

HORSE

Among sixteen horses on the western slope
weathering sleet and sunshine, reflecting field-lit
contours, there is a first horse, one where I might
bring my face to its cheek, feel the eyelash of its thought,
see myself reflected there, hand extended—how it had seen
an early flash upon a winter clarity restaged on the iris
of its companion, and they whitened together in the comet's return.
They bolted at the man of Tarsus kept blind, who kept his name
staggering among the husks, the sleepers beneath
patches of ice and tufts of bunchgrass. This horse watched
my mother as a girl passing in a train, fence posts
pulling to where the two-lane county road brought me
to the length of the animal's moment, which is always, skin
taut around the mouth, older than the skies that cured the hide-locked
region around its eye—avuncular, and at center
an eddy of weather and dust that sifted the afternoons and roads,
the cave aperture where the stone held its ground.
The animal did not move. I came no closer.