

Small Fred, The Heart Of The Appaloosa

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 strenght 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 shal 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