

1971

From: "The Santa Cruz Mountain Poems": Horse Chestnut; Hiking

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From: *The Santa Cruz Mountain Poems*

HORSE CHESTNUT

You have rapped against the earth and were not allowed to enter. Was it your appearance of an eclipse?

You have been the trembling in the hand of pollen, and have found your dark way lighted by the lamps of flowers, only to come to this.

Those who touch you desire to know the outer covering of the sky and find an emptiness harder than diamond.

You are silent, still, totally possessed. For me that's enough. Enclose your villages, wall your cities, surround your empty oceans.

I salute the deaths inside you that I cannot see: the coasts, plateaus, mountains, dried-out marshes.

Dead planet, you are the skin of my day. For I cannot cross my galaxy without a ghost to wish on, a ghost that's solid in my hand.

HIKING

Sunlight spills down my shoulders, and at the bottom of a hill I arrive at a road where many people of dust are marching toward the city. A storm of knees, bodies that cannot resist but are blown down the road like an enormous collection of bad breaths.

It is not to bless them that I tell you this, but to remind you of those who are truly blessed.