

## Hotblood

What a horse Medio could have been—  
Sixteen hands, eleven fifty  
And grandson of Man-o-War  
On his father's side  
Red sorrel with two white feet  
And a star,  
A coat as fine as mouse fur  
That rippled over thoroughbred lean.

Foaled in Montana as a remount,  
Rough broke at three  
Then turned out to grass  
When the cavalry quit buying.

He was five when he came to me—  
Gaunt from the railroad car  
And hotblood wild—more untameable  
Than any desert-caught mustang.

I was sixteen  
And thought I knew my horses  
From a Welsh pony  
And a Morgan-Hambletonian cross.  
I knew about gentling them down  
With grain and curry comb,  
And snubbing to a tame horse  
And riding on plowed ground  
And holding their heads up  
So they couldn't buck.

But it wasn't enough.

I lost count of the times  
He pulled his head loose  
And threw me off.

And he ran away with me—  
Two miles on a paved road,  
Running like the leader in a race—  
Paying no attention  
To my seesawing the reins—  
Until he was stopped by a brick wall.

Once we put him in a chute  
To check his feet  
And he kicked at one of us  
And ripped his velvet hide  
On a projecting nail,  
And then frantic, he kicked again  
And again and again—  
Until the leg was ruined  
And he had to be destroyed.

I've known men like that.

—John S. Harris