

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