

## Companion Poems

### A Blessing

James Wright

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,  
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.  
And the eyes of those two Indian ponies  
Darken with kindness.  
They have come gladly out of the willows  
To welcome my friend and me.  
We step over the barbed wire into the pasture  
Where they have been grazing all day, alone.  
They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness  
That we have come.  
They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other.  
There is no loneliness like theirs.  
At home once more,  
They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.  
I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,  
For she has walked over to me  
And nuzzled my left hand.  
She is black and white,  
Her mane falls wild on her forehead,  
And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear  
That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist.  
Suddenly I realize  
That if I stepped out of my body I would break  
Into blossom.

James Wright, "A Blessing" from *Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose*. Copyright 1990 by James Wright. Reprinted by permission of Wesleyan University Press.

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### From *Inklings*

#### Two Horses

Two horses  
standing on a rise  
have just broken  
a cast of night,  
are a severity  
of shoulders.

The light cannot believe itself

It can only  
follow them down  
into a swale,  
among the redroot,  
the nimblewill.

Don Welch, "Two Horses" from *Homing: The Collected Poems of Don Welch*. Copyright 2016 by Rogue Faculty Press.

### A Lesson from James Wright

If James Wright  
could put in his book of poems  
a blank page

dedicated to "the Horse David  
Who Ate One of My Poems," I am ready  
to follow him along

the sweet path he cut  
through the dryness  
and suggest that you sit now

very quietly  
in some lovely wild place, and listen  
to the silence.

And I say that this, too,  
is a poem.

Mary Oliver, "A Lesson from James Wright" from *Devotions, The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver*. Copyright 2017 By Penguin Press.