Curiously, the neck of one hog still held the slaughtering knife. The butcher had driven it deep enough to catch into the neck bone, and there it stuck to tell the loathsome story of the slaughterhouse.

"Did the storm do that to these animals, Dad?" asked Jeremy.

His father only stared in disbelief, unable to answer.

Most of the women had taken one look and turned away. Some were vomiting, others crying.

Emma seemed to be turned to stone. She, too, couldn't speak.

And so they remained, staring in mute shock, the animals' eyes looking back at them.

THE HORSES OF RETRIBUTION

Now through the dust they come — horses black as the heart of rain; their necks are scarred, their foreheads burned with mystic anger and love.

And we can soak their running power into our flesh, becoming black water; and locked into the body of God we can evoke the flashing days to teach us torrent of total pleasure; we can be swept to meadows of praise.

And geese we listened to at the dead door of the subconscious till all fear broke, and like them we rose and flew, cry now across the marshes of the years with ancient pity and perceiving woe;— stretching our black-beast sinews we pursue and overtake these birds, speed under them in joy;

and where we come upon the murdered fawn we dabble our hooves in the clean blood, and swear to avenge with an unspeakable pain all violations of nature's good.

George Abbe

Carol Belanger Grafton,
Old-Fashioned Animal Cults.
New York: Dover, 1987