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.