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These Untitled Little Verses in Which, at Dawn, Two Obscure Dutch Peasants Struggled with an Auburn Horse

Norman Dubie

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These Untitled Little Verses in Which, At Dawn,
Two Obscure Dutch Peasants Struggled with an
Auburn Horse / Norman Dubie

The water is green. The two boats out at a distance
Are silver, and the two gulls coming in

Off the water are, also, silver;
But these peasants and their horse, at first light,

Seem absorbed in the pitch-blackness
Of a previous night. They are in a field

That climbs away from the sea joining
A thick row of white almond trees.

The younger of the two men holds a small branch,
The other

Holds a rope that leads away from the horse
Running over his shoulder and underneath the arm

To a pool of rope beneath him: he leans,
Or he reclines like a lever in the scene.

The auburn horse
Represents some inevitable sadness

That will visit each of us, that visits
These two peasants struggling in a winter pasture.

It is the morning.
It is dawn. These three may

Signal a common enough passage from the night
To the day. It begins like pain for the older man:

It begins to rain.
The two men run to the trees just above them

And the horse, ignorant of everything, walks away
Like a skilled butcher from a dark, maimed

Lamb still wiggling in the grass behind him. And
Morning surrenders to mid-day, and the afternoon

To the evening, and the evening surrenders everything
To the sleep of these two peasants

Who have had a discouraging day in the fields:
They dream of the black, burial horses of a king

With heavy sable plumes and the blinders
Of gold-leaf made starry with diamonds,

Horses not like the auburn mare who stood
In a world that

Belongs to a system of things
Which presents a dark humus with everything

Living: all of us preceded
Not by the lovely, braided horses

Of which the peasants dreamed, but by these two
Peasants and their horse struggling

Briefly, at dawn, in the deep trenches
Of a field beside the green, winter sea!

Premonition / Mark Jarman

Mother, I see you blocking the door,
your skin is a mesh of light
letting the night through,
your breasts are no longer toylike
as in the bath, they are cones
of moonlight tipped with darkness,