

## ADAM JAHIEL

*Remuda #1, YP Ranch Stateline Camp,  
Nevada, 2018*  
Photographic print, 30 x 30 in



COURTESY THE ARTIST

## DION O'REILLY

### The Mare in the Road

Midnight, the blacktop in front of me  
familiar in the headlights and coastal fog.  
Suddenly, horses with sweaty coats  
careen across my path,  
racketing like an avalanche,  
twenty or so, in an instant  
before they gallop down a ravine.

Gone, except one, still standing  
on three good legs.  
Struck by a car speeding around the bend  
or kicked in the bucking frenzy,  
stranded now, immobile.  
I pull over, walk to the chestnut mare,  
her head down, ears quivering and veined  
like sable leaves, her smell strong  
like sap from an old tree.

She looks at me, her eyes a full  
glazed brown with no white,  
then moves her head violently,  
like nodding *Yes*.

No halter, so I pull at the forelock,  
click softly, nudging her away  
from the danger. It's so hard  
with her cannon bone,  
the long one below the knee, bent  
like a broken branch,  
but she blows out her wet nostrils  
and limps off the bloody road  
to the shoulder where we wait.

When the vet arrives, finally,  
I stand, one hand on the blaze  
crowning her forehead, the other squeezing  
the muscled crest of her neck,  
and her life—

the onion smell of meadows, the small  
warm herds, the shimmering leaves  
in the wind above the trails—  
all of it canters in the darkness.

**Dion O'Reilly** has spent much of her life on a farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains in California. Her poetry appears or is forthcoming in *Sugar House Review*, *Rattle*, *the Sun*, *Canary*, *Spillway*, *Bellingham Review*, *Atlanta Review*, and a variety of other literary journals and anthologies, including the Lambda Literary's anthology *Emerge*. Her work has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize and the Intro Journals Project, and was sent to the judges for the Folio Poetry Contest.