

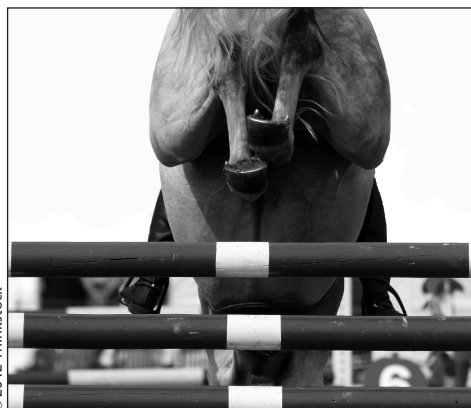
POETRY

Steeplechase charity gala

With a terrific clang, the gates open
 And the steeds surge forward.
 A halcyon wave washes over her,
 And her single-serving companions,
 Reducing uninhibited guffaws,
 Shrieks, and vulgar whispers
 To hushed murmurs,
 As hooves and her heart
 Both pound with earnest impatience.

She presses her cheek to the cold metal tent pole,
 Trying to steady herself
 Against the weight of the world
 And the trembling of the ground.
 Time slows, and she notices then
 How the crisp fall air mingles with the scent
 Of freshly cut hay, perfume, and gin.

How difficult it is to break away,
 Like a stallion before the gate opens,
 From these inebriated, carousing strangers,
 To whom it seems secrets are currency,
 And from the insalubrious mixture in her hand
 That has defined her, marked her,
 Siphoned her health these past years.



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These majestic equines calm her,
 Their rippling velvet skin concealing
 The raw power of a million myocytes;
 Form and function seamlessly married,
 Whispering of a harmony in nature
 She now struggles to regain.

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