

Hijaz

by Brandon Marlon (July 2016)



Heat demented rival sheikhs intent on a gymkhana
to determine superior breeding among stables;
shaded by canopies and awnings,
tastemakers rate every caracole and gambade,
scrupulously evaluating velocity, physique,
and temperaments from submissive to refractory.

Hopeful of vindication, trainers and groomers
observe their equine charges displayed
before onlookers opining with abandon;
already rumormongers gossip about
uneven forelegs, bruised hocks and fetlocks,
discolored tufts, and jockeys inclined to bestiality.

Midday's orb simmers, seethes, then scalds.
Rancorous camps assail one another
with choice epithets and invidious gestures
unsuitable for polite company,
and even barter handfuls of loam and marl
when the authorities are occupied elsewhere.

Bumptious upstarts deride veterans
throughout the afternoon, greeting the eve
with blessings for honors garnered.
All parties decamp in the gloaming
and disperse across dunes, leaving
in their wake only the startling calm
of desert oases stargazing on a clear night.

Brandon Marlon is a writer from Ottawa, Canada. He received his B.A. in Drama & English from the University of Toronto and his M.A. in English from the University of Victoria. His poetry was awarded the Harry Hoyt Lacey Prize in Poetry (Fall 2015), and has been published in 100+ publications in Canada, U.S.A., England, Scotland, Ireland, Spain, Greece, Romania, Israel, India, Pakistan, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Australia, South Africa, Nigeria, Trinidad, & Mexico. [here](#).

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