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RUNAWAY HORSES

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RUNAWAY HORSES

I woke to hear the paper
beneath your words

or the poinsettia, how red
looks black against the morning grey

is this wound wandering
or did the hills move while I slept

waking is almost impossible
the horses will never come back

did I sleep while I was walking
why doesn't anybody know me here

the paper breathed up in a breeze
so light I couldn't lift it

I didn't understand the words
how they manage to come from you to me

they rode me into sunrise
dumb cowboy herding phantom longhorns

but the light was the same
the light was the same

change me hard the clouds propose
I couldn't bring your face to mind

too many images between too many images
your eyes in profile sometimes I can

locusts that year hopping wild
crossed the Snake before them into Oregon

you waited for me on the porch legs spread
it was too small to be anywhere

brief town waiting for its mother
the paper settled back, the word shouted

still couldn't get it
I guessed my own language

who else can I be, I wanted to so much
it was moving all around me

is this a letter written
or a room full of shadows

can I stand up and reach the ceiling
or ride all the way to the wall

is this a fugue? it was a horse
she didn't know she just kept playing

I hear your fingers not the instrument
no other sound ignored me so

can I make music with your hands
with your skin

sound of a thought slipping down an arm
yes it is, it is another destiny

linked to you from where they ran
the way sunlight links to stone

but you will leave me one fine night
the way the hills lift this morning

bring me with you
I will be your promised light

show you all the things that I can't see
all my seeing will be your eyes then

and nothing left for blindman me
except the image stored up when the hillside

opened its quiet rusty door
I saw the kind of life they lead inside

they have no light in there
but love is their light

it flows out from a creature like a lamb
but very big

and no iron is permitted in that music
and the horses who ran from me are pastured there

smiling gauchos with insolent sombreros
chatter my mothertongue I used to have

there are voices everywhere
there is nothing to forget

they filled my mind again with images
they forced my memories out

no room in the Inn
the Christ Child caught in your hair

that picture will not help me now
chilly Fitzwilliam clean manuscript illegible

who was even looking when you stood
naked on the hilltop crying my name

holding out towards me the jawbone of a deer
its little grinding teeth came loose

scattered gemstones on a mischief earth
an old man calling for his father

mischief in a mirror
Melchizedek is it you with wine-stained clothes

offer me your cup for I drink no wine
but there is something other in it

my leprosy lets me swallow stone
you are an odd priest to meet in this sad sand

an odder even woman in the park
yes it was Vienna, we lied about different things

and that was the end of music
diamond in the shuttered window bend to look

lovers at dawn uneasy now
because they have to go back to language

or there it is again, the written page
touched and not read, seen but not touched

all our senses each its own delusion
every sense its own desolation

I rode into town looking for you
the locusts leapt about our legs

who killed that deer I wonder
I think the paper tells the real name of her

there are few angels west of Donegal
and the horses have vanished in the sea

America was old even before
the Indians got here late

so old it was the first the early island
garden from which the first humans fled

began their migration to square the roundish earth
slowly wisely made their way back

Hopi came home first
holding scraps of maps, scribbled paper in their hands

to find the way they listened to the wind
that always lies and always tells the truth

and the wind says what it always says
you're here already and the earth said

there is nowhere else
sit down and feel me beneath your bones.