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How Not to Cull Wild Horses

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HOW NOT TO CULL WILD HORSES

Wisdom dictates there is a right and wrong way to do everything, and if that is true of cracking a walnut, accompanying a jig on a bodhran, or getting out of the sand trap then it is true of culling wild horses, in the public lands out West where some suggest that mustangs have outlived their charm and become nuisances like sourpussed former Mousketeers fallen on hard times, staggering drunkenly around the county fairgrounds picking fights with all comers.

In the best of all possible worlds the wind that spins dust devils and rattles the panes of loosely shut windows would also fret the manes of horses sprung from their makeshift pens and carry the scent of the hunter with his rifle trained from a comfortable distance to the spooked herd. In the best of all possible worlds there would be a Plan C and their would be room for compromise, even as in late summer the sage grass long and lush that stretches out as far as the eye can see bends beneath the whir of the patrol chopper.

The clouds prove to be anvil shaped conundrums for the splaying from where we gather on the capital steps
waiting on a late reprieve,
bluer skies to adjudicate
the final compromise that may be arrived at
only after fierce debate,
the fruit of smaller scrums fought
in the dust that rises along the fencelines
that hold nothing of value in
and keep nothing of value out,
where sentimentality huddles
in the darkness of the bitless, fetlocked nights
that begin in the canyons
where even the memory
of the echo of the thunder
of hooves is held dear.