

The old mare's young one was useless for pulling a cart or even carrying a boy—but he did have one gift to offer Theron which was well worth the trouble of propping him up on a boulder. . . .

PIGGY

by Kit Reed

THERON SWORE IT. A GREAT winged figure swooped out of the sky one night and threw itself on Duchess, the old Percheron.

Theron ran in the house as soon as it happened and tried to tell his Daddy, but his Daddy just pushed him aside and said "Don't talk dirty," and that was the end of it until the mare foaled the next year. The colt was pink, plastic pink, like the thumb-size baby dolls in the ten cent store, and Theron's Daddy had to look close to see the light planting of white hair. The mare's pink baby was round as a couple of barrels, and when he finally got up he teetered on legs too spindly to support a puppydog. Right off the Pinckneys named him Piggy.

Mostly, Piggy was Theron's pet. Before Piggy came, Theron didn't have anybody in the crumbling old house. There was nobody to talk to but his mother and nobody to play

with but the twins, who were too small even to sit up alone, so he just naturally took to Piggy, and pretty soon he was keeping Piggy right outside his bedroom window, in a stall made by the caved-in part of the porch. Theron stuffed hay in between the carved railings so Piggy could eat lying down, and he hung a grain-bucket from one of the marble pillars, where Piggy could poke it with his nose. His mother gave him a big flowered bowl her granddaddy had used to make punch in, so when Piggy wanted water he wouldn't have to go all the way down to the trough.

Cold nights, when winter was frosting the marsh grass, Mrs. Pinckney would look out the window at Piggy shivering, and she'd get a quilt or Mr. Pinckney's Navy parka and throw it over Piggy in his stall. Sometimes she'd let Theron go outside and sit with him, and Theron would light a little fire.

The night of the hurricane, Mrs. Pinckney made Theron bring Piggy in the big double doors to take shelter in the living room, and after that Piggy used to spend a lot of time inside. Mrs. Pinckney would send Theron after him whenever Mr. Pinckney was shrimping out of Port Royal or spending his money in Beaufort, the nearest big town. He had clean habits when he was indoors, and he'd fold his legs under him by the fire, with his head in Theron's lap, and blow little noises through his nose at Luvver and Fester, the twins. Mrs. Pinckney would sit in the chair that Theron's great-great-great-great had brought with him all the way from England, watching Theron tying knots in Piggy's yellowed mane, and she'd think how nice it was for Theron to have a pet.

Daytimes, when Theron was gone, Piggy used to call to her, and many's the time she sat on the porch rail, just looking at him. He even tried to follow her a couple of times, getting unsteadily to his feet, but she made him keep to his stall and wait for Theron, because he belonged to the boy.

Theron's Daddy felt differently about things. He never went near the stall when he could help it, and the very mention of Piggy made him mad. He had a right to be galled. He'd been pouring grain into Piggy for years, hoping he'd get strong enough to pull a plow,

or at least to take the twins out in the basket cart, but Piggy went all shivery every time Mr. Pinckney brought the cart around and his legs buckled every time Mr. Pinckney tried to put the harness on. Mr. Pinckney would swear at him and then Piggy would have to eat some more so he could get his strength up again. Even Theron couldn't get him to move. At first Mr. Pinckney put up with it because Piggy was just a colt and the rest of the family liked him a lot.

But by the time Theron was fifteen Piggy was five years old and Mr. Pinckney had had just about enough. He was eating more grain than Duchess and Rollo put together and he hadn't done a lick of work in his whole pink life. Theron got up one morning to see his father sitting on the porch rail and looking down at Piggy, all curled up like an oversized tabby-cat at his feet.

"Morning, Theron," Mr. Pinckney said.

"Mornin, Daddy."

"I was just lookin at Piggy here." Theron's heart sank.

"Yes, Daddy," Theron said, and he perched his behind on the porch rail and looked at Piggy too. Piggy lowered his white eyelashes and gave him a yellow look.

Mr. Pinckney settled his bristly chin in his collar. "Piggy's eaten enough of my grain. I'm gonna call the dog warden tomorrow and have him put away."

"The dog warden." Theron looked hurt.

Mr. Pinckney poked Piggy with his toe. Hairless, porcine, Piggy was nibbling thoughtfully at his hoofs. "You call that thing a horse?"

"Piggy's a good horse, Daddy," Theron said.

His daddy jerked his head at his old coon hound. "So's Archambault."

"I mean it, Daddy. You just give me a chance with him and you'll see." Theron mumbled some words around in his mouth till they tasted right. Then his face lit up. "I bet I could have him broke for ridin by tonight." He ran his fingers through Piggy's sparse yellow mane. "You been sayin Mama shouldn't have to walk all that way to town. Piggy could take her."

"That's right, Eldred." Theron's mother shook Theron's feather mattress out the window by their heads. She didn't care about riding him one way or the other, but Piggy was a special friend of hers.

Archambault came up and licked Piggy on the nose.

"Okay," Theron's Daddy said. "You get him broke by tonight and you can keep him."

"Gee, Daddy." Theron was already coaxing Piggy to his feet. "Hey, Luvver," he said, and he gave Luvver the special look that meant he'd better hop to it or he'd get what for. Between them, they got Piggy hove to and headed for

the back field. Theron was walking in front, pulling Piggy along, looking proud as Lucifer, and for a minute Piggy was really picking up his feet, instead of just dragging them along. "You just wait, Daddy," Theron said. "He'll be broke in before you can get to Beaufort and back. Won't he, Luvver."

Five minutes later Luvver was back. He tugged at his Daddy until he gave him a bucket of grain. "Piggy sat down," he said.

They held the grain out in front of Piggy until he followed it to the pasture. Then they let him lie on his side and eat grass while Theron rode Luvver around and around, pretending to go on all fours, trotting and cantering so Piggy could see what it was like. Then they got him propped up on his four legs and Theron put Luvver on his back. Piggy sat down. Luvver slid off, hollering "Hey hey, that's the way," and Theron took him by the collar and said "Don't be fresh."

Next time he slid off, Luvver hollered "I'll use force, you dumb horse," and "He's too fat up where I sat" the next. Each time he said something he'd hit the ground and look foolish for a minute, and then he'd start swearing at Piggy to beat the band. When Theron shook him he'd say "Piggy made me say it. I had to talk like that." Theron just said "Aw, Luvver, don't be dumb," but next time he slid off Luvver

said "I went dump and hurt my rump," and Theron told him to get back to the house and send Fester out instead.

While he was waiting for Fester, Theron jacked the back end of Piggy up again and pushed him sideways so his belly was over a rock and he couldn't sit down. It was near noon and Fester was slow coming, so he decided to mount Piggy himself. Piggy looked around at him with an injured expression as he scrambled up on the fat back. Then he shimmied his bald rear quarters a bit, trying to sit down, and he curled his lip at Theron when he found out he couldn't sit down because of the rock. His eyelids drooped and he whuffed as if he'd been betrayed.

"There, there, Silverhair," Theron said, and patted him on the neck. Then he reared back because a crawly feeling had come over him, and he didn't know from one minute to the next what he was going to say. Piggy tried to sit down again, and before he could stop himself Theron was poking him with his heels and spouting

"Come on horse
I got no other
Gotta break you
For my mother."

It scared him so much he scrambled off and ran halfway across the field. Piggy wiggled his hind quarters, trying to get his middle off

the rock. Theron snuck up on Piggy, from the wrong side this time, and got on again. He sat there for a minute, feeling different about Piggy and the field and the day, and suddenly something started prickling inside of him and before he could help it he opened his mouth and sang out:

"Life is real, life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal
Dust thou art, to dust returnest
Black as the pit from pole to pole"

and it was so beautiful that Fester almost caught him crying when he appeared suddenly in the field.

"Hello, little fellow," he said to Fester, who thumbed his nose. Then he slid down off Piggy because he couldn't trust himself to go on. "You get on back to the house, Fester. I don't need you here. And you tell Momma and Daddy to come on down here just before it gets dark." He made a shooing motion. "Git."

As soon as Fester had gone he went back to Piggy and looked long into his yellow eyes. Piggy just breathed in and out, not much caring, and let his lower lip droop because it had been a long hot day.

"What you got in you, horse?" Theron said, and when Piggy wouldn't even turn his head far enough to nuzzle Theron's hand, Theron climbed up on him again to see if that strange feeling would

come back. As soon as he got on the whole field seemed to turn all green and shimmery, and the sky was changing colors like a piece of mother of pearl. He shook his head because all sorts of strange things were buzzing around in it, and before he could stop himself he was talking out loud again, in words that sounded even fancier than the poems they were reading this year, in the seventh grade. Theron just threw his head back and listened to himself, talking long, rolling musical lines about things he'd never heard of in this world, and he kept it up until he felt Piggy shaking underneath him, getting tired, and then he tumbled off and led Piggy under a shade tree where they could both get some rest.

When Theron's mother and Daddy came down to the field that night, there was Piggy, standing up straighter than he ever had in his fat life, and Theron looking tall and proud, was sitting on his back. He stayed up until he was sure they'd had a good look at Piggy, and then he slid down and said "See, Daddy. He's broke. He carried me just fine."

Mr. Pinckney was just about to open his mouth and say "If he's so well broke in let's see him walk," but Mrs. Pinckney was grabbing him by the elbow and dragging him away, saying "That's wonderful, Theron," with every step she took. When they got out of ear-

shot she told Mr. Pinckney it didn't really matter if Theron had propped Piggy up on a rock. If he cared that much about him let him keep him, and if she saw the dog warden even drive past in his pickup truck she was going to forget the marriage vows and fill Mr. Pinckney full of shot.

Theron came back from the field so late that his parents were already in bed. His mother had left a plate of hoppinjohn on the table, but he was too stirred up to eat. He went to bed instead, murmuring verses over and over to himself, so he'd be able to remember them the next day.

Everybody thought Theron was in school the next morning, like he ought to be, but when Luvver and Fester started playing hide-and-seek, and Luvver left Fester hiding his eyes on the tree counting to a million and two, he took off for the back field to hide and found Theron sitting on Piggy in the middle of the field, waving his arms for all he was worth. Luvver said why wasn't he in school, but Theron just said something he couldn't understand and gave him such a ferocious look that he turned and ran for home. He didn't even tell Fester about it when Fester finally found him hiding under the marble-topped pier table, where Theron's Daddy kept his boots.

Long and fine-ringing words were swimming in Theron's head

when he came up for dinner that night. He came late, about six, and everybody but his mother was sitting out on the front porch. Theron slid around back and pulled up at the kitchen table while she had her back to him, working at the stove.

"Mama," he said, and she jumped because she hadn't heard him come in at all. "Mama, don't you think this is beautiful?" and then he said a long, musical piece that ended,

"Footprints in the time of sands,"

hugging his skinny shoulders, trying to hold the words within himself because they warmed his insides.

His mother touched his head affectionately. "You better eat your grits."

His father wouldn't even listen.

Theron cornered Luvver outside the cold house after school the next day, and said poetry at him and said poetry at him. Luvver was quiet enough, and Theron's heart lightened, until he saw that Luvver was quiet mostly because he was picking his nose.

He kept pretty much to himself after that, going down to the field as soon as he got home from school. He was quiet and edgy most of the time, thinking about the poetry that would come to him as soon as he got on Piggy's back. Piggy still hated standing up, but he seemed

to know how much pleasure it gave Theron, because he stood patiently as long as Theron wanted him to.

Once, Theron came home from school to find his mother on her knees beside Piggy, running her fingers over his balding neck. She looked up at him and said, "Is there something special about Piggy, son?"

He said, "I tried to tell you, Mama. He makes poetry come."

"These things I hear you say in your sleep?"

"I guess so, Mama." He wished she would let him go. He wanted to get on Piggy's back again.

"It was real strange," she said thoughtfully. "He almost tried to get up a while ago. He kept poking me with his nose like there was something he wanted me to do."

Not long after that Theron built a leanto down by the field, and moved Piggy out of his stall on the porch for good. He snuck out of the house with a Queen Anne chair and a pile of quilts and a Holland vase to make the place look pretty, and he fixed up the shack. When fall came, he used a lever to roll the big rock in the door of the shack, so that they could sit there most of the day, Theron mouthing poetry and Piggy drowsing a little, one hip dropped, listening to Theron's voice. His daddy was off with the shrimp fleet, looking for better waters, and there was nobody to

bother Theron about how much time he spent down at the field.

Daytimes Piggy would let Theron ride him, and new lines would come to him as he sat, and evenings he would talk to Piggy, reciting as many lines as he could remember. Piggy would lie on his fat flanks heaving. He'd put his muzzle in Theron's lap and look up at him with yellow eyes. One of the twins would come down with a little pail of supper and Theron wouldn't have to go back to the house until late at night. Sometimes his mother would stop him in the halls and look him in the eyes and try to talk to him, but he'd say "Night, Mama," and go to his room. In bed, he would cross his feet and look at the ceiling, calling the lines as they came to him. Soon there were so many of them crowding in his mind that he was afraid he'd forget some, and he took to writing them down. He moved into the shack that October, and he and Piggy lived quietly in the haze of autumn, with words flying around their heads like dandelion puffs in the sun.

It was too beautiful not to share. Theron went up to his Daddy's rolltop desk one day and got a magazine and copied the address down, because he thought other people ought to be able to see Piggy's poetry too. He got three cents from his mother, who loved Theron enough to let him go his own

way, and he got out one of his favorite poems and mailed it to the Breeders' Gazette. He went down to the mailbox every day for a couple of weeks, looking for a letter, and then he forgot about it for a while.

In November Theron's Daddy came home. He dropped his canvas bag and his yachting cap on the floor in the front hall and peeled off the twins, who were climbing up his trousers, and asked Mrs. Pinckney where Theron was.

She chased the twins into the kitchen and said, "Down't the field."

Theron's Daddy gave her a close look. "He been any help to you since I left?"

"Course he has," she said, edging in front of the dining room door so he wouldn't see the harness Theron was supposed to repair each summer still waiting on the dining room table.

"He's been wasting his time with that—*horse*." Mr. Pinckney pushed his jersey sleeves up above his elbows and looked around for something to threaten Theron with.

"Eldred Pinckney, you lay one hand on that boy . . ." Mrs. Pinckney stood toe to toe with him.

He backed down a little. "It's not Theron, it's *Piggy* I'm after," he growled. "Should've let the dog warden take him right off. I'll drive him down to Beaufort to-

night, and see what I can get for him . . ." Theron's Daddy was so mad he'd forgotten Piggy wouldn't walk. He grabbed a cane from the elephant-foot umbrella stand and barged for the front door. The screen door swung in and banged him in the face and he reared back to see a little man in a sack suit still reeling from his battle with the door.

"It's wonderful. *Wonderful*," he said, sweeping right past Theron's Daddy and taking Mrs. Pinckney by both hands. "Where is he?" He readjusted a folder of papers under his arm and started sniffing around the house.

"What's wonderful," Mr. Pinckney said, standing smack in the doorway.

"Why, *this*," the man in the sack suit said. He closed his eyes as if he were in church and started reciting:

"Sky of sky! with clouds all brindle
With the birds that dart between
 them
And thy sun which doth enkindle
Nightingales before we've seen
 them
In our nooks . . ."

Then his voice trailed off as he saw that Theron's parents didn't think it was wonderful at all, and he said, "Oh, you didn't know about it," his voice getting fainter and fainter, ". . . perhaps I'd better explain . . ."

A little later, while Mr. Pinckney was sulking on the widow's walk, Mrs. Pinckney took the man in the sack suit down to Theron's field. Theron was just taking Piggy into the shed.

"Theron, honey, this is Mister Brooks. He runs a poetry magazine . . ."

Mister Brooks flushed to his round collar and said "That's just in my spare time, I'm afraid. Actually I work for the Breeders' Gazette. I was down this way doing a story on hogs . . ."

"You got my poem?" Theron said, and pulled him inside.

He sat Mister Brooks down on a marble-topped commode, far enough away from Piggy so that Mister Brooks wouldn't be frightened of him, and they talked for a long time. Mister Brooks told Theron the Breeders' Gazette didn't exactly take to his kind of poetry—in fact it didn't take to poetry at all, but he happened to be working there ("just to support my poetry magazine") and he saw it and he wanted Theron to know he thought it was great. Then Mister Brooks gave him a copy of "Fragile," which was *his* magazine, and then he gave Theron five dollars, which was because his poem was in it. He got down off the commode and came over and took Theron's hand.

"If you could come back to Lou-aville with me, I bet I could get you a scholarship somewhere. You

could write poetry for the reviews, the "Prairie Schooner," you could win the Bollingen prize . . ." Mister Brooks's eyes were hazed over with longing. "We'd both be famous, son. With your talent . . ."

" . . ." Theron said through his fingers, blushing red.

"What did you say?"

"It wasn't me—it was Piggy." He said it over and over, but Mister Brooks didn't want to understand. Theron did get it across to him that he couldn't go to Louaville ever and thank you very much. Then he looked down at the five dollars and he promised to send Mister Brooks all his poems because Mister Brooks seemed to feel so bad.

He patted Piggy on the nose and walked Mister Brooks to the edge of the field. "I couldn't leave Piggy, see," he said, and then he handed Mister Brooks a big sheaf of poems because he looked like he was about to cry.

On his way back to the house Mister Brooks must have said something to Theron's Daddy. He came down to the shack and took Theron's five dollars, but he never said anything about getting rid of Piggy again, and he stopped talking about sending Theron back to school.

There were little bits of money after that—Theron's Daddy took the checks to keep up the house—and copies of magazines, "Challenge" and "Output" at first, mim-

eographed just like "Fragile," and then austere-looking reviews that bored Theron and Piggy because there were no pictures in, and in a few years there were copies of "The Atlantic" and "The Saturday Review." Sometimes people came down to see Theron, all bright-eyed and loaded down with their own poetry, but Theron's Daddy sent them away. Every once in a while Mister Brooks would send Theron a clipping about a speech he'd given on poetry—Theron's poetry, because Mister Brooks had appointed himself Theron's Goddaddy and his agent (that was the way he explained it to Theron) and he was very famous now. He'd even quit The Breeder's Gazette.

In a few years the twins got married and moved away, and there began to be scruffy patches on Piggy's shoulders, and transparent hairs in his mane. Theron only sat on his back two hours a day now, and the words that came to him were all detached and sharp and pure, wheeling like gulls over the river.

His mother brought his food down to him every evening and took the poems to mail to Mister Brooks. Piggy's longest poem paid for the funeral when his Daddy died. After he was buried and put away, Theron's mother began hanging around the shack door of an evening, too lonely to go back to the big old house. At first Ther-

on was impatient with her for being there, because the words were singing in his brain and he wanted to be alone with them, but one night when she touched his hand as she gave him the bucket, he looked down to see soft, trembly lines around her mouth, and he was so sorry about that and the way her hand shook that he opened the door and sat her down in the Queen Anne chair. Piggy rocked a little until he was lying alongside her, and put his head in her lap. They both sat quiet as marsh-rabbits and listened to Theron make the words ripple around them.

Theron threw back his head in the glow of the lamp, thinking he'd be perfectly happy if he could die right then. As his mother got up to go something glittered on her cheek, and Theron saw that there were tears in her eyes.

"Son, that was beautiful." She ducked her head and slipped out the door before Theron could say anything to her. Piggy nickered and looked almost as if he'd like to follow her up to the big house and put his head in her lap again. When she came the next night Theron opened the door and motioned toward the Queen Anne chair without a word. After that his mother spent all the long evenings with him and Piggy, listening to Theron in the closeness of the low-ceilinged shack.

One night, after she'd left, Piggy nudged Theron, who watched amazed as Piggy struggled to his feet without urging and edged his hindquarters around so that his belly was resting on the rock. He took Theron's sleeve gently in his teeth, tossing his head until Theron climbed on him, slowly, because Piggy tired easily these days. Then he gave Theron his most beautiful piece of poetry. When he got it in the mail, Mister Brooks was to say that it was the culmination—the pearl—of Theron's late period:

The sun kept setting, setting
still,
Because I could not stop for
Death.
Great streets of silence led
away—
I took my power in my hand,
As far from pity as complaint.
My life closed twice before its
close;
I asked no other thing.
Safe in these alabaster cham-
bers
A spider sewed at
Night.

When his mother heard it in the next evening she wept.

Days sang and days passed, one like the other, until Theron's mother tapped at the door one night, bright-eyed and quivering. Theron sat quietly without beginning, because he knew she had

something on her mind. She ducked her head, pretending to stroke Piggy's sparse mane, and then she saw that Theron wasn't going to begin; he was waiting for her to tell him what was bothering her.

"Mister Gummery was asking after you, Theron," she said.

Theron scratched his head.

"He was in the fourth grade the year you quit school." Her hands fluttered in Piggy's mane.

Theron rattled some papers, wondering what she would say.

"Theron." She got up abruptly, so that Piggy's chin fell off her lap and bumped on the floor. "He says the church is going to have its hundred-twentieth birthday next month, and he wants you to write them a play."

Suddenly, Theron's hands were still. "Mama, I don't know if I can. Piggy's getting tired." His voice sounded old. "And so am I. Couldn't he use some play out of a book?"

Her eyes were hurt. "I never asked you anything before. Your great-great granddaddy went to that church." She touched his arm gently. "Son?"

Theron looked at Piggy, whose skin was almost transparent now, under the light fall of his brindled mane. Piggy's white-rimmed eyes were wide open and swimming with love. He began rocking and rocking back and forth gently, back to floor, then belly, until

he got his spidery legs under him and began heaving himself to his feet. He almost made it and then he fell, catching splinters in his delicate knees. Theron rushed to him but he was already struggling again, heaving until he got his legs under him. He rose with a massive gesture and with a sigh put his nose on Mrs. Pinckney's shoulder. Theron gave him one tragic look and then turned to his mother.

"You better go now, Mama. Piggy and I have to get to work."

Piggy carried Theron on his back all that night and all the next day, and they were still going the next evening, when Mrs. Pinckney scratched at the door of the shack. Theron's eyes were bloodshot and his fingers cramped from scribbling, but Piggy snatched at him with his teeth every time Theron tried to get down. Finally Theron scribbled "The End," so drunk with words that he didn't realize what he was writing, and with a gallant toss of the head Piggy fell sideways away from the supporting rock and sank to the floor. He turned his head toward Theron, and his eyes glazed over with pride.

"Mama," Theron said. "The play."

She turned her eyes away because she couldn't stand to see Piggy's rigid fat body or the pain in Piggy's eyes. After the church show, when Mrs. Pinckney sent a

copy of the play, "A.B.," for Abraham, to Mister Brooks, he sent her a pile of money and told her Theron would certainly win the Poets' Prize. The money came too late. Piggy had already gone into a decline.

Theron called a heart specialist down from Charleston (he'd have nothing to do with a vet, like he'd had nothing to do with the dog warden years before) but there was nothing anybody could do. He took to his shack, pining so that he wouldn't even let his mother come in at night. She sat on a step outside, listening for Piggy's breath.

The prize came the day after Piggy was buried, under a wooden marker, down in the soft grass at the end of the field.

Five men in dark suits and black Homburgs and a woman in a lace-trimmed dress and a velvet tam pulled up outside the Pinckney house. Hushed by the brooding trees, they talked in whispers until Mrs. Pinckney opened the front door. She hardly recognized Mister Brooks; he was so gray and distinguished-looking. She seemed not to understand until, wordlessly, the woman held out a small leather case with the medal, nested in satin, bearing Theron's name.

"Oh," Mrs. Pinckney said. "You want my son."

They followed her around the house, past crumbled garden stat-

ues and a sundial that had sunk into itself a hundred years before, nudging each other and whispering as they caught glimpses of ruined chiffoniers and Federalist mirrors through the tall, low windows. Gently, they untangled vines and bushes from their ankles and, single file, looking reverent and austere in the bright daylight, they followed Theron's mother across the hummocked field. They picked their way up the worn little path and stood uneasily at the door to Theron's shack. His mama called to him. There was a rustling inside and Theron poked out his shock-white head.

He stood in the doorway with the sleeves of his blue work shirt rolled up above his gaunt elbows, and looked at the men in the fine black suits. Then he smiled tentatively at Mister Brooks, who nodded almost shyly, and the ceremony began.

The leader of the delegation gave his speech. Theron heard him say something about "most coveted prize in poetry," and he said "Piggy'll be glad," but the man in the sack suit gave him a puzzled look and went on with the speech. Theron waited respectfully until he was finished, stepping aside because he could see that the lady with the velvet hat was trying to peek inside his door. He looked over his shoulder and saw that the Queen Anne chair was standing up, just where

he'd propped it, and Piggy's place was all swept clean. He whispered "That's where Piggy used to sleep," but she pretended not to hear.

"... pleased to give you this award," the speaker concluded, and he held out the medal so Theron could see where they had engraved his name.

"It wasn't me," Theron mumbled, and they all nodded their heads and twittered to each other about his modesty. "It wasn't me it was Piggy," Theron said again, as they pressed the leather case with the medal into his hands. "It was Piggy," he said again as

they bowed their heads in a moment's respect and then turned like nuns in a procession and started single file back across the field. "It was Piggy," Theron said, looking down at the glint of the medal in his hands.

He sat down on the front step of his shack, turning the case over and over, watching the sunlight catch the gold until tears shimmered in his eyes so that he couldn't see. Then he went inside and combed his hair and put on a clean shirt. Slowly, as the delegation had walked, he went to the end of the field and put the leather case on Piggy's grave.



A Meeting On A Northern Moor

"Who are you, flimsy ghost on a ghost-horse
Riding the night-wind?"

"Bugaboo my name,
Wild Huntsman, bogle, goblin—only words
To frighten ploughboys. Once my temples rose
All over Scandia and the Germanies,
My hand sent forth the lightnings. I was called
All-Father then, Wotan the Wise . . . and you,
Thin crone on the broomstick?"

"People call me now
Old Mother Holly, midnight witch, and hag,
Terror of nurseries. But I have been
High Lady of Heaven, giver of bread and life,
Frigga the loved and beautiful. Alas,
Old Lord and husband, know you not your wife?"

—LEAH BODINE DRAKE