

The Four Horsewomen

and the voice said “now listen:
John didn’t see it all

and some of what he did see
he could not comprehend

“he wrote of four horsemen –
you know their names well
but listen, for you have ears,
and look, for you have eyes to see:
for those are not the only ones
riding here at the end of days...”

and there was no sound,
no trumpeter to herald them
but lo, I saw four figures riding:
& they rode also upon horses
but these horses bore wings

& this was the first horse:
red, the dark red of blood;
its reins & halter of clean white linen
& her name is Sacrifice;
& her rider likewise clothed in white linen,
bearing bandages & herbs of healing
& her name is Cura, called Compassion;
who rides against foul Pestilence
& in the wake of the one called War;
& I saw thousands behind her,
the healers & caregivers
but slow was their progress
as their tasks were so great,

& their numbers too few
& always the needs increasing;
& this was the first horse
& behold I saw the second horse;
her body dark brown,
the shade of rich earth,
& its wings the golden color
of freshly baked bread
& this horse is named Awareness;
& upon her rides Satis –
whose name means Enough
she rides against cruel Famine
& she bore a basket, into which she
gathered, & from which she gave,
& behind her I saw millions,
the tenders of the land, farmers,
harvesters & millers & cooks
but their progress was slow,
as their tasks were great, their numbers
few, & always the needs increasing;
& this was the second horse
next came the third horse,
dove-winged Calm,
upon her rides Eirene, or Peace
who ever rides against merciless War
ahead of War, around War, above War,
behind War she rides; War surrounds her,
and she surrounds War; indeed
even within War she may yet be found;
and ahead of her the peacemakers

striving to clear her way
their progress so slow,
their tasks so great,
their numbers so few
& this was the third horse
& behold the fourth horse –
bright green as the leaves of spring,
bearing Vita Ipsa, Life Herself
But there in the saddle as well
I saw her pale conjoined sister...
I asked: I know who she is,
she who rides against implacable Death,
but it seems Death also rides with her
how can this be? & this was my answer:
“there is Death, inseparable part of Life,
the Death that allows Life to go on –
but there is also Death, fourth horseman,
who seeks destruction without rebirth
desolation, sterility,
the negation of existence...”
& where are her followers? I asked
but then it was shown to me
that I am standing among them
& our progress will be slow,
& our tasks are so great,
but our numbers are many -
now listen, and understand:
the name of the fourth horse
is All of Us

The Rider with the Red Nose

"... And lo, the next angel did then blow upon his trumpet; but the sound thereof was not as the other trumpets, but more like unto a goat or a sheep bleating, or like unto the passing of gas. Then did I behold a great white stallion, bedecked with ribbons, which pranced as it advanced; and upon it was a rider, and he bore a red nose, and a pointed hat of many colors; and likewise did his clothes have many colors; and his shoes were as large as the shoes of two men together.

"And he rode amongst the armies of the nations, sometimes standing upon the horse, sometimes riding backwards, sometimes hanging off to one side; and behold, one-third of the armies were felled because they slipped upon peels of fruit, and one-third of the armies were felled because their pants were suddenly around their ankles, and one-third were felled by the cream pies which the red-nosed one flung into their midst. And great therefore was the confusion among the armies of men, and there was much wailing, and gnashing, and kvetching amongst them; and their kings and generals did tear at their hair in their rage, and kick their lieutenants, even in their keisters. And the Waters of Sel-tzer did spray all about, and great was the spluttering thereof.

"And the angels and the prophets and those around the Throne were seized with great laughter, and would have watered themselves indeed, had they had bladders with which to water themselves. And the Lamb did declare, 'Behold, that was a good one!'; for truly had the power of the mighty been shown to be vain and of no avail. And this was the rider with the red nose."

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EXCERPTS FROM THE ANTICALPYSE OF SEBASTIAN OF APPALACHIA

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