

The Heart of a Bucking Horse

Song by Tom Russell and Paul Zarzyski.

Paintings by Tom Russell.



Old Roman nose; long tangled mane—not built for town parade
But ugly lies in the eye of man—God makes broncs a different way
Ah, the buckskins, roans and dappled greys—let's cut down to the source
I come here to tell you boys, of the heart of a bucking horse

Of names that ring like carnival games, in the dusty old fairground night
Whiplash, Cylone, Kewpie Doll—Hootchie-Kootchie, Dynamite
And when they throw their weight 'gainst the hand of a man
With the whirl and the suck and the force
There's nothing that defines the West, like the heart of a bucking horse

From the hurricane deck of a rank old wreck roars the wild volcanic blood
The resin squawk is the anthem talk to the gelding, the mare and the stud
Ah the shouldered spur! The snort! The whirr! The screamin' in a red dust rain
It echoes down to Mexico—the Cheyenne rider out on the Plain

War Paint, General Custer, Empty Saddles and Trail's End
Grey Wolf, Midnight, Indian Sign—Snake Eyes and Descent
And when they throw their weight 'gainst the hand of a man
With the whirl and the suck and the force
There's nothing that defines the West, like the heart of a bucking horse

This old rodeo life just a big ole painting—Maynard Dixon skies that roll away
Some come to ride—some come to hide—near the chutes in the Cottonwood shade
But forever out in the forefront, The Great Western Image, The Soul, The Source
A cowboy's eyes intent on the “try,” and the heart of a great bucking horse

Yellow Fever, Dream Boat Annie, Painted Smile and Jesse James
Red Wing, Banjo, Widow Maker...how I love them old bronc names!
And when they throw their weight 'gainst the hand of a man
With the whirl and the suck and the force
There's nothing that defines the West, like the heart of a bucking horse



Tom Russell lives and writes from a border town in West Texas. His CDs are available from www.tomrussell.com and www.villgerecords.com. His art is available at www.tomrussell.com and also www.rainbowman.com in Santa Fe. His latest cowboy collection is “Cowboy'd All to Hell,” and features all his well-known original cowboy songs and several duets with Ian Tyson.

Paul Zarzyski is a former bareback bronc rider and “rodeo poet,” a title earned from 35 years spent “spurrin’ the words wild across fenceless open range of the blank page.” Of 10 collections of his work—mostly free verse—three remain in print. He has four CDs. www.paulzarzyski.com

