

## La Peur des Chevaux

by [Sarah Gordon](#)

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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.