

# The Pearl Of Them All

Slim Dusty

Gaily in front of the stockwhip  
The horses come galloping home  
Leaping and bucking and playing  
With sides all a lather of foam  
But painfully, slowly behind them  
With head to the crack of the fall  
And trying so gamely to follow  
Comes limping the pearl of them all

He is stumbling and stiff in the shoulder  
And splints from the hoof to the knee  
But never a horse on the station  
Has half such a spirit as he  
Give these all the boast of their breeding  
These pets of the paddock and stall  
But ten years ago not their proudest  
Could live with the pearl of them all

No journey has ever yet beat him  
No day was too heavy or hard  
He was king of the camp and the muster  
And pride of the wings of the yard  
But Time is relentless to follow  
The best of us bow to his call  
And death, with his scythe on his shoulder  
Is dogging the pearl of them all

I watch him go whinnying past me  
And memories come with a whirl  
Of reckless, wild rides with a comrade  
And laughing, gay rides with a girl  
How she decked him with lilies and love-knots  
And plaited his mane at my side  
And once in the grief of a parting  
She threw her arms round him and cried

And I promised, yes I gave her my promise  
The night that we parted in tears  
To keep and be kind to the old horse  
Till Time made a burden of years  
And then for his sake and one woman's  
Go, fetch me my gun from the wall  
I have only this kindness to offer  
As gift to the pearl of them all

Here hold him out there by the yard wing  
And don't let him know by a sign  
Turn his head to you, mate, just a little  
'Cause, I can't bear his eyes to meet mine  
Oh stand still, old boy, just for a moment  
These tears, how they blind as they fall  
Now, God help my hand to be steady  
And goodbye to the pearl of them all