

Masthead Logo

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# Heartbeat

David St. John

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## HEARTBEAT

My father's eyes fix again  
on nothing.  
My mother cries,  
and holds his mad wrists  
against her forehead  
for the seventh day.  
Heartbeat: 212.

In the riverbed,  
a nervous, bloodhaired roan  
sniffs the darkness  
curled at the wind's edge.  
And runs;  
and can't stop.

Nostrils blaring.  
Mad hooves clattering on the shale.

*David St. John*

## ROANOKE VALLEY

I have never seen such stuck-up mountains:  
their valleys look like they belong

always to someone else. Here  
accent is taken up with fine horses;  
it braids their tails, expecting Saturday  
and all other hurdles to go right.

If I were staying, I would talk up what goes  
into dogfood, sell the foxes into fur.

I am used to mountains taken up with snow,  
to valleys that belong to anyone who wants them; it is  
the women who go about in braids there,  
and naked when fine occasions come up.