

Horse

You were luckier than I, August.
You were driving down
a foggy Michigan road
under a really huge and yellow moon.
You and your friend
were seven hours into
the long trip home
for Christmas break,
eyes weary, small talk spent.
The other horses and I—
one of us had broken the fence
to our pen and so we decided
to go for a walk on the highway
to warm our blood and stretch our legs
amidst the chill in the air that
makes one want to get home quickly.
We were all wearing colorful blankets
and mine was bright red
and then it all happened really fast,
you, swerving
between my brothers and sisters,
headlights blasting huge horse shadows
against the roadside snowbanks,
and then the muffled snap of your fender
striking me in the back leg.

I lay sprawled in the snow
while my siblings, spooked,
galloped through the fog
and you called 911 from your car.
Soon, my owners showed up weeping,
not looking at you but me.

And then you drove away.

August, it could have been you.
You could have been the dead animal.
I'm glad it wasn't you, of course.
I'm happy for you.
But I just want you to know
that it could have been you.