

LET'S START * WHERE THE LONG AUTUMN SHADOWS CAST THEIR CRIMSON LIGHT UPON THE LAND

Beneath a Hunter's Moon in wild solemnity
the stallion quietly watches his herd.¶

Humble-eyed, ebony black, auburn-maned,
a Westmorland prince and his island of a thousand fables.
Mother Earth's blinking light slowing now
to the heartbeat of a horse in the
brotherlands of the Cumbrae.¶

A hoofed native of moors and marsh,
a traveller of star moss and elf cups and folklore.

*Watchers of Hen Ogledd, the Old North,
a gilded gateway past The Heart Wood.*

Busha of Bush Howe, a once-prized horse,
hefted to the fell with wet-lichened slate,
through thunder and torrent and helm wind watches.¶

CHALK HORSE * OF THE NORTH A CUMBRIC KING

he is waiting beneath the heather
and bracken glassy-eyed.¶

Beneath an Ivy Moon, the Land
of the Fae is shrouded in mist.

A mist of manes that meet the marsh,
Jinny Greenteeth is waiting.

*The walls have tongues,
they talk in rivulets,*

they tell of the wild where man once walked barefoot,
where witches and shapeshifters and kelpies
sent children trembling back to the hearth.¶

Entwined now under the hazy halo of a Moonbroch,
hag stones at their feet,
the herd collect in a steadfast embrace.
A storm is on the way. ¶

Under the cold December Moon
a chariot burial now idle,
equus frozen in time on a forgotten round hill
*where thorn trees talk in rings,
set in an eternal sleep,*
ekwo, once charging as one with the champion.¶

Remember me whether it was justice or revenge,
an instrument played beneath the power of man.
The wild stallion broken, a changeling has taken his place,
*now tethered and bound, wearing another's skin,
metal-clad, tendons straining, salt white with sweat.*¶

Kingdoms rose and fell and yet
the fells and their ponies stayed true,
they've been here as long as the deer,
through aeons of time and tales.

EOH STEED VIGG CHARGES AIHWA HOSS POWNY NATIVE

Yule logs warm the fires below.¶

And now the Wolf Moon rises,
horizon tethered, cold and wan.¶

Beasts must find a nook to sleep out the winter.
Shards of ice and hardship coat the land.

Irs' stay at home month but wild ones cannot sleep.

Muzzles search the frozen fells for green.

Our herd, now sheltered behind moss-
clad walls, stand stoic,
while winter's white gloves enshroud the earth.
They favour freedom over four walls still.¶

Now the Ice Moon, fog and
mystery's most prized accomplice,
sets fear into the invaders on Hadrian's Wall.

*The ponies' exhalations spiral like a
dragon's breath in the ice-cold air,*

so cold it plays a tune. A love song to
the land of their ancestors,
heirlooms of a vanishing culture,
symbols of hope and freedom.¶

The wild in their eyes speaks through the palisades
and the soldiers shiver to their core.

Wooded ghosts on pitch-black ponies.

An ancient and shared wild ancestry, the
land will preserve who we are,
all mammals after all. After the fall.

BEHOLD! OSTARA IS HERE

An ink-black Raven Moon rises
higher towards the coming light.

Urien's army galloping behind flared nostrils
in spirited cavalry gains speed.¶

Taliesin spoke of this to lords and great rulers.¶
All horse worshippers we once were,
ruled by Queen Cartismandua, the Sleek Filly.

And what of Arthur and his steed Hengroen,
their final battle together.¶

All now a swirl of memories and legends
entwined within long, dark manes.¶

Now like a wild dream, Lancelot on a white mare to
Isis Parlis beside the sacred waters of Ituna and Lyvennet
and to Crosby Ravensworth adorned with elm trees.¶

The knights, all Marchogion, horsemen,
Brigantian warriors lightly armed,
strong and sturdy, trotting over rocky ground.¶

Muscles have memories
and now, centuries later,
along fair mile they race,
a thunder of hooves and foam
through the glacial valleys of Urien's stronghold.

Past standing stones, waterfalls
and windy gap into Dun Rheged.

Carrying spoils along drovers' roads
past Pendragon Castle,
wild and bleak, the wooded foragers are
rooted in this deep dark earth.

Beasts from a thousand millennia, they will never leave.¶

AWAKEN!

There are whispers of new life now,
a fertile Seed Moon stirs the earth.

The goddess Epona in excelsior skies
watches over the blossoming mares who grow quietly,
protected by the furze, ablaze with golden yellow flowers.

Sylarls sing amongst scattered cairns,
aurora buds burst quietly, as a quiver of wisps and
withers move across the mires. Starry skies bring a chill
to the night air and the mares stay stoically still.¶

Yan-tan-tethera and Beltane
bursts forth, bright and bold.

The Flower Moon is upon us.
May Queens, mothers and mares all adorned
with ribbons and feathers in their manes.

The Green Man awakens, signalling the start of spring.
An infinite cycle, the wheel of the year
set in stones reared for deities on Moor Divock.

Vengeful spirits speak in a Brythonic tongue,
even the dobbies don't dare stray here,
yet the ponies rest their limbs in the centre of it all,
completely at peace amongst the rune
stones of Urien's Rheged.¶

And now, the moon of June, the Moon of the Horses,
casts its beams on the newborn foals

that lie cradled in soft rushes,
myrtle and cotton grass plumes.

A dappled grey filly whinnies for her mother.
One day she will harness the wind.

Thorn tree blossoms drift on the mountain breeze.
Such magic can only stir in sacred places.

Becks as clear as glass pass through
pools of parnassus flowers.

This is where kelpies are born, white and wet,
guardians of secrets and legends.

The widening rivers take the stories
sinuously through the Vale of Eden,
down to the Solway seas where white
horses whisper them to the waves.¶

STORIES MUST BE SPOKEN OR THEY WILL BE LOST

It's July and warm summer storms muffle the air.

A Thunder Moon strong and ominous casts
moonlight upon the ancient trees, tall and wise.¶

Oak groves talk but only the ponies and
a few two-legged creatures can hear.

The Heartwood is full of watching eyes.

Metal horses pass at speed along rails,
the world turning faster and faster where once,
past chasms and tarns,

ponies cautiously pursued their way without
mishap or haste over Cambria's fells.

Laden with riches of new-shorn sheep through
tangled brakes where adders hide.

Led by the melodies of bells and tinkling honours worn.
Faithful servants each of them.¶

Late summer
and a Barley Moon,
still sun-drenched,
hangs languidly in the sky.¶

Flaxen waggoners laze in golden fields,
a last place of harmony away from the maddening crowds.

The grazing ponies leave the flowers for the
dumbledores that dreamily buzz past,
soft muzzles searching for sweet grass
amongst the heather and rune stones.

Their dark coats soak up the last of the mellow rays,
blinking eyes surrender and close, just
for a few sublime seconds. ¶

September's Harvest Moon, an
equinox of dark and light.
Black stallion, white mare.

But the pursuit and strain of horse and homo
sapiens has not quite balanced yet.

Dew-glazed lashes blink as dawn rises
above a blanket of cloud in the valley below.

Awaiting command.¶

The last golden eagle searches
the land of the Carvetii,
all horsemen, horse worshippers and
horse rustlers, Kombrogi.

BECKS SCARS GILLS CRAG DICES FELLS AND FORCES

an alchemy of hooves and bones and living,
breathing myths dot the landscape.¶

The 13th Moon,
an Elder Moon,

grants gifts of wisdom on silver-coated yearlings.¶

The sky has given them wings to frisk and fly
and the earth has woven a blanket of soft star moss
to rest their limbs,
quietly under the starlit skies.¶

Beneath the constellations of
Pegasus and Equuleus the foal,
Andromeda shares a star.¶

We share the earth on borrowed time,
these lands of Cumberland and old Westmoringland
and all the while on the hallowed fells the
ponies and the horse of slate watch on.¶

Natives need the wild and that
starts at the dry-stone wall.¶

Can we value much more than freedom in
this world of walls and yats and chains?¶

Something quite magical that can't be
put into words lives up on those fells.

Can they preserve the wild in us?

And now, as autumn's light ebbs and wanes,
the wheel of the year passes by.

As empires come and go we all return to the land,
weathered, cup and ring marked,
then barefoot,

AS A CHILD BACK TO THE EARTH WE GO *

 **EPONA THE
WILD PONY** 
OF THE NORTH