

My High Horse

JEFF OAKS

Every morning I get up on my high horse to have a look again at the world. No one else knows how to drive. Everyone else is out for him/her/themselves. Nobody else cares whom he/she/they hurt. Everyone is so busy panicking they can't breathe or be logical. It's bewildering. No one sees the big picture, the true cost, the colossal waste. No one seems able to restrain human desire enough to save the planet, control population, lower our consumption of fuel, food, merchandise, common resources. The rich are monsters who have much, much more than they shall ever need; they seem to have no notion at all of how to share. The poor are ravaged by need, riddled with prejudices and a lack of imagination. Neither of them seem willing to be still and make good choices, work, study, change their lives. Not like the rest of us. Well, a few of us maybe. How lucky I am to have this high horse, I think, which gives me such an ability to move between the unconscious and savage and dangerous and doomed. He is a wonderful horse, tall and expert at moving almost undetected in crowds, at parties, at the grocery store. He hardly takes up

any room he's in. I've gotten him trained so well, at this point he teaches nearly a third of my classes, so I often find myself having fallen asleep while he talks about the history of modernism or the trouble with syllabics as a form or the writer's need to describe a character more before arriving at a judgment. He can go on and on with almost no tug on the reins until I wake up, and as long as I smile at the end of my nap, the students often don't know which one of us was there. I'm not always sure myself, if I'm honest, which I try to be. All day long, people in need stop by the office to ask us questions of protocol and procedure when they can't find an answer on Google. Sometimes they bring their own high horses in and we talk about the future. At night, having guided me all day through the dangers of the world, most of which are, in truth, moral lapses and ethical failings of politicians, my hardworking and intrepid horse clip-clops me back home where, for dinner, I make it something large, quick, and practical, full of green leafy vegetables (for I need to restrain my own consumption of processed white things like sugar, flour, milk, salt, and Apple products). We settle together on the couch, under a blanket if the house is a little chilly because we're trying to save money, and watch TV or play video games, no better than anyone else, we snort to ourselves, as we blow up our enemies and conquer kingdoms, as we laugh at the foolish situations other people seem unable to stay out of.

