

Salvation Menu

Driving the Wild Horse

by Jim Gold

Jack was born with a wild horse in his head. Neighbors claimed his mother had put it there. Or perhaps it was Uncle John from Bergenfield. Or maybe he'd been born with it. Nobody knew for sure. But no matter who or what had done it, Tom grew up with a wild horse problem.

In the beginning, he blamed his mother. It was easier that way. Every Wednesday, after kindergarten, he'd ask, "Ma, why did you plant this beast in my brain?"

"Your father did it," she would answer

After six years of hearing the same mid-week tune, she rebelled. When Jack came home from sixth grade with his usual complaint, she looked him straight in the eye and said, "Jack, stop blaming me. I won't take it anymore. It's not my fault. Horses, foxes, mules, rabbits, whatever, you and you alone are responsible! It's time to take care of your own stable." Softening a bit, she added, "I can understand why you may still want to blame me. After all, I'm taller."

Three days later, after Jack fell out of a window, he began taking more responsibility.

Still, despite weekly consultations with the local therapist, Jack's problem persisted throughout high school and college.

His wild stallion pulled him so much, he often went over the cliff, although, sometimes, by holding the reins real tight, he managed to get the horse back on track.

What a mess. What could he do with the beast? How could he control it?

Suddenly, a genie appeared before him and said, "Master, I am here to do your bidding. Whatever you want, you shall have. Tell me your wish, and it shall be granted."

"Wow, pretty good!" Jack exclaimed, reining in his horse. "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

"I'm your reminder," said the genie. "I'm bypassing your distracting questions. Simply know that, though your mind is a wild horse, you are its driver."

“Hey, Genie, you think I’m some kind of moron?” snarled Tom, feeling the sting of insult. “Who sent you? My mother?”

The genie, smarting equally from insult, raised his hand to strike the lad. “You young ingrate! I’ll--”

“Hold your horses!” Jack chuckled at the irony. “Listen, Genie, I know that! I know myself better than you think. I know my route is Edge-of-Cliff. On one side are open fields, blue sky, and sunlight, on the other a steep chasm, the abyss of darkness. I know it’s a bumpy ride, but I’m holding the reins tight!”

The Genie scratched his head. “Pretty good, kid. You’re smarter than I thought. Okay, my job is done. I’m off to see my next client.”

“What? Wait! What will keep me on the road?”

“Your horse! Watch him, but keep the reins in hand. Put yourself on the road to Becoming as you stay on the road of Being. That’s the paradox and irony: To be in the present as you see into the future. Striving to get better and improve will straighten out your mind and keep your horse from going over the cliff.”

“Anything else?”

“Isn’t that enough?”

from Carlos the Cloud

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