

Swarthmore College

Works

English Literature Faculty Works

English Literature

2016

Minding The White Horse

Nathalie Anderson

Swarthmore College, nanders1@swarthmore.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit>



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Let us know how access to these works benefits you

Recommended Citation

Nathalie Anderson. (2016). "Minding The White Horse". *Poetry Ink: 20th Anniversary Anthology*. 5-5.
<https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-english-lit/299>

This work is brought to you for free by Swarthmore College Libraries' Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Literature Faculty Works by an authorized administrator of Works. For more information, please contact myworks@swarthmore.edu.

Minding the White Horse

-- after George Biddle's painting "South Carolina Landscape"

Nathalie Anderson

Every last bush here is dark at its heart,
parched and yellowed at its rim. The cabin cants,
the porch pole leans, and the tar-paper's thin
over the rafters, mossy where the rain pools between.
Every last field is stumped and stubbled, the sand
sifting over the red clay. Nothing easy grows here.

So that's what he grazes: crops the dry grass
down to the dirt, mumbles the stubble, mouths up
thistles and stickers. His neck's half to giraffe
from reaching, his shoulders stubborn as the fields
we plow. He's always jawing. You can't shoo him.

And mouth to mouth, he thins and thins. Our land
alters him, the red earth rusting along his spine,
moss furrowing under each rib. His back
dips like our roof beam. His tail's a bony memory.

Haste! Haste! Something's rising, storming the horizon –
the mule's ears blown forward, the mule's tail blown
between his legs, the shutter slamming shut and open.

The white horse stands pat, thunder in his eye. He knows
who'll be riding him, who'll be riding him

soon.