

Indigo Girls, Killing Time

"Knockin' on Heaven's Door" is a Bob Dylan song from 1973. The girls have been doing it now and then since at least 1988. There's something about the girls' version that kinda confuses me... See, the official Dylan lyric sheet has two verses:

Mama, take this badge off of me
I can't use it anymore
It's getting dark, too dark for me to see
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...

Mama, put my guns in the ground
I can't shoot them anymore
That long black cloud is comin' down
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...

Though I know that Dylan often sings a third verse live:

Mama, wipe the blood from my face
I can't see through it anymore
It's a feeling that I just can't trace
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...

Though in every IG version I have, Amy sings the following third verse:

Mama, wipe this blood from my face
I can't see through the walls
Six white horses coming to carry me away
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...

So, I don't know whether Amy re-wrote Dylan's third verse, or whether it's from some Dylan version I don't know. What I'm trying to say is that I don't know whether to attribute the "six white horses" line to Dylan or to Amy.

To further complicate matters, I've got one version that features a FOURTH verse, sung by Michelle Malone. This verse breaks both the meter and the rhyme scheme (ABBB in favor of ABAB), so I'm willing to bet that it's just Ms. Malone improvising...

Mama, take these chains off of me
'Cause I don't want them anymore
They're getting too damn heavy, I'm crawling across the floor
I feel like I'm knockin' on heaven's door
Knock, knock, knockin' on heaven's door...

Oh - BTW - the first person who asks me about the "Guns-n-Roses" version will feel my wrath...

-Vic.

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