

What Can't Be Spoken Of

Carol Hayes

If left too long unfed
the mare will bolt--
take the side of anyone's face
held near. There's no
comfort for her but fresh
grass and feed not
fought for.

Our stomachs full, we watch
scatter cool morning
certainty that brought us
here, follow the lead
rope broken through
rocks, mud, manure
to sweeter

places we've lost sight of
don't remember
in our fullness what drives
the tongue to wet
itself on salt blocks
left dry in a
dead place--
what memory forms crust
too thick for much
more than food, its smell or
lack of, to breach
or by what power such
rising of forelegs
suck breath from one moment
of ignorance.

Hesitant, we flank her
sides, pat ribs we've
grown blind to, whisper
around the truth
of why old ropes don't hold
and what can't be spoken of
give every name
but what it is.

