

1976

Premonition

Mark Jarman

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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 toylake
as in the bath, they are cones
of moonlight tipped with darkness,

and between your thighs
that reddish wedge of hair
that hovered near my palm-sized face
is white with a black crease.

When you turn completely to memory
that is the shape you'll take,
reminding me each time I pass
through you into another room
that death is a short trip;
your heart stops and you're there.

The Picture / Arthur Vogelsang

In this one, we sat on the floor.
Beyond the thin glass the idea of water and thunder
Was like a seizure in God's mind
(“Fresher! Fresher!” he yelled, and threw the water down)
And among our legs which smelled like salt and clean blood
We spread out the thousand photographs,

A few aunts dead, the Cartier-Bresson imitations we published,
Our cats at two months, that auditorium
Where we saw Lowell eight years ago deserted
Afterward so in our frame it looked like erosion
In a waterless desert or a hill so steep
You'd think at a sneeze someone would have somersaulted down
Over body after body into his sidekick poet
Rich's lap. The old girl friends,
The boys who had you, in snapshots
Somehow better than the 8 x 10's we were secretly so proud of and sold.

In nearly every one, of us,
There's this irony on my face and always on yours
That keeps us from being scared
At the nervelike blue light which instant by instant attacks the powerful rain
At the edge of the window.

There's a smile