

## Pegasus

by Patrick Kavanagh

My soul was an old horse  
Offered for sale in twenty fairs.  
I offered him to the Church--the buyers  
Were little men who feared his unusual airs.  
One said: 'Let him remain unbid  
In the wind and rain and hunger  
Of sin and we will get him--  
With the winkers thrown in--for nothing.'

Then the men of State looked at  
What I'd brought for sale.  
One minister, wondering if  
Another horse-body would fit the tail  
That he'd kept for sentiment--  
The relic of his own soul--  
Said, 'I will graze him in lieu of his labour.'  
I lent him for a week or more  
And he came back a hurdle of bones,  
Starved, overworked, in despair.  
I nursed him on the roadside grass  
To shape him for another fair.

I lowered my price. I stood him where  
The broken-winded, spavined stand  
And crooked shopkeepers said that he  
Might do a season on the land--  
But not for high-paid work in towns.  
He'd do a tinker, possibly.  
I begged, 'O make some offer now,  
A soul is a poor man's tragedy.  
He'll draw your dungiest cart,' I said,  
'Show you short cuts to Mass,  
Teach weather lore, at night collect  
Bad debts from poor men's grass.'  
And they would not.

Where the  
Tinkers quarrel I went down  
With my horse, my soul.  
I cried, 'Who will bid me half a crown?'  
From their rowdy bargaining  
Not one turned. 'Soul,' I prayed,  
'I have hawked you through the world  
Of Church and State and meanest trade.  
But this evening, halter off,  
Never again will it go on.  
On the south side of ditches

There is grazing of the sun.  
No more haggling with the world....'

As I said these words he grew  
Wings upon his back. Now I may ride him  
Every land my imagination knew.