Horses of San Marco (first published in chapbook "Migrations")

Deborah D Fleming, Ashland University

Available at: https://works.bepress.com/deborah_fleming/27/
Horses of San Marco

Venice, 1989

Above the Basilica's archway, stoneleaf, Corinthian columns and Romanesque frieze, four bronze horses turn their heads toward each other as if they would speak. Their mouths are open, eyes set apart, manes shaved like the war horses of Greece. Breastplates encircle their arched stallion necks.

With someone I love,
I watch them
above the high archway
and blue starry alcove.

Venetti took them
from Byzantium
to mount on San Marco.

Mid-stride, they pause, each lifting one slender knee, and face the piazza as if come from their stable to see what caused the commotion below.

*

Nine years ago
in New York I saw them
with someone else I loved.

I wondered then:
Did the sculptor know where grass grows
rich enough
to feed muscles like these?

I wanted to leap
onto one of those broad backs,
ride him away at a gallop.

*

Many with stolen loves
have traveled as far as these horses
on the plain of the sea.
Is the muscle of the heart
ever strong enough?

The *balcon*
brightens in the face
of the western sun.

The stallions will keep
lovers of horses
in their gleaming eyes.