

## Soft Spots

—Mariecor Agravante

I lean forward to breathe in  
The scent of his soft muzzle—  
His warm bronco breath condenses  
Visible hints of whispered nickers  
In the crisp morning air.

His coroneted hoof paws the ground—  
I soothe him at the withers  
Near his prophet's thumb,  
And in so doing calm myself, too,

I hear the beat of his heart—  
Rhythmic like the ra-ta-tum  
Of the military drum  
The metronomic tempo is  
akin to gait cadences:  
foxtrot, lateral rack, revaal,  
Tolt, and Tennessee running walk.

Nomadic steppe cultures  
(Like the Huns, Mongols, and Timurids)  
Have long held reverent affinity  
For eohippus's descendants;  
Every mustang wows with the might  
Of horse sense and pioneering power;  
Pedigreed thoroughbreds are held in awe

For their discipline and agility;  
Even the statue of Marcus Aurelius  
Astride his steed conveys grandeur  
Long past the halcyon days of  
Pax Romana antiquity.

Indefatigable and valiant Bucephalus comes to mind,  
As does Napoleon's inherently majestic Marengo;  
Wellington's Copenhagen and Lee's Traveller  
Were such treasured confidantes—  
Their forged bonds transcend  
The constraints of chronology,  
And down through the ages  
Their spirits touch mine.

I look at my horse,  
Think on Chief (the last US cavalry horse);  
I ponder as well on George Washington's  
Caparisoned horse, and his successors—  
Old Whitey, Old Bob, Black Jack,  
Raven, and Sergeant York,  
reminded of Native American  
Blackhawk and his faithful equus, too—

I pray that Providence grants  
Long healthy lives to both  
My Horse and me,  
That we may adventure together—  
Conquering doldrums and

Attaining worldly actualization.

Then, in time, we'll cross the threshold together

(From walk to trot to Canterbury gallop)

In a joint voyage to the Elysian Fields

Where our predecessors and forefathers

Have prepared the trail path for us.