

Ballad of a Runaway Horse

Emmylou Harris

Say a prayer for the cowgirl her horse ran away
She'll walk 'til she finds him her darlin' her stray
But the river's in flood and the roads are awash
And the bridges break up in the panic of loss

And there's nothin' to follow nowhere to go
He's gone like the summer gone like the snow
And the crickets are breaking her heart with their song
As the day caves in and the night is all wrong

Did she dream it was he who went galloping past
And bent down the fern broke open the grass
And printed the mud with the well-hammered shoe
That she nailed to his speed in the dreams of her youth

And although he goes grazin' a minute away
She tracks him all night she tracks him all day
And she's blind to his presence except to compare
Her injury here with his punishment there

Then at home on a branch on a high stream
A songbird sings out so suddenly
And the sun is warm and the soft winds ride
On a willow tree by the riverside

And the world is sweet and world is wide
And he's there where the light and the darkness divide
And the steam's comin' off him he's huge and he's shy
And he steps on the moon when he paws at the sky

And he comes to her hand but he's nor really tame
He longs to be lost she longs for the same
And he'll bolt and he'll plunge thru the first open pass
To roll and to feed in the sweet mountain grass

Or he'll make a break for the high plateau
Where there's nothing above and nothing below
It's time for their burden the whip and the spur
Will she ride with him or will he ride with her

So she binds herself to her galloping steed
And he binds himself to the woman in need
And there is no space just left and right
And there is no time but there is day and night

Then she learns on his neck and whispers low
Whither thou goest I will go
And they turn as one the head for the plain
No need for the whip oh no need for the rain

Now the clasp of this union who fastens it tight
Who snaps it asunder the very next night
Some say it's him some say it's her
Some say love's like smoke beyond all repair

So my darlin' my darlin' just let go by
That old silhouette on the great western sky

And I'll pick out a tune and they'll move right along
And they're gone like smoke and they're gone like this song

Say a prayer for the cowgirl