

TO WENDY

1 A horse is both soft and hard, it consists of muscles and bones that can bend in various directions and combinations. When learning how to care for a horse, there is a certain number of different brushes that comes in a specific order to be memorized. If used correctly, starting with the roughest brush or even a scraper out of metal or rubber to get rid of the shedding, the smoother brushers and at last a thin layer of a certain spray made especially for the purpose, the fur will catch the light and shine just like velvet. Some horses enjoy being cared for, others have to be bound up with tight ropes on each side of their head so they can't reach the caretaker when trying to escape the tickle. Unlike a motorbike that can only crash and fall, a horse can bend and stretch and when it slides it can find it's balance again, if the reins are not held too tight. When a horse crashes and falls, it has both pain and fear in it's eyes. The heat, it's a suicide machine.

2 Long and moist stretches a gravel road down in a valley and up on a hill, where it twists and bends in a manner that conceals the view of meeting cars. Dense forest to the right and something that might be a swamp to the left, where rays of a low sun shines through. The horse is old and unwilling. Her fur is soft but not shiny. One out of three girls is afraid, about the dark and the possibility of falling off. Fear smells and has to be hidden under determination. She doesn't stop complaining and if it wasn't for our dad, who values his friendship with her parents, we wouldn't let her come with us.

3 With moonlight reflected in its fur, a horse is often portrayed in front of a waterfall, under a deep purple star filled sky, sometimes with hints of pink. Or running in dust, lightened up with what might be a sunset, or fire. Those images can get printed in large format, sold and delivered to pre-teen girls who put them up above their beds. From the same companies that deliver the images, there are books that can be delivered too. In the books, the distinction between good and evil is always very clear, just as in action movies or westerns.

4 Over and over we dragged the horse to the other side of the valley, just where the road was about to bend, and then turned her around. She was only fast while facing home. We took turns in going fast and at twilight we all sat up and let her run freely back to the stable. If you didn't try to slow her down, you couldn't really tell who was in charge. When describing the rush you have to navigate around phrases such as 'wind in my hair' or 'free as a bird'. A phrase is, I guess, always more or less borrowed.

5 Freedom is an everlasting open road and it sings *Just wrap your legs 'round these velvet rims, and strap your hands 'cross my engine* with lyrics and melody borrowed from Bruce Springsteen.

6 There is a raven in the parking lot in my backyard. I notice him when hearing a gentle bang from outside, and then see him land and pick something up. It's a walnut. By dropping it from far above onto the asphalt he tries to break it open. On his third attempt he succeeds. I notice how while he's eating, he freezes when other birds appear above him, as if he wants to make sure they don't notice his snack and try to steal it. To myself I name what I observe 'work' and get reminded of adulthood.