

Three Horses

Joan Baez

In the early dawn a stallion white
Prances the hills in the morning light.
His bridle is painted with thunder and gold,
Orchids and dragons, pale knights of old.
He is the horse of the ages past.
And now the children run to see
The stallion on the hill,
Bringing bags of apples
And of clover they have filled.
And the white horse tells his stories
Of the days now past and gone
And the children stand a-wondering
Believing every song.
How brightly glows the past.

When the sun is high comes a mare so red,
Trampling the graves of the living and dead.
Her mantle is heavy with mirrors and glass,
All is reflected when the red mare does pass.
She is the horse of the here and now.
And now there is confusion
Amongst the children on the hill.
They cling to one another
And no longer can be still.
While the red mare's voice is trembling
With a rare and mighty call,
The children start remembering
The bearers and the pall.
And though their many-colored sweaters
Are reflected in the glass,
And though the sun shines down upon them,
They are frightened in the grass.
How stark is the here and now.

When night does fall comes a stallion black,
So proud and tall he never looks back.
He wears him no emeralds, silver and gold,
Not even a covering to keep him from cold.
He is the horse of the years to come.
And I will get me down
Before this steed upon my knees
And sing to him the sorrows
Of a thousand centuries.
And the children now will scatter
As their mothers call them home,
For the sadness of the evening horse
No child has ever known.
And I will hang about him
A bell that's never rung
And thank him for the many words
Which from his throat have never sprung.
And I'll thank God and all the angels
That the stallion of the evening,
The black horse of the future,
Comes to earth but has no tongue.