HORSONNETS

by

Shriram Sivaramakrisnan

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing

Boise State University

May 2022
DEFENSE COMMITTEE AND FINAL READING APPROVALS

of the thesis submitted by

Shriram Sivaramakrishnan

Thesis Title: Horsonnets

Date of Final Oral Examination: 04 March 2022

The following individuals read and discussed the thesis submitted by student Shriram Sivaramakrishnan, and they evaluated the student’s presentation and response to questions during the final oral examination. They found that the student passed the final oral examination.

Martin Corless-Smith, Ph.D. Chair, Supervisory Committee
Kerri Webster, MFA Member, Supervisory Committee
Rebecca Wolff, MFA Member, Supervisory Committee

The final reading approval of the thesis was granted by Martin Corless-Smith, Ph.D., Chair of the Supervisory Committee. The thesis was approved by the Graduate College.
DEDICATION

To Amma and Appa.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My heartfelt gratitude to Martin Corless-Smith and Kerri Webster for their guidance and care. Thanks also to my classmates over the years for their encouragement. This collection wouldn’t have been possible without the support and generosity of my lovelies, Meredith Higgins and Lillian Jenner.
ABSTRACT

‘Horsonnets’ was conceived and written between September 2019 and December 2021. As the name suggests, the collection is centered around horses, as objects of desire, metaphor, tropes. The collection is structured into four sections: ‘the way a horse frames blueness’, ‘to nurse a hurt’, ‘horsonnets’ and ‘landscape with horns’. Together, they all address different kinds of pain (horses became emblematic of that): bodily (‘the way a horse frames blueness’), historical (‘to nurse a hurt’), cultural (‘horsonnets’), and spiritual (‘landscape with horns’).
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .......................................................................................................................... iv

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .......................................................................................................... v

ABSTRACT ............................................................................................................................. vi

THE WAY A HORSE FRAMES BLUENESS ............................................................. 1
  my pot is broken .............................................................................................................. 2
  the way a horse frames blueness .......................................................... 3
  to horse an I .................................................................................................................. 4
  psychorses ................................................................................................................... 5

TO NURSE A HURT ........................................................................................................... 6
  1772, Ariyakuruchi, Tamil Nadu .............................................................................. 7
  One who doesn’t ......................................................................................................... 10
  An eight-year worth of wait ..................................................................................... 11
  1780, Sivagangai Fort, Tamil Nadu ....................................................................... 12
  Kotravai .................................................................................................................... 14
  Aravan ......................................................................................................................... 15

HORSONNETS .................................................................................................................. 16

LANDSCAPE WITH HОРNS ....................................................................................... 62
  Landscape with Horns .................................................................................................. 63
  the horizon the ............................................................................................................ 64
in the dark ......................................................................................................... 65
the deer sacrifice.............................................................................................. 66
THE WAY A HORSE FRAMES BLUENESS
my pot is broken

in the beginning was my pain
in the beginning was the tendency to say wait
conditions for the onset of i

nothing breaks sentences like an error
nothing breaks causation like an error
you and i are so equal i can only kneel before

you
i do not know where my language stops and i stop

if my language uses me what am i
after
in the beginning was a keypad not QWERTY

for my persistent sentencing
if i want pain i only get the keys for
pain

4 letters in a row
if i want love i only get the keys for
pain

4 letters in a row
how many keys would i need if i want to say
my pot is broken
the way a horse frames blueness

we talk about glockenspiel during our drive, pay no attention to junipers corkscrewing outside, not an evidence of unlikely events in this city of haunted vineyards rassling with Andrew Bird & the Mysterious Production of Eggs, sometimes old country music, blues blaring in fields of violet fruits, the sunlight toiling on them a subtle crowbar that pries open anything on which it lingers a little too long. a patch of square away i spot a horse, then a patch of sky between its hind and forelegs. between its legs, a horse always frames blueness this way. there is water, gushing. we search for an aquifer, find a viaduct. arches for the water to whistle through. the cocked ears of the horse point us in the direction.
1
slip a horse inside to destroy an I
*the trick* *is made from* *made*

2
of the three balloons in our house, one is helioleaking into us. tall dark now lean as an ostrich pecking unkempt prufocking next to the coffee table, the balloon leans in our direction like an eager gossiper I think-about it as the omega of the pack, the one that gets left behind

3
*the trick* *is made from* *made* horse an I inside a bag of air to de-story it
psychorses

356278. Der Radiergummi is the German word for the eraser. OTP to access my email. Are words biodegradable?
A numerical condom. Der Radiergummi makes space out of scribbles. To bargain a margin.
Styrofoam meaning. Der is the definite article for masculine nouns in German. To make space out of scribbles. Der Radiergummi does what ends in sure. OTP to access my email. To bargain a margin.

AOTPAU. Der Radiergummi makes space out of scribbles. That which burrs on the paper is a rubber. A museum is dead things under bright lights. The English word for eraser is.

In the room, a bird is adorned with scratches. The cold erases my nose. Definite masculine must disappear. To be sure is to erase the worry. To enjoy salad you must have had a heartbreak.

Styrofoam meaning. Der is the definite article for masculine nouns in German. The margin is running out of space. To be sure is to erase the worry. To enjoy salad you must have had a heartbreak.

Rubbing is burring if burring means burying by removal. La sad in a salad. No language can be removed. To erase the written is to convert the written into eraser shavings. To be human is to be erased. I know square one better than others. Is must be available in every tongue.

Deleting means to not magnify but mmmmmmmmumify the human. The human ear is an erasure poem of a seahorse. We know equine farts. Is language our psychosis?

To erase is to create the erased. For the erased, no language comes in handy. 356278.

La sad in a salad. No language can be removed. To erase the written is to convert the written into eraser shavings. To be human is to be erased. I know square one better than others. Is must be available in every tongue.
TO NURSE A HURT
The body is a wick. The king of Sivagangai is flat as a horizon. Someone whisks him into an orange plumage.

Velu Nachiyar musters nothing. She can’t plunge into the velveteenarkness of grief, yet.

Next to her hides Vellachi Nachiyar, her daughter, and the future heir of Sivagangai if she lives if her mother lives.


She snatches Vellachi from her tears and gallops into the day.

There is rain. Or there is no rain.

It does not matter. Maybe she rides through the palai\(^1\) land of Sangam poetry. It does not matter. What matters is that her tongue is parched. What matters is that Velu Nachiyar comes across a young Dalit girl herding cows. Of all the curiosities she can have about this woman, the girl chooses to ask do you need water. It was more a statement than a question. Velu Nachiyar falls from her saddle, kneels before

\(^1\) dry region, one of the five landscapes of ancient Tamil country.
the girl. The girl does not ask again. *I only have rice water*, she says. Velu Nachiyar takes sonorous gulps, till there is nothing left to drink. *Do you have a name?* Velu Nachiyar asks. *Udaiyal*, the girl says.

*Udaiyal, there are white men on horseback. They will be here...they want my life. If they ask you anything, please lie.*

Udaiyal doesn’t say anything. The men find the girl singing to her cows. *Did you see a woman full of fear in her eyes, fleeing on a horse?* Udaiyal does not lie. *I saw a woman. She was thirsty. When I gave her my pot,*

she drank it like she wanted to live... like she wanted to kill. *Her eyes, I don’t think if they know fear,*

she says. *You better tell us which way she went,* they tell her. Udaiyal shows the men her eyes.

*Do you see fear?* They push her. Her cows thrum their deep bowels. *We do not have time to kill you, so tell us which way she left and we will be on our way,* they tell her. *You will be on her way,* the girl says.

One of them unfurls a sword from his sheath and with a swing of his well-oiled loyalty, chops off
her head. Her legs shake what
they cannot comprehend. The men
choose a path, follow it to the flaw.
One who doesn’t

udai: dress (n), to break (v)
-al/ar: she/he (suffixes), also refusal, as in she who refuses

to break~Udaiyal spalls~and rises as vettudaiyal kali².
vettu: cut (v), slash (n)~She

who wears her brokenness for others~a dark ore of fierceness~headhuntress

draped in a necklace of shrunken skulls~some say it was Ayyanar~the guardian of Tamils~

who in the guise of Udaiyal~became vettudaiyar kali~with his terracotta horse

² a tribal goddess of Tamil people, also a fierce incarnation of Hindu goddess, kali
An eight-year worth of wait

How do you forget that which you want to forget?

To sift through the grid of grief and find the grief of having a grid.

The grid as a way to delay the scream, because sometimes a scream is all that remains of a stifle, which is not to say a scream cannot expand like a balloon but that a scream is orthogonal to the breath. Cull a voice and you will be trapped in its echo for a life and eight. Velu Nachiyar waits.
1780, Sivagangai Fort, Tamil Nadu

For nine days
people arrange *golu*\(^3\) dolls on odd-numbered steps.

Velu Nachiyar waits
for *Ayudha Puja*, the tenth day,
meant for worshipping tools.

Poets leave their quills
dunked in vials of ink. Farmers
hang their sickles

like question marks. Women
light *deepams*\(^4\) in their houses to ward
off evil, soldiers

surrender their weapons
for a night. Velu Nachiyar waits
for *Ayudha Puja*, the only day

the British open the Sivagangai Fort
for all
the women in the kingdom.

How many *deepams* are there in the
*golu* inside the Fort?
It does not matter.

What matters is that Kuyili,
Velu Nachiyar’s Commander-in-Chief
of the women army,

knows that deep in the Fort
is the ammunition

---

\(^3\) a display of dolls and figurines in South India during the 10-day festival, *Navaratri*

\(^4\) a lamp, lit as a part of Hindu rituals
They enter the fort, Kuyili and her army, disguised as civilians, a flowerpot resting in each of their grasps. Once inside, they break the pots, grab the seeds waiting to singe and throw at the men guarding the Fort. Kuyili climbs into a vat of ghee kept for lighting the *deepams*, and walks into the ammunition room. The body is a flame.
Kotravai

the goddess with an arc
of arms~like a peafowl’s blue train of
covert feathers~this one
with a stag~

unearthed~with three of the
eight arms missing~like they slithered
away~to jostle
with the taproots of Banyans nearby~

when he says the statue has a rural look~
what he says is that look on her
face~of having seen the
dilating pupils of soldiers before the great

plunge of the sword~gleefully
leaking their lives in nine
cuts~to win wars~an offering
for the dogged dogooder

of hunters and wayfaring
robbers~before every death there will be
a death
under an orange striving to dry

its infinite brine
on this spoilt land of palai where to wither
is to will~sometimes
to know a thing is to know that you cannot

know a thing~what more can we
take into our percussive waters~this un
earthing~is to nurse
a hurt that never comes to pass
Aravan

to half-slither and half-surrect for ayyan\(^5\) Arjuna~to have a god eddy into a goddess~to irrupt with the goddess for a night and uday in 32 cuts by the dawn~to think of nagma\(^6\) Ulupi before being severed and revered along with your horse~to the god who will lollipop your head on a pole before a conch horn signals the tenth day of the war~to watch men flaw into their plans

\(^5\) Tamil for father. Ayyan-ar in One who doesn't is a Father-God of Tamils

\(^6\) Tamil for serpentine mother goddess, from naga meaning snake and amma meaning mother
HORSONNETS
We meditate upon Hayagriva, the One with the neck and face of a horse, who is the embodiment of jñānā (knowledge) and ānanda (bliss), whose form shines forth like sphaṭik (crystal), and who is the abode of sarvavidyā (all the branches of learning).

...the halahalaḥ sounds arising in the form of neighings from the throat of the Horse-faced God, akin to waves in the ocean of jñānā, may they chase away the ignorance (a-jñānā) from the minds of those who are driven by their own pride and arrogance.

- from Sri Hayagriva Stotram⁷ by Vedanta Desika (1268-1369)

---

⁷ a poetic hymn for Hayagrīva, the hindu god with the head of a horse and the body of a man
T-stoff

br-br-br-bro-abro-abra-abracadabra-abracadabro-mobro-mobrace-brace-
mobromo-mace-bromoace-bromoacetone-broketonone-brokentone-
brokenface-brokenvoice-brokenbroken-brokomone-br-br-brmone-bramone-bromone-
broHarmone-brokenHarmone-brokenHorses-brokensee-brokenbee-broken-brH-
broH-brotH-broCh-brOCH-BrOCH-BrOCH-C3H5BrO-BrOhood-BrOcide-BrOmicide-
BrOmide-CHBrOcide-C3H5BrOcide-C6H4(CH3)(CH2Br)ocide-BrC6C3CH3H4H3H2ocide-
Hocide-Horside-Horsoside-brokenHalaHalas-Horsotonne-br-Horstoffnet-Horsonnet
Infolding, a clot into a colt.

A hiccup at the limb chirrups into a wing.

When a horse is born, it is asked to beat its wings faster and faster till the wings all but disappear for every roving eye,

so that when the eye flits, the horse can disappear into its own safety. The birth of a horse is a metaphor.
2

The first hurt
is a horsehurt

cstriction of esquineophagi
dry as raisins a gradual
corking of the plosives
vowels vwl the horses halahala
while their
Bronchi xylyl: far too many H₅
-orses H₅aya-
grieve far too many H₅orses to
H₅ayagrieve

to pray when a body craves for
the release
Equus ferus perambulus
as the entropy of H₅orse-body since the time of xnylylation.

Bone marrow molecular fibonacci

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

jowls cherub rather than elongate
H₂₀ H₅₀
H₅₀ H₂₀ H₅₀ rse
H₂₀r seH₅₀
H₄₀rseH₂orse
Man is one
of the symptoms of H₅orse
A group of H5orses is a house of commons.
A house of commons is not a house for the commons.
A group of H5orses walked into a nightclub.
The bartender charged them a Boeing bill.
Who could blame him?
The H5orses kept yessing their heads for everything the bartender offered.
The DJ kept looping ‘roses really smell like poo-poo-oo’.
The H5orses went home with roses in their vertices.
Horses smelling roses
at parks and gardens and playgrounds,
roses being sniffed by Horses.
A lawsuit was filed.
‘Oh, the miasma of roses these days,’
the plaintiff said.
The Horses were marched down the
main street. A BANALITY OF
PERCUSSIONS, the paparazzi noted.
Two of the Horses in the group
were shot. When a Horse is blinded,
the Horses next to it prepare themselves.
A few in the group felt they should have been blindfolded first. The chief of Horses who used to carry the mayor around accused him of farting frequently. ‘It smelled like roses,’ the Horse said in its plea. ‘A rose is what I say it is,’ the mayor responded. ‘A rose is a rose like no other rose,’ one of the Horses, a poet, tweeted. The tweet garnered likes like hate. The Horses were stripped of their rights.
A H5orse without its right is a damn thing. The H5orses were termed ‘movable benches’.
‘Today, H5orses. Tomorrow, your three-legged tea poys!’ a daily headlined, to public uproar. #thregged went viral.
‘Papanazi, not paparazzi,’ the attorney representing the H5orses said.
The city passed a moratorium on three-legged varieties. Anything that stood on three legs was ordered to be destroyed.
‘NOW FOR THE BANALITY OF REPERCUSSIONS,’ the media noted.
All the Horses that carried
so much as a niggle was killed.
Killed were also Horses
that had lost their legs rearing up to
enemies in warfare. ‘Break a leg.
Make a log.’ A billboard was erected
the next day at one of the four
entrances to the city hall, blocking
the entrance for passers-by.
One blocked, three cocked.
This building is a broken dream.
wrote the poet-Horse. ‘You are not
horace.’ Someone tweeted.
To draw a Horse, hold the pencil slant. Make sure the nib is pointing inward, angled towards your solar plexus, so that its other end, the blunt back, faces outward, the way a reporter shoves in a microphone at a celeb caught in a scandal, walking out of a bar. Start with yourself. Let the first point be somewhere in your torso. The rest will have to settle for the page. The last one (need not be the tip of the tail) will leap out of the page.
Muzzle-forehead-poll-crest-shoulder
withers-back-loin-croup-tail:
you can traverse these points in one
stroke. The bottom half is
complicated. Find a way to connect
the chin groove with throat latch
elbow knee cannon hoof heel ergot
chestnut barrel stifle…you can
leave it and say, my H4orse is
disappearing into the whiteness
or pixelating off it. If you write
your H4orse, you can
write it off as a bad debt.
the reverse mocking of a blinking cursor as it bulldozes language deleting space creating space little dolly was eating her burri in a telly an asian actor went wha a just-opened champagne overfl someone’s someone was yawni next to someone’s someo a huge potato refitted with fake angel-wings was lowere a mother was baking brea a certain poem was written halfw
Horses went to watch *The Jurassic World*. After the movie, the younger ones discussed the CGI. The oldest in the group was lost in thought. ‘The raptor fighting a hologram of Dilophosaurus at the climax,’ it said. ‘That was just a distraction, nothing else,’ said the youngest of the group. ‘The hologram is a projection,’ another chipped in. ‘That is how it is for us,’ the oldest replied. ‘We will never win this fight.’
One of the H4orses was a news anchor. It interviewed a puppet who sipped a latte with triple caramel throughout the interview.

H4orse: Are you in favor of fielding candidates who can win you constituencies?
The puppet: Our candidates are from the constituencies they represent.

H4orse: Even if they are not fit for the job?
The puppet: I believe in H4orses for courses.

H4orse: Would you field a H4orse?
The puppet: What can I say? I am a conscientious objector.
Horse: Whose decisions are you objecting to?
(There was no more latte to be sucked.
The puppet piped the straw.)
Horse: Who are you objecting to?
The puppet: lrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlrlr...
Horse: Were you referring to the...
The puppet: I was referring to those who can move but won’t, for the love of God, groove.
Horse: That is one strange combination of words, speaking of which, at the recent cabinet meet, you have proposed for the inclusion of ‘new words’ into the constitution.
The puppet: I ask myself, how can we build an inclusive society if our language cannot accommodate the dis-advantaged, the misfits?
H3orse: Among those words, there is a *H3orsed*.
The puppet: If you are H3orsed, you are being given a special status of equality.
H3orse: Are you saying that to be treated as an equal will soon become a privilege?
The puppet: Isn’t that a privilege already?
H3orse: I am not sure how to continue without getting offended.
The Puppet: That’s the privilege. You can feel bad and say it so too.
H3orse: Last question. Why did you name your dog, *bow*?
The puppet: Is that a problem now?
Horse: Every time your dog barks, she is in effect calling herself.
The puppet: What do you mean?
Horse: Thank you.
(The puppet throws the empty glass)
The Horse was terminated from the job.
A giant effigy of the Horse was burnt outside its house. ‘A Horse is burning still,’ the poet-Horse journaled.
‘A Horse is burning still. The onlookers and the passers-by fill up the street with the inadequacy of themselves.'
Their eyes calibrate aggression but it remains inert as an introverted virus. Only the fire gallops, rearing the entire lot of its forelegs as they grow as and when they grow out of the H3orse.’
Someone phished it from the H3orse’s cloud and leaked it online with a new title: A GROUP OF H3ORSES IS A CH3ORUS.
The H3orse-symbol irked the mayor. He called the poem an ‘elegy to the Democrazy.’
If the misspelling was an oversight, the mayor’s office did not acknowledge it. Instead, ‘Time to fire the poople,’ the mayor tweeted. His PR guy was fired from the job. One of the party loyalists fired a shot at the editor of the news agency that had quoted the mayor, with a wadcutter. Nobody saw it. Earwitnesses claimed the shot boomed like a hoofbeat. The mayor issued a gag order on hoofbeats.
No tomtoms to be played after 6 PM.
No percussion instruments.
The H3orses were retrofitted
with velveteen U-shoes
tufted from the finest yarns. Special
status.
The Committee of Equestrian
Affairs, to be headed by
an Eld, was formed. Elds were
H3orses
whose ancestors were H3orassed to
embrace
different identities.
The Eld chairing the committee was unpinioned on the left. Its right-wing, the Eld loved. Stomped stopped stomped stopped, H₃orses doffed their U-shoes stomped stopped stomped stopped near the city council. TAKE BACK H₃ORSED. GIVE BACK THE JOB! the placards said. Velveteen draped the bins.
Do H₃orses cry, the mayor wanted to know. H₃orses have no tear gland, someone said. Not true, someone else said. H₃orses do bleed, the Eld noted. The first of the gas canisters fell that noon. The H₃orses fled in a rain of hoofbeats. Thirteen died. It was dubbed The Riot. A task force, headed by a panjandrum, was formed to investigate it.
The committee questioned the Eld on The Riot. Horses are constitutionally permitted to protest, the panjandrum said. The issue, noted the Eld, is with us, is with our idea of entitlement. Our belief that we all deserve good things in life betrays what we deserve. Things happen to us regardless of our beliefs, noted the Eld.
Are you saying Horses deserve everything that happens to them, and so not bemoan? asked the panjandrum. hummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm mmm...stop making that noise. We need an explanation. Sint ferae, noted the Eld. What? Sint ferae. Equus ferus perambulus, noted the Eld. If you want to make a point, please do so in a language we can understand.
De animantibus, non de hominibus!
noted the Eld.
You are wasting everyone’s
time, said the panjandrum.
Of living things, not of men, noted
the Eld.
If you are talking about the
Horses, I must confess
it is strange to hear it from an Eld.
But we are not here to
discuss your beliefs. If I hold you
responsible for The Riot, can you
deny it, the panjandrum asked.
I hold myself accountable for not culling The Riot before it reached the street leading to the hospital. Fifteen patients died because hoofbeats outlubbed their heartbeats, noted the Eld. The Riot happened because you gave permission to deploy T-stoff. With velveteen shoes, the Horses could have dissolved silent as a flock.
‘Thirteen.
Fourteen.
Fifteen.
Velveteen.’
the poet-H2orse wrote in its wall
two days before
The Riot. Three
days after
The Riot, the poet-H2orse was
arrested for instigating
The Riot, booked
for sedition and sentenced for
a public execution.
Horses don’t spread-eagle when they fall.
T-frames will not work. They clap their limbs, one-sided like a closed book. Only their tongues stick out, a rotting bookmark of their fall.
t-frames will. The poet-Horse was strung on a t-frame, its muzzle kissed the sky.
It licked honey around its lips. The entire body was smeared in it. The frame was left in the middle of the buzz of fifteen broods of bees, as per the mayor’s orders. The death of a metaphor is sweetness and a horse-shaped catacomb, gnawed by the bees gnawed for the bees. A beehive.
The Eld resigned the next day, citing a conflict of interest. All the Other Elds in the cabinet resigned in solidarity. I WAS FORCED. The Eld tweeted and everyth— overflowed yawning someone lowered bread halfway
-benzylic
a substituent or molecular fragment
possessing the structure
C₆H₅CH₂
or CH₂ attached to a benzene ring
hexagonal honeycomb
benzyl bromide beehive.

A group of horses once stood at
a T-signal crossing.
Green dot to Red palm to White
man to Green dot to Red palm...
this was no Abbey Road.
The horses did not do a Beatles.
LANDSCAPE WITH HORNS
Landscape with Horns

little fading game
the beige of a mourning yet this
attempt to creep into
a pliable pose try again

little occupant of this hush land
mooring
yet your antagonizing
verbose try again

little strutting reality
dwell in your antlered possibilities
the sky between
your legs try again

residual scapetoad of myrrhyns
siege
the abundant aquifer of my pain
this trial again

a slice of a slice of your silhouette
poly brittle
you bereave this fading yet fading
still cry pluck your compass
in the fall
our desires elongate

prick at all the
prying fingers & ojas

galumphing
in their orbs

all that pry is a prayer
that which pricks is a

branch
a swelling wilts

the horizon the
horizon

leaps from branches
to branches

elongates our desires
fall in the
in the dark

I plant an oak of sound, chiseled as an echo | an oakrobber I am

my language a vast lumberyard of tall hurts | when amma\textsuperscript{8} asked

me to peep into a pot of oil, she only wants | me to meet the end

of my own stare, catch & cancel the evil eye | I caught skypatches

behind me, a forever
yawn framing an oak —

a compass, wilting tilting in its reach towards the light the light

---

\textsuperscript{8} Tamil for mother
the deer sacrifice

this must stop/ this obsession with writing poems in which a poet driving on a deserted stretch of road meets a deer crossing it/ their eyes lock for a fleeting instant before the deer disappears into the bushes or disappears under the car/ the poet behind the wheel turns right through his life to that moment/ wakes up on random mornings to find himself looking into the eyes of the deer/ into the shrunken inversion of himself held by the optical apparatus of the deer/ the deer for its part plays no role except as an object of introspection/ it can escape the collision if it can fall into a ditch elsewhere & puncture the oil joints of its body or sell its assemblage of bones to a faithful paw for a quick death & attract a bonnet of flies/ but the deer lets its eyes shine bright with the headlights of a car & holds that glow till it fades into a fire across the folding body/ the deer is the perfect corollary to Schrödinger’s cat/ it meets the same fate despite falling in the poet’s line/ of sight the poet ekes out his days thinking a little deer-blood is inevitable/ his poem a bonnet of lies\ a deer saunters across his path unwilling to budge\ their eyes lock for a fleeting instant but the instant flees faster than the deer\ the deer should have known this but there are stars in its eyes\ constellations all over its body\ night in its marrow\ the poet brakes hard\ the bumper of his car biffs into the ribs of the deer\ the poet gives the deer its breathing space\ a little pocket to breathe one last time\