

Book Review

BLUE MOUNTAIN RIDER

by Mary Benson and Hedy Strauss

Reviewed by Carol M. Upton

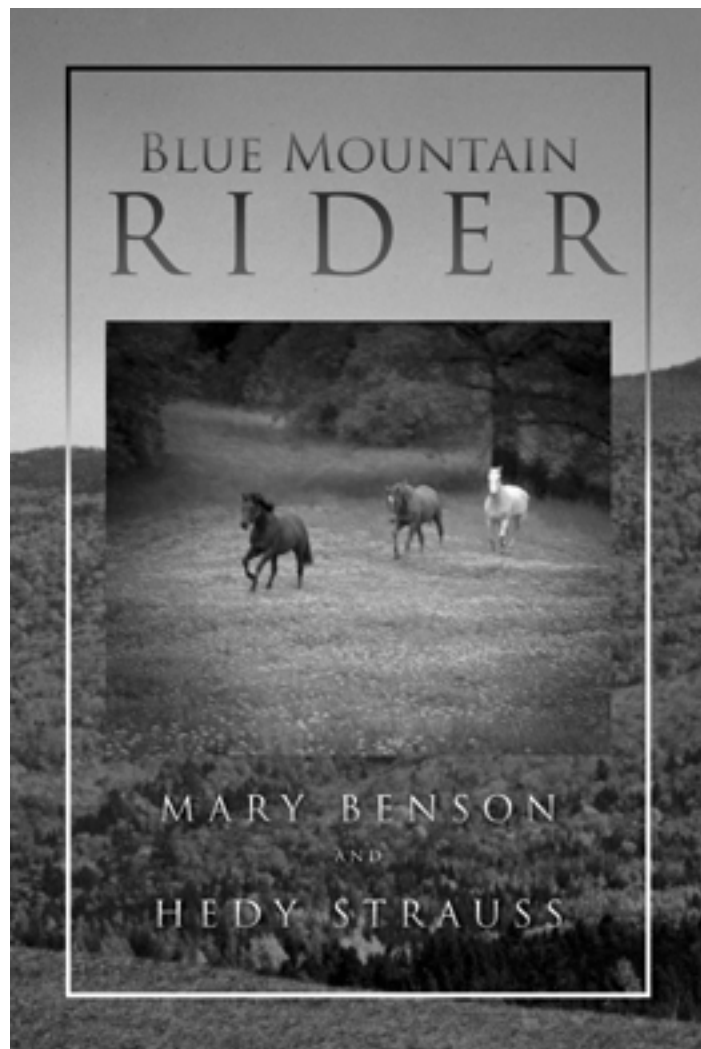
This collection of poems reflects our deepest emotions, ambitions, desires, hopes, fears, and dreams. It illustrates love and respect for an animal that has earned its way into our structure of life. - Hedy Strauss

Blue Mountain Rider is one of the few poetry collections dedicated to a celebration of the horse. Mary Benson and Hedy Strauss bring us an exceptional anthology that describes the countless ways in which these unusual creatures have enriched our lives.

In the opening section, 'Horse Evolving', we are treated to elemental images that remind us why we are often so drawn to horses. In 'Wild Spirit' Strauss writes one of several poems about the mustangs whose dramatic images appear in current news of round ups and herd management: "The sound of hoofbeats/ fill the air/ Wild prairie phantoms - disappear!" Benson offers us the ethereal 'Night Ride' plucked from childhood dreams: "Oh, the desert sings to me/ And I ride/ In windswept flight, aloft and free/ Forever in this enchanted land, Pegasus and me."

Other sections include poems dedicated to specific types such as the Appaloosa, the hard-working mules of history, and the world's wild horses, from the Steppes of Asia to Australia and the Moors of Brittany. Another cluster reminds us how horses have served throughout history, in city streets and country fields, on police patrol or cutting cattle. Special relationships between girls and horses are explored in such tender poems as 'Pigtails and Ponytails' and 'Mane of Red and Gold'. There is sadness, too, in Benson's pondering: "Oh, how will we say farewell?" and Strauss acknowledging how "It will break my heart the day you die."

This book is a memorable gift for any horse-lover, but you'll likely want a second copy for your bedside table, so you can savour these evocative lyrics whenever you wish.



Combining their love of horses and the outdoors, Mary Benson and Hedy Strauss immigrated to the Adirondack Mountains in Upstate New York where they met. Whether it is preserving wild mustang heritage or saving horses from slaughter, both women are passionate advocates for animal welfare. Visit Mary and Hedy at www.bluemountainrider.com