

La Peur des Chevaux

by [Sarah Gordon](#)

July 3, 2024

Yes, she feared them
in spite of their large forgiving eyes—
those compact bulging bodies,
sharp-necked, maned;
the strangely round poop
emitted occasionally
(and embarrassingly)
from beneath their raised
tails; the random, indelicate
snorts. Ach! the suddenness
of canter into gallop.

She, of course, was in fact *I*,
always intent on proving
myself to anybody who cared.
I heard my father's words:
Always walk into a grand
and imposing room
as if you own it.

And surely
the underside of his stony
advice was my fear. He saw it
in me, and I knew it was there.
I folded it inside the cuff of my sleeve,
believing it hidden.

The admirable Mrs. Roosevelt cleverly
advised: Every day you must do something
that scares you. Perhaps the thing
you're sure you can't do: pick up the reins,

hide the news from your dying mother,
sit down for the difficult talk, turn
your back on the faithless lover,

even if the world remains a fragile,
trembling place, beset by low-hanging
branches, wild unbroken stallions,
your own sweaty palms.