

## POTATO CANNON

My tall boys stand outside  
the sagging barbed wire fence,  
this time before dusk. Nearby,  
the cow keeps an eye on her calf.  
Posing with their white and shining tube,  
PVC clean as new skyscraper,  
they aim the fantasy length over our front field.

Out schoolroom windows, they've imagined  
dank alleys, a steel barrel poked at hip's height,  
spooks, heroes with attitude.

They fill the chamber with AquaNet,  
that relic of an era  
when women poured themselves into girdles  
and hairspray was their battle helmet.

The sticky gas is trapped to spark ejections  
aimed two-handed towards the pear tree and horizon,  
spuds hurling with a whoosh  
any philandering god would envy.  
The calf tears from the nipple, scooting towards the shed.

Which shattered piece might keep a fetal eye intact?  
Which might sprout, missed by spreader tires?  
Watching from a window, arms wrapped  
around a bowl filled with greens,  
I toss my hair back from my eyes to watch  
the postures of their lengthening silhouettes.

D. M. Gordon 2002

## MORE THINGS, HORATIO

Horses are not  
predators;  
most moments  
they're aware, wordless  
in their flesh,  
they're to be eaten.  
Sleep is dangerous.  
When they must,  
they lie down on the earth,  
misshapen mounds  
aberrant as beached whales,  
and flash to gallop  
at a stick snap.

They see everything upon them,  
two planes at once,  
the horizon and crushed grass--  
a landscape  
without vanishing points.  
One eye doesn't tell the other  
what it knows,  
one eye frightened,  
the other consoled.  
Two eyes won't say  
if yellow is a lion,  
or a wild receipt wind-tossed from a truck.  
Smart ones never linger  
to find out.

Horses are not  
predators;  
the weight of heart and hide falls  
to teacup joints,  
lotteried to shatter;  
they are mindful  
to keep other flanks near  
for wolves to find.  
Herdless life is netless,  
friendship  
opiate as religion.

You might say  
these are not like horses you've observed,  
swishing flies in dusty paddocks,  
half asleep. Half asleep.  
I might search these lines  
for what they tell me of myself.  
You and I are predators,  
busy with defining.  
Sleep  
lingers long with us,  
and haunts us when we wake.

D. M. Gordon 2003

**TRIVIAL PURSUIT™**

*What is the oldest Vegetable?*

“The pea.”

How strange to think, of peas as old,  
older than tubers or pale wild carrots,  
of fingers--undetermined sex, square, nail-bitten--  
snatching the first found pod,  
upping the pace in a rush of sweet,  
tasting flowers, then leaves till the vine was empty.  
How long for restraint to swell the pea,  
and the well-kept nail to slice,  
and the vessel to be forged,  
and the soup sprinkled with sage to simmer,  
and the woven sacks to bulge with dry winter peas,  
and the tin cans to be stacked,  
and the freezer doors to breathe worried clouds  
on waxed boxes in the Supermarket?  
And all this time, I, relying  
on the farmer, potter, weaver and tin maker,  
the electrician and truck driver,  
have learned nothing,  
but hungry this morning in the yard,  
spring-fevered and sugar high,  
I ate the sweet thin pods, every last one,  
long before they could grow old.

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