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## Why Nature Surprises Us

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# Why Nature Surprises Us

## I

The clouds slump into the gutters,  
Their heavy bodies plane the roof,  
Their tongues on tin, dragging.  
The close friction  
Like the rub of comb and mane.  
And heaven—  
A pin of light driven between dark woods.

All four of them are up  
Today,  
Even the lame one  
Hobbling like a broken easel.  
Even through the spiked, sweating tobacco,  
And the moaning wheat sheaves,  
They've smelled the dark oats  
Like so many sheep's teeth sifted in the bucket.

## II

The grime from their coats,  
Their teeth marks sewn into my jeans,  
Their golden-bleached dung—  
They are in the wind,  
The land they've beaten themselves into,  
Throwing their bodies down to mark the earth.

## III

After the storm,  
When the red trailer  
With heavy, iron barred doors  
Bumped into view,  
What else could it mean?

It was noon.  
We stood in the gaping doorway.  
The high sun  
Played tricks on the horses;  
Their broad shoulders and narrow backs  
All plateaus and plains,  
Their drugged heads—  
Their necks,

Long and low—  
Submission so vast  
Their breath blew dust onto my boots.

Then leading the bay into the trailer,  
Her front end, up and in;  
Her back hooves in only by instinct.  
The death stiffness already in her legs,  
In her tongue lagging from her mouth.  
And so sexual, needle sliding down  
Neck and vein, their deaths  
Birthed in blood.

Then only falling,  
Then only falling,  
Then only falling into the trailer's tub,  
No thought of decency or harm.

—Josh Endicott '96



—Untitled, Colin Mack '94