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Cutting the Easter Colt

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CUTTING THE EASTER COLT

for Earl Stewart

This saddlebag surgeon readies his tools
like a Monsignor prepares
for communion. Holyday or not,
nothing's sacrilegious
when the moon comes
ripe, the disinfectant fumes
stunning us hard as incense
at high mass. We lead
the stud, procession-like, into the corral,
scotch-hobble and throw him
fast with cotton ropes, then watch
this wrangler/pastor/sawbones—all-
rounder—move his 55 years of heart
and savvy, lickety-split
amid thrashing hooves
to lash all 4 together
at the pasterns. He swashes
the scrotum, a glistening world
globe, delicate and thin-veined—perfect
contrast to his saddlemaker hands,
fingers braided like rawhide bosals,
his knuckles the thick heel knots.
With knife honed to a featheredge,
he makes the incision and probes
until he hunts both down,
an Easter egg apiece for the blue
heeler pups, their anxious panting
reflected in the gold
chalice of the gelding's eye.