

## Horrible Qualities

Josh Ritter

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?