SUSAN LETCHER [SPRING, FAR FROM HOME] FIRST PLACE. WALLACE STEVENS POETRY CONTEST

All the mares are shut inside tonight. It's late; their heavy necks droop toward the floor, their eyelids closed against the naked light's fluorescent glare. Rain beats against the door, softly now, but gathering. I turn the radio to a station far away: through static, Wagner's dark frustration burns. I step inside the first stall, check the hay, then suddenly no light or leitmotif: the power's out. I wait. The quiet's deep. The foal's white face, as indistinct as grief, floats upward through the musk of hay and sleep. Outside, the distant passing of a train, the dark awakened, everywhere the rain —