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Leaving Home

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Hershman: Leaving Home

LEAVING HOME Alec Hershman

Never mind the starflowers, thick as burs,
the weather increasing my poncho
like a trash bag on a stake and still no rain;
the fence-water was stingy with my horse.

There was only a little I could do: sugar cube
in my palm, the weight of the muzzle filling my hand
with the soft shock of a first breast.
Where field came to field the sky

was vast with apathy—the opposite of a room.
To do something as intimate as whisper
into the felt canoe of the horse's ear
was not quite a secret; was not quite forgotten—

we were far enough from the house
that whether or not to hear
the domino-clap of the screen door
almost seemed a choice.