



Penned by Lantern Light

This column will spotlight members of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the Western Music Association. It will highlight an invited poet guest with possible short biographical information of his/her works. If a member of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter and if interested in submitting one piece of original work for publication, please contact the Western Wordsmiths chapter president.

Bill's Red Whiz

By Susie Knight – 02/15/13

I drove to the stable and climbed out my pickup.
I searched the arena that day.
The trainer was lunging a colt in a circle.
Sweat covered his neck all the way.

"Whoa!" she demanded and pulled on the lunge line.
He halted and faced her on cue.
"He's had his first lesson. He's done for today now.
I worked him while waitin' for you."

I looked the colt over from head to his tail.
I checked down his legs, neck, and hip.
A two-year old gelding straight out of the pasture.
No knowledge of halter nor whip.

I looked in his eye, and I saw his potential.
A calm sort of wonder he spun.
I nodded approval, "How much for this chestnut?"
We shook, and the deal was done.

I set aside time. Yes, he held my devotion.
I made it a point every day
To handle that gelding and, slowly but surely,
We made quite a team, I must say!

We won a few ribbons at shows that were local.
Chose not to compete far from home.
We'd rather take off through the pines and the meadows
And search for new trails to roam.

Then, one day, I found him way out in his pasture
Just standing alone from the herd.
I opened the gate, and he lifted his head then
Loped up though I said not a word.

I patted his neck and I slipped on his halter.
While leading him on I could see
My gelding seemed glad that I'd showed up to ride him!
I think he'd been waiting for me.

One day in the spring, after three days of raining,
I shouldn't have worked him so much.
I loped him in circles and figure-eight patterns.
Seemed he was ignoring my touch.

I got disappointed and over-n-undered
Him twice with my reins on his rump.
Insulted, he fought back with saddle-bronc anger,
And airborne, I braced for the thump!

That moment, he panicked and lost his own balance!
His four hooves slipped right off the track.
My thousand-pound cayuse went up in the air, and
He fell landing right on my back!

So helpless, I laid there as he tried to scramble
and rise up to just get away.
His right hind he planted on my calf beneath him,
Near-crushing my bones where I lay!

Well, nothing was broken aside from my ego.
'Twas my fault it happened, you see.
My own forceful hand shocked my colt to confusion
And caused him to near-cripple me!

It took me two weeks to recover and fin'ly
I steadied my nerves once again.
My father was there to lend moral support
as bareback, I mounted and then

The gelding rode easy and seemed to acknowledge
That he, too, was trying to see
If I was the same friend that he used to honor.
It seemed he was waiting for me

To ride him with fairness like we used to do it
For days on end, year after year.
He needed as much as I did in assurance
That we both had nothing to fear.

And never again did he look for a reason
To crow-hop nor buck like he'd done.
The mutual feeling we shared was that riding
Together should be lots of fun!

Eleven more years, we both rode on complaisant.
We covered a whole lot of land.
He even learned tricks where I taught him to hug me,
Shake hands, and act shy on command.

I moved to the mountains and broke down and sold him.
At seventeen, he'd seen it all.
Seasoned and bomb-proof, worth all of his training,
He kept kids from taking a fall.

Eight years, it has been. I should call his new owner.
I'm curious, now, just to see,
If he's grazing pastures way up in the sky where
I know he'll be waiting for me.



Susie Knight was exposed to horses, ranches, and all things "cowboy" at age three when she first rode a pony. At that same time, her parents (who sang professionally) had her begin her training in dance, piano, and theater arts. Intrigued by Chris LeDoux and her passion for rodeo, she began writing cowboy songs and poetry at age 15. Also, she wrote about her life experiences on her in-laws' Circle M Ranch in Pine Ridge, SD, during the 1980s. In 2010, Susie was able to start participating in Cowboy Poetry Gatherings. Her debut album, "Western Wordsmith," won the WMA 2012 Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year award. She's been a Top Five Finalist for the WMA's Female Poet of the Year in 2012 and 2013. Additional awards include 2013 Cowboy Idol Poet and 2013 Academy of Western Artist's Cowgirl Poet.