

Brownlock

We thought his name was Brownlock.
He was our son's first horse.
A funny sounding name but still
We kept his name of course.

Much later we discovered,
By stockmen he was known.
'Old Skinny' was his handle then,
For he was skin and bone.

A seasoned horse was Brownlock,
And stubborn as a mule.
Despite his stubborn nature though
This horse was no-one's fool.

He'd throw his head back, staring.
For men he wouldn't stand.
But for the kids and ladies, he
Would eat out of the hand.

Our Ray at only nine years
Embarked on training stress,
But who was training who, and how,
Was anybody's guess.

The two became a legend,
So versatile were they.
Gymkhana, show and jumping too,
And still had time for play.

Then Ray would practice falling,
In case he faced that test.
They were the envy of the club.
Both gave his very best.

Our son turned twelve and travelled
To boarding school down south.
It fell to me to learn to ride,
And try out Brownlock's mouth.

He picked me for a novice,
And tested me each day.
Sometimes he'd prop his feet and stop.
At times he'd fly away.

His 'trainer' had allowed him
To gallop out and back,
The gravel road beside the dam
Then fast along the track.

I nearly came unseated.
We dipped into the drain.
A sharp turn here, a jump up there,
I clung tight to the rein.

It must have been amusing
To see me looking pale.
Now on the horse's neck, and then
I dangled near his tail.

Though shaken up and flustered,
I firmly did decide,
I'd not fall off, no matter what,
And still I'd learn to ride.

Through thick and thin we battled,
The best of enemies.
And every day I still forgave,
And he tried hard to please.

Eleven months and counting,
Now Polocrosse I'd do.
I hadn't fallen once, and I
Was getting cocky too.

I reached out with my racket,
Unbalanced, in a daze.
The pony leaned the other way,
And then we parted ways.

A gentle sliding earthward,
And I was on my feet.
I smiled and bowed, so gracefully.
I thought it rather neat.

They say pride goes with falling,
And this was soon to come.
When galloping along the track
I landed on my bum.

That stubborn horse veered leftward,
While I was pulling right.
We headed for a pole, and it
Was him who won the fight.

A sudden stop, off balance.
We fell. I used my crop.
He rose and ambled down the road.
I called, 'Please Brownlock, stop!'

So injury to insult
He added on that morn.
I staggered home with wounded pride,
With knees and jodphurstorn.

The horse had won, I'd fallen,
But now can truly say,
That I became a rider, when
I hit the dirt that day.