## **Horrible Qualities**

Tarnished mirror in the hall Reflects the ghosts that come to call Dressed in dusty silken gowns Dancing in the shadowed sounds

Eyes like echoes not quite there Should be dead but instead stare Behind me up stairs they bound They're gone when I have turned around

On the walls that seem to cry Are the monsters finally free? Oh, what secrets do they hide Behind the family tapestry?

A handless maiden leads a mare Through half-deserted bedrooms bare To her the sunlight filters in From out behind the red curtains

A little girl in framed attire Hangs her locks above the fire She takes your hand, writes her lines Drench the page with children's rhymes

In the walls that seem to cry Are the monsters finally free? Oh, what secrets do they hide These bright-lit whispered histories?

Smoking jackets play around What house of theirs once fallen down Is crept in ruins behind closed doors In hallways not gone down before

A lonely reader in the gloom Hears footsteps in the other room It's only children playing ball In the tarnished mirror in the hall

In the rooms that seem to cry Are the monsters finally free? Oh, what secrets do they hide? Is the only monster me? **Josh Ritter**