

Fred Small

"The Heart Of The Appaloosa"

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From the land of shooting waters to the peaks of the
Coeur d'Alene
Thimbleberries in the forest, elk grazing on the plain
The People of the Coyote made their camp along the
streams

Of the green Wallowa Valley when fences had no
name.

And they bred a strain of horses, the treasure of the
tribe

Who could toe-dance on a ridge or gallop up a
mountainside

Who could haul the hunter's burden, turn a buffalo
stampede

The horse that wore the spotted coat was born with
matchless speed.

CHORUS:

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains

Lead the People across the Great Divide

There's blood on the snow in the hills of Idaho

But the heart of the Appaloosa never died.

In the winter came the crowned ones near frozen in the
cold

Bringing firearms and spyglasses and a book that
saves the soul

The people gave them welcome, nursed them till their
streight returned

And studied the talking paper, its mysteries to learn.

In the shadow of the mission sprang up farms and
squatter towns

The plain was lined with fences, the plow blade split the
ground

In the shallows of the Clearwater gold glittered in the
pan

And the word would come from Washington: remove
the Indian.

CHORUS

The chief spoke to the People in his anger and his pain

"I am no more Chief Joseph. Rolling Thunder is my
name.

They condemn us to a wasteland of barren soil and
stone

We shall fight them if we must, but we will find another home."

They fled into the Bitterroot, an army at their heels
They fought at White Bird Canyon, they fought at
Misery Hill

Till the colonel saw his strategy and sent the order
down

To kill the Appaloosa wherever it be found.

CHORUS

Twelve hundred miles retreating, three times over the
Divide

The horse their only safety, their only ally

Three thousand Appaloosas perished with the tribe

The people and the horses dying side by side.

Thunder Rolling in the Mountains said, "my heart is sick
and sad.

Our children now are freezing. The old chiefs are dead.

The hunger take our spirit. Our wounds are deep and
sore.

From where the sun now stands I shall fight no more."

CHORUS

They were sent to Oklahoma, malaria ran rife

But more died of broken hearts far from the land that
gave them life

And the man once called Joseph at death was heard to
say

"We have given up our horses. They have gone away."

But sometimes without warning from a dull domestic
herd

A spotted horse of spirit wondrous will emerge

Strong it is and fearless and nimble on a hill

Listening for thunder, the Appaloosa's living still.

CHORUS

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