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Horse Purposes

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Horse Purposes

When a horse stepped through the window of the church minister's fiancée's Chevy we wondered what the horse was doing in the middle of the road. Escaped, for sure, but no-one knew from where. The funeral that followed was lavishly tragic.

I went to the parlor with my best friend whose father had drunk himself to death the summer before when he should have been coaching a baseball game. My friend told me not to meet anyone's eye, because he remembered no-one had met his eye at his dad's funeral, but as we passed the closed casket I looked anyway, and everyone looked at me, their expressions inquiring like there was something missing from their memory. The funeral home was owned by a deacon in the church and the funeral procession was the most impressive parade I'd seen. The cars made a neat line into the horizon where the cemetery stood on a hill. I marveled at how a straight line could be so comforting, and afterwards for weeks I watched for signs of order in the parallels of vineyards and cornfields, listened for harmony in the wind. I looked at our clothesline, matched its double blue lines against the black wires joining our house to a hundred poles on Hixon Street. And I worried about the things that had no order, horses that stepped into the street for no good reason, horses out of line with anything but their own horse purposes.