First Day with Prancing Dan

James A. Emanuel
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1 We called him Prancing Dan,  
my brother Raymond and me;  
beautiful this restless horse  
(his bright-copper sidestepping--  
ballet-like, prairie style),  
teenager like us, as horses go,  
Nebraska-born too,  
bred on whirlwind-dust and knobby hail,  
harnessed too young, like us  
(men by necessity).

2 Now teamed with a veteran mare,  
bit in his teeth as pride commanded,  
he gritted his way through morning,  
the long blade of his mowing-machine  
laying cut-down stems of wheat like carpet,  
re-coloring the yellowing field  
till noon.

3 At the water-tank  
Dan’s nose plunged first and deeper,  
the mare’s downreined by harness laws,  
both circling blowbubbles,  
his upsnorted  
as if to shake out ditties  
from his leathered chains.

4 The afternoon, all his,  
surrendered with elegance:  
an orange-and-purple butterfly,
settling on his perky mane,
rode plume with him home.

AUTEUR

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