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## Working Horse

Big sorrel Belgian,  
last stall on the right.  
Buzz-cut blonde mane,  
forever he runs away  
inside his head. Rescued from  
a farmer who used him  
without the care lavished  
on a rusty old tractor.

He bites his own fore-leg, groans,  
collapses back into the hay rack ,  
wrinkles his long soft lips, terror's  
grotesque smile when we come close.  
Ghost-hands raise the lash, the whip, the knife  
Behind his eyes. Baby, baby, Gideon.  
Not all hands are fisted! Tears tell him  
This. They paint my cheeks.

Look (look softly) only a brush,  
or a sweet oatmeal cookie: sometimes,  
tremble-fingers reach more terrified than he.

I sit here, cloaked in velvet insomniac darkness  
and surreal green screen-light. I imagine him asleep  
right now, this just-past-midnight moment,  
one back foot cocked that way horses do,  
his left side where his hip is scarred and the hoof broken  
off, head drooping, ears flutter, eyes closed  
I wonder what he dreams about.