THE MIDWAY

Muse

Here I am, this is me
I come into this world so wild and free
Here I am, so young and strong
Right here in the place where I belong

BRYAN ADAMS, SPIRIT

The Midway Muse

Guest Student Editor: Banu Bilen

Faculty Editor: Dr. Rebecca L. Briley

Fall 2017

Volume 2: Number 1

A publication of:

Midway University

512 East Stephens Street

Midway, Kentucky 40347

The Midway Muse

Copyright © 2017 by Midway University Dept. of English

http://midwayacademics.orgsync.com/org/englishdepartment/EnglishJournal

Published by Midway University

No part of this work may be reproduced without expressed written permission from the publisher.

This journal contains works of fiction. Any resemblance to real persons, places, or events is purely coincidental and not intended by the authors.

Cover design by: Banu Bilen and Dr. Rebecca L. Briley

Cover photo by Dr. Kris Patton

All rights reserved.

Technical assistance provided by Dr. Karoline Manny, Instructional Technology Librarian.

Table of Contents

Editor's Word	1
Once Upon A Horse	3
Photo by Diana Burkee	4
Photo by Hannah Waroway	5
Metamorphoses	6
Photo by Hannah Waroway	9
So I Will Always Know It	10
Sketch by Daniel Roethle	13
Photo by Jacquelyn Pack	14
What Fields We Rode Our Horses Through	16
Thoroughbreds on US 62	18
Blessing the Hunt at Pleasant Hill	19
Photos by Hannah Waroway	22
Photo by Diana Burkee	24
Sketch by Lilly Pendley	25
Photo by Sue Lasky	26
Photos by Hannah Waroway	27

Editor's Word:

"The horse is poetry in motion." --Unknown

If the author of this epigram were known, credit would be given, but as the phrase falls under "anonymous," perhaps one can only assume such a tribute is universal: the instinctive conclusion of all who observe this natural masterpiece of muscular movement—the *horse.*

Kentucky is the acknowledged Horse Capital of the World: the Bluegrass with its lush thoroughbred farms, the historic race tracks of Keeneland and Churchill Downs, the storied names of Man O'War and Secretariat. Whether one is privileged to own one of the "million dollar babies" or just hopes to win a high-paying Trifecta, when in Kentucky, one is inexplicably entwined with this most magnificent creation.

Nestled in the midst of the Bluegrass like a tiny jewel in its crown, Midway University has long been associated with horses. Where else do boot-scrapers accompany entrances across campus; students clomp

into classes in mud-stained riding boots, smelling of stables; or costumed horse and rider greet guests on special occasions clad in full ceremonial regalia. Midway's Equine Studies programs are known and respected nationwide, and even those not inclined to personal relationships with these noble steeds are appreciative of their beauty and dignity.

So it could not be more apropos to dedicate this Fall 2017 issue of *The Muse* to this majestic mascot. Students, faculty, children, and community have come together to contribute favorite photographs and sketches, poetry and prose featuring a shared affinity with horses.

The muse of *The Muse* is the Horse.

Enjoy—and consider how you, too, may play a role in our open-themed Spring issue.



Hayden Patton



Diana Burkee



Hannah Waroway

Metamorphoses

A caterpillar may be in slumber, but I bet they're plagued by wretched nightmares. Metamorphosis is never comfortable. First, the caterpillar must be unmade. Their insides liquify. They'd probably scream if they still had mouths.

My organs tried to scream as they woke. Emerging like a drowned specter from the sterile cocoon of white clinic walls and sanitized stainless steel, it occurred to me that, as I'd slept on a cotton coffin, the world had awoken around me. Warmth had bloomed like blood in satin budding petals, while veins in me had blown out like tires tread too thin. Melted Crayola splashed the sky, cerulean bleeding through the grayscale fabric of winter, blue as the eyes that held vigil over me. My lungs drink in a breeze, unfamiliar after the grave. I flex deprived flesh and find myself not much different. The edges of the day are hazy like film. I am not really here, because I am not really real. I have two feet in the void, peering out. Robins forage for worms like me.

Numbness is amniotic. It's opiate. I am veiled in it, hallucinatory and paranoid and euphoric and—cold. And broken. And tired of fighting. Too bright, the world presses in on me as if I'm an envelope, licked here, creased there. Like paper, I shrivel away from the flame, unable to bear the intensity of gold after enduring fluorescent spotlights in the darkness of me. I am too raw. I crumple and crisp, crumbling white like charcoal, ghosts, and ash. I have become sharp mountain-peaks and deep, aching valleys and sluggish rivers running dry. The North wind howls through me and fills me with frost, crystalline at my core. Stark, I do not fit here, amongst the verdant, rolling hills and open meadows. My body's a macabre, push-pinned into a child's Maytime dream.

Hollows for eyes meander out of panes of tempered glass, blinking in the diluted light and watching the earth slip by as painted wooden fences blur into a long black track leading nowhere—watching beyond that, to the horses in the fields. Their muscled bodies are robust and gleaming in the sun, warm and glossy and thoroughly brown. Powerful hooves tear up grass, churning up soil speckled with worms for

robins to devour. Heads toss streams of hair and snort, vital and solid and free. They are not valleys and peaks, but smooth hills at peace with hills. Their ribs are not their cages. Both they and I are air, but they are roaring wind. I long for that: for their heat, their health, their strength. It is not a fierce, determined hope, but rather a wistful yearning that settles somewhere behind my uncertain heart. It is a stubborn heart that, though beaten, has not stopped, but no longer knows whether to keep on beating; and an exhausted yearning that somehow perceives, and fears, though I do not yet feel different:

I would have to liquify many more times before I became a horse, and my changes would not stop there. A body that wants to be air will not be contained, and the very air in me would scream if it could.

Cait A. Smith



Hannah Waroway

So I Will Always Know It

This morning,
going out to feed the horses, I try to remember
what it was like to be a poet;

how language
made of words occupies the space of pages in
graceful lines, the way horses

occupy grace
itself—and the space of pastures. When the horses
see my approach, see the blue pail,

they know, in
a wordless language, the coming of grain. They
break
from their early-sun reverie

toward the fence
where the blue feed buckets are mounted thirty-two
feet apart. With the single

motion of
my right hand, they take their places and wait, both

certain they will get their portion

and that I
will breathe my breath into theirs, my lips close to a nostril,
so they will always know me

even in
the dark when I cross their pasture to the stalls to fill their
mangers with hay on deep cold nights.

Like the night
when sleet and high winds were forecast and I went
out near midnight. The horses

were downwind
from me, down at the edge of the lake, when my sound
and my scent rode the wind to them.

They galloped,
fearless, toward me, out of near absolute dark. I knew
I could stand still and they

would stop close,
the gallop blown out of their muscles as quickly
as it exploded. Now, back in this

cold morning,
the sun not risen enough to warm the chill air, the
horses
at their grain, that night breathes

back to me
the shapeless language of breath itself and grace,
galloped through pure dark. And then,

I do remember.

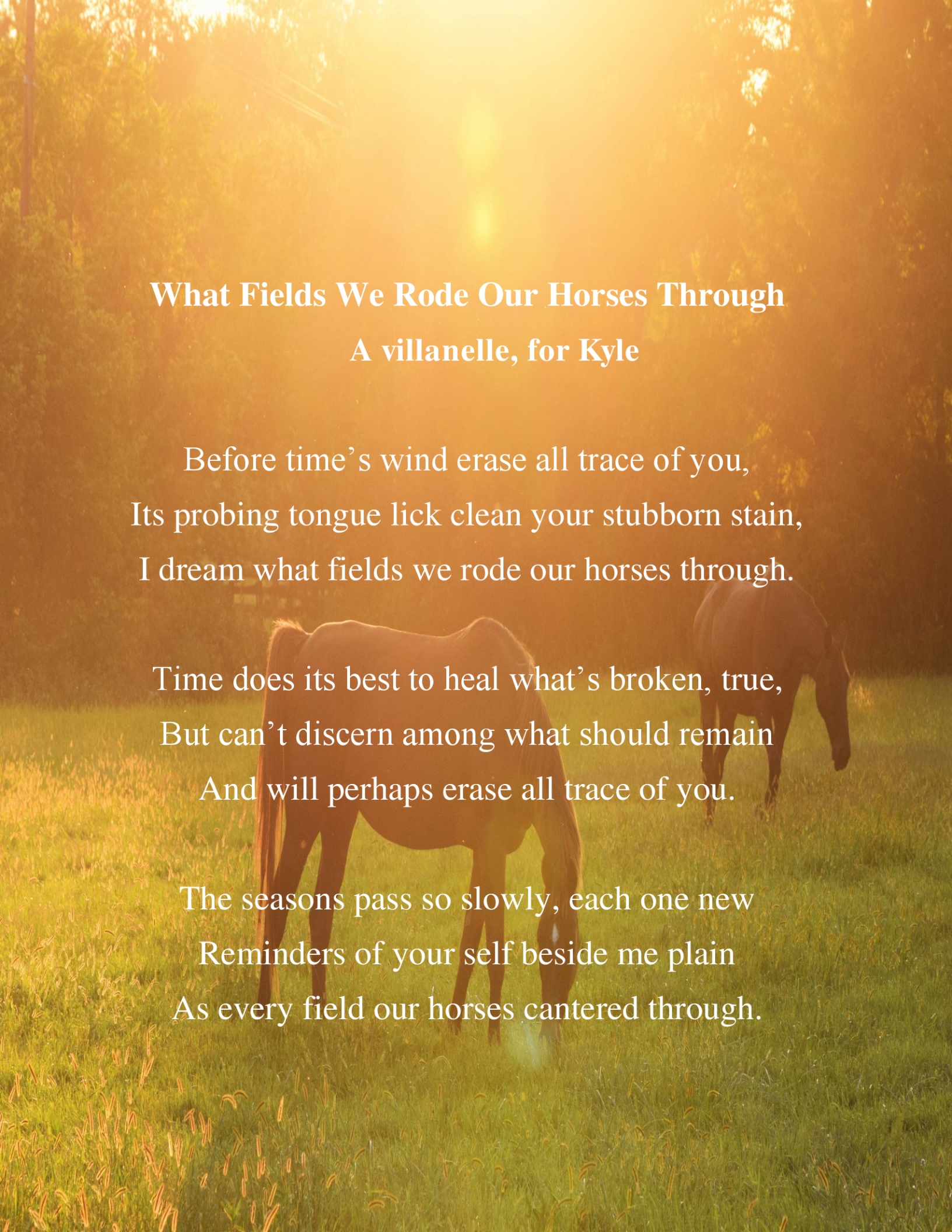
Tom Gibbs



Daniel Roethle







What Fields We Rode Our Horses Through

A villanelle, for Kyle

Before time's wind erase all trace of you,
Its probing tongue lick clean your stubborn stain,
I dream what fields we rode our horses through.

Time does its best to heal what's broken, true,
But can't discern among what should remain
And will perhaps erase all trace of you.

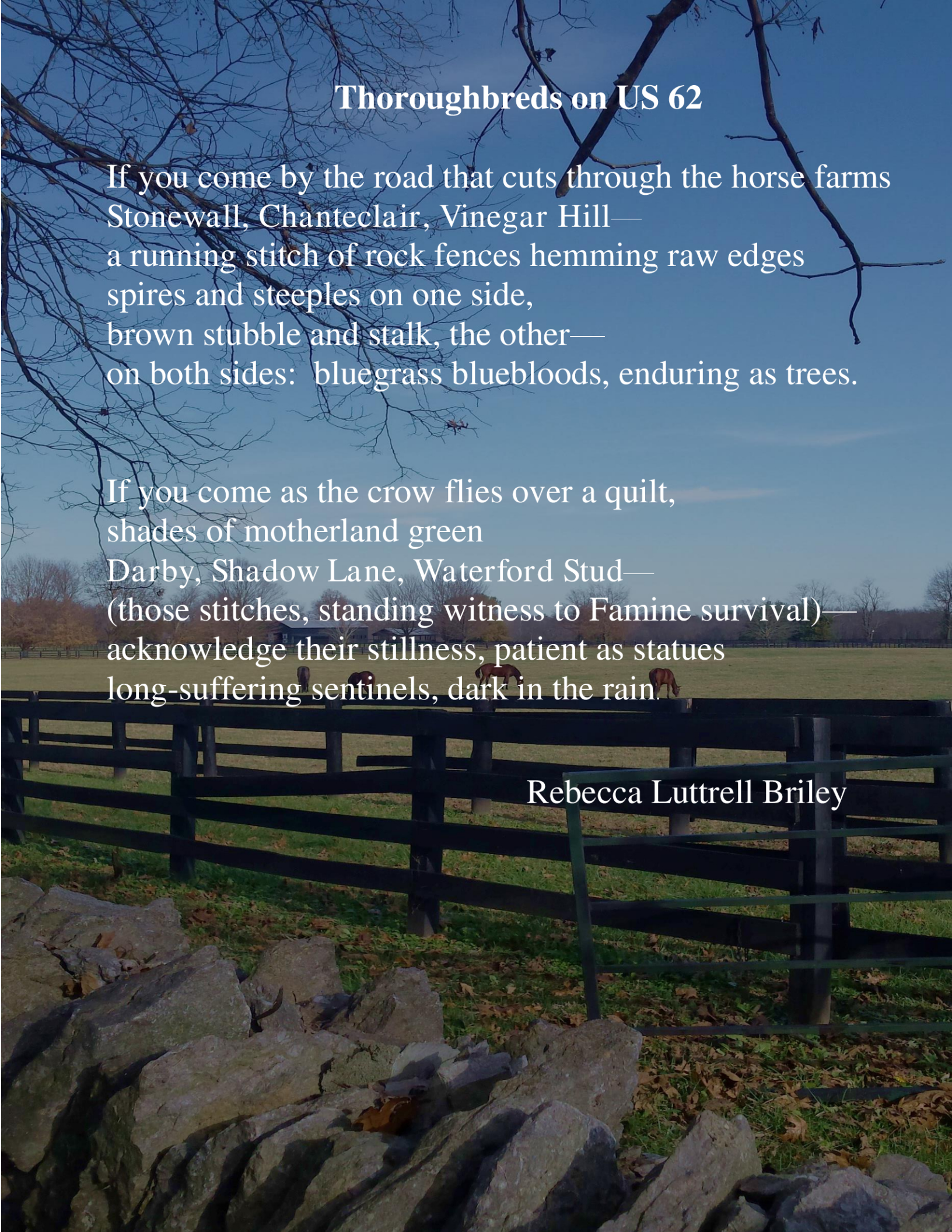
The seasons pass so slowly, each one new
Reminders of your self beside me plain
As every field our horses cantered through.

The spring, so fresh, so heedless of life's rue,
Then summer, warm, and innocent of rain
And wind that would erase all trace of you.

Came fall, deceptive with its sky so blue
And leaves so bright their gold a foolish feign
Concealing minefields we were riding through.

Now stony memory's all that marks a clue,
And where your name is etched, I trace in vain
As time's chill winds erase all trace of you,
And weeds choke fields we rode our horses through.

Rebecca Luttrell Briley



Thoroughbreds on US 62

If you come by the road that cuts through the horse farms
Stonewall, Chanteclair, Vinegar Hill—
a running stitch of rock fences hemming raw edges
spires and steeples on one side,
brown stubble and stalk, the other—
on both sides: bluegrass bluebloods, enduring as trees.

If you come as the crow flies over a quilt,
shades of motherland green
Darby, Shadow Lane, Waterford Stud—
(those stitches, standing witness to Famine survival)—
acknowledge their stillness, patient as statues
long-suffering sentinels, dark in the rain.

Rebecca Luttrell Briley

Blessing the Hunt at Pleasant Hill

To ask the Lord's blessing we gather together
To open the Hunt in this crisp Autumn weather;
For red-coated riders in boots of black leather,
On fine-blooded horses, with hounds on their tether.

But Lord, for protection, we also do pray,
No matter the well-meaning spirited play,
Remember the fox-hunter's game held at bay.
It isn't a sport when it's their blood to pay.

Well-hid in the valleys, beneath well-stacked rocks

The den of the bushy-tailed, sly-grinning fox

May harbor a vixen with three or four kits

Red velvet their coats, black velvet their mitts.

So God bless them all: horses, hounds, and their prey--

May all live to hunt on another fine day.

Rebecca Luttrell Briley





Hannah Waroway



Hannah Waroway



Diana Burkee



Lilly Pendley



Sue Lasky



Contributors

Dr. Rebecca L. Briley – Poetry and photos, pp. 16-19; Dr. Briley is Chair of the Communications, Humanities, and the Arts Department and professor of English at Midway University

Diana Burkee – Photos, pp. 4, 22; Diana is a junior Psychology major from West Allis Wisconsin

Tom Gibbs – Poetry, pp. 10-12; Tom is a guest contributor from Taylorsville, KY

Dr. Sue Lasky – Photo, p 24; Dr. Lasky is Chair of the Department of Teacher Education and a professor of Education at Midway University.

Jacqueline Pack – Photos, pp. 14-15; Jackie is a junior Equine Studies major from Illinois

Dr. Kris Patton – Cover photo; Dr. Patton is an assistant professor of Education at Midway University

Hayden Patton – "Once Upon a Time" sketch, p. 3; Hayden is the 9-year-old daughter of Dr. Kris Patton

Lilly Pendleton – Unicorn sketch, p. 23; Lilly is a freshman, majoring in Psychology at Midway University

Daniel Roethle – Sketch, p. 13; Daniel is a freshman from Versailles, KY

Cait A. Smith – Prose, pp. 6-8; Cait is a senior English major from Frankfort, KY

Hannah Waroway – Photos, pp. 5, 9, 20-21, 25; Hannah is a freshman from Ann Arbor, MI, majoring in Equine Rehabilitation