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## Rite of Passage

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Amy Lewis *Rite of Passage*

Dig your heels in, girl,  
and grab his tail at the bone.  
Lean back hard,  
I will take his halter in the same.  
I see you're afraid, girl,  
just don't close your eyes.  
Put your strength in your heels,  
your hands,  
lest this wild horse drag you down.  
After the vet has bludgeoned  
his spirit with a needle,  
his haunches will earthquake.  
When it happens, girl,  
ready your whole self for the weight  
of generations crumbling in your arms.  
And when it happens, girl,  
I will watch  
his eyes cloud over,  
his ears grow limp like a bored jackass,  
his lips swell heavy with drool,  
as you take the brunt of his teetering life.

Dig your left in, girl.  
and lean right.  
Push the sagging body into the ground--  
to the piano size grave;  
I will heave his halter in the same.  
I see your youth, girl,  
that's why I made you take the tail.  
Once you've felt the force of death  
from behind, girl,  
you'll be a woman enough to take it  
in the face.