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# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Ruth Bavetta: Three Poems

Ruth Bavetta · Wednesday, May 4th, 2022

### Stallion

When I was a young girl our neighbor, Bud, kept horses;  
a bay, a palomino, and Blizzard, the white stallion.  
Wearing fancy tooled boots, studded  
cowboy shirt, and white Stetson, Bud  
had pictures taken of himself astride  
Blizzard—the horse rearing, front hooves raking  
the air—to send to movie studios and agents.

Bud let me watch him wash and groom Blizzard,  
who'd stand there allowing each hoof to be raised  
and the caked manure prized out, the warm water  
from the horse-washing station sluicing  
over his body, all the while his big, black, ball-shaped  
eyes gazed into the distance and his penis  
lengthened like a fat and lazy boa.

One day a special trainer came to put Blizzard  
through his paces in the stable yard.  
I sat on the hitching rail watching the stallion's  
muscles swell as he reared higher and higher.  
Bud stood behind me, fingering my crotch.  
There was so little I knew about stallions.

\*

### Grief

It creeps in clouds and foggy mornings,  
amorphous, greyer than grim,  
arrives by surprise when you were expecting  
a day of sun. It feeds on your attention  
like a petulant child, if you turn away it mutters  
in your ear, threatening a squall of temper  
if it receives what it perceives as neglect.

It will stand erect in your path, arms crossed  
across its chest, daring you to push it aside,  
to continue on your way toward what lies ahead.

It's never shy, has no compunctions  
about crowding between you and a book,  
pushing between you and the stove.  
It follows you to the bathroom. Sometimes  
at night, when it crawls into your cold  
and lonely bed, you almost welcome its embrace,  
but it will never warm you. On occasion  
it will mark the days and weeks  
without involving you at all, only to suddenly  
burst into the open when you're in the market  
or talking to a neighbor.

Or it may sit beside you on the couch  
all evening. Not speaking, eyes turned  
to the distance, seeing things that you cannot.  
There will come a time when you will know  
that it's no longer taller or broader  
or stronger than you are, but no matter,  
it will always be faithful.

\*

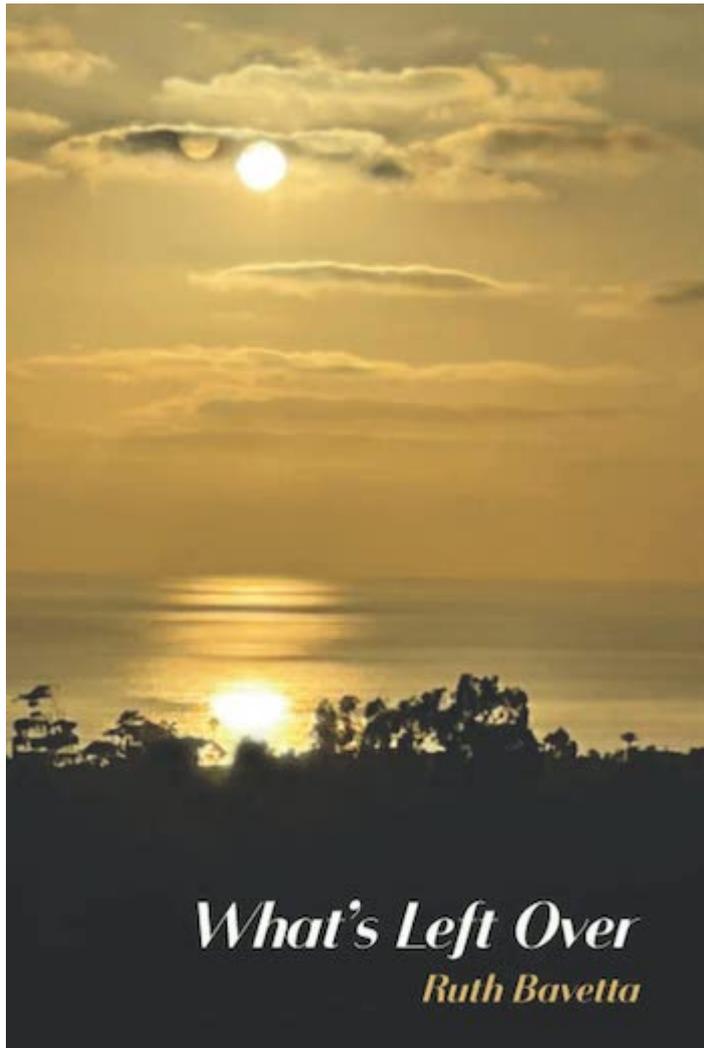
## Corpus

This body, this boat I've sailed on  
for over eighty years. This boat  
that passed so surely over the turbulence  
of my teens—new breasts, new hips,  
new emotions slipping restraint.

This body that carried the passengers  
that were my daughter and my son.  
This dinghy that let one marriage  
slip but held the other in the measured  
calm of a safe harbor. This body  
with its cargo of days in the sun, of nights  
guided by the twin stars of hope and ignorance.

This body that twice bore me past the shoals  
of angry cells run amok, that weathered  
a heart that swung in irregular cadences.  
This body now bends and pulls and creaks,  
gathering pain and stiffening joints,  
the indignity of leaks. This vessel, this cruiser,  
this liner heading for the unknown deep.

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