how to kill a dragon dead (except)

by strannikov

the worm was stabbed where two rivers branch:
who would slay was slain.
its headless body a putrid green,
head lost to the tides.
already rot oozes from its corpse,
putrefaction quick—
a sudden time to erect a fire.

God knows where the evil thing crawled from
poison ooze its trail
meandered the peninsula down
to assail the town
probably from some sick lowland swamp
where slimes breed with slimes
until slimes and molds learn how to crawl.

this worm's poison killed thousands and more,
gentry, servant both,
matrons and young girls, boys never shaved,
grandmas rudely dead—
this plague of poison crawled through unseen
under moonless nights
leaving festering puddles of slime.

the poisons festered for two long months:
by the third new moon
curious of its dark approaches,
we waited in dark:
and when we thought we saw something glow

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under moonless night,
we aimed our lamps at the giant worm:

a swaying green thing thirty feet long,
the green a sick lime,
perplexed perhaps by our lamps' approach,
so used to the dark—
studded with poison-dripping red spikes,
the hideous thing
writhes on its haunches, sick twisting green.

pitchforks by the dozen pierce its flesh
and then an axe swings,
body tossed into its pit ablaze,
head dispatched to tide.
the rank stench of its rot hardly moves:
an infection deep
of stink this deep will take time to cure.