

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?