

Heavy Horses

Robin Laing

Iron-clad, feather-feet pounding the dust
On October's day, towards evening
Sweat embossed veins standing proud to the plough
Salt on a deep chest, seasoning
Last of the line at an honest day's toil
Turning the deep sod under
Flint at the fetlock, chasing the bone
Flies at the nostrils plunder
The Suffolk, the Clydesdale, the Percheron vie
With the shire on his feathers, floating
Hauling soft timber into the dusk
To bed on a warm straw coating
Heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free
And now you're down to the few and there's no work to do
The tractor's on its way
Let me find you a filly for your proud stallion seeds
To keep the old line going
And we'll stand you abreast at the back of the woods
Behind the young trees growing
To hide you from eyes that mock at your girth
You're eighteen hands at the shoulder
And one day when the oil barons have all dripped dry
And the nights are seen to draw colder
They'll beg for your strength, your gentle power
Your noble grace and your bearing
And you'll strain once again to the sound of the gulls
In the wake of the deep plough, sharing
Heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free
And now you're down to the few and there's no work to do
The tractor's on its way
Standing like tanks on the brow of the hill
Up into the cold wind facing
In stiff battle harness, chained to the world
Against the low sun racing
Bring me a wheel of oaken woods
A rein of polished leather
A heavy horse and a tumbling sky

Brewing heavy weather
Bring a song for the evening
Clean brass to flash the dawn
Across these acres glistening
Like dew on a carpet lawn
In these dark towns, folk lie sleeping
As the heavy horses thunder by
So wake the dying city
With the living horseman's cry
At once the old hands quicken
Bring pick and wisp and curry comb
Thrill to the sound of all the
Heavy horses coming home
Iron-clad, feather-feet pounding the dust
On October's day, towards evening
Sweat embossed veins standing proud to the plough
Salt on a deep chest, seasoning
Bring me a wheel of oaken woods
A rein of polished leather
A heavy horse and the tumbling sky
Brewing heavy weather
Heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free
And now you're down to the few and there's no work to do
The tractor's on its way
Oh, heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free
And now you're down to the few and there's no work to do
The tractor's on its way
Oh, heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free
And now you're down to the few and there's no work to do
The tractor's on its way
Now heavy horses move the land under me
Behind the plough gliding, slipping and sliding free

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