brain at crown  
and I crumple, dead. Miles across  
the country in my dream I whack my son  
with a crude, heavy hammer full

and square on his ear miles across  
the country in my dream I whack him  
with a crude, heavy hammer and he  
shudders and drops. Nightly like Norse

Berserkers on a misty island  
though miles apart in our dreams we hack  
away with other cursed souls  
until we both fall dead and wake

whole with sunrise like Norse  
Berserkers to feast and drink  
with the other cursed souls in the raucous  
mead hall, nap on benches,

miles apart in our dreams, then we all  
go out to the field again to slaughter,  
cursed souls, again each other.  
Of course, one night miles apart

in our dreams, my son must finally kill  
me and not just in dream. And I'll  
have the grace to stay dead,  
become a clutch of rags and bones

for wolves and ravens to scatter but, stunned,  
as I topple, finally ended, I'll glance  
his warrior daughter come up behind  
my son to smash his head with a crude

hammer and enjoy for grisly years  
her own dark wounds. The blade  
cleaves my brain at crown and I shudder.