

## Dark Energy

*Dixie Partridge*

*"One of the newest, most daring hypotheses,  
is that the explanation lies somewhere weird, near  
yet far: in extra dimensions. As in the land of Narnia . . ."*  
—Charles W. Petit, on yet unexplained mysteries of the  
universe, "Science & Society," U.S. News and World Report

Mathematicians say the universe is a leaking wonder  
of heat and cold: immense pressures  
sucking and exhaling, not elegant  
as they'd imagined . . . "preposterous."  
Above our hilled skyline: an indigo fluorescence  
lines a vapor trail, man's faint longevity  
streaking like a mote of stellar dust,  
a sub-atomic comet. As Mars comes visible,  
a random arc in thought  
brings *dark horse* to mind—  
and the image of black traces against snow  
the winter my father took me to the cutter races,  
a hard-packed track sliced by blades  
until ground bled through.  
The winning horse, my father's favorite,  
was onyx black, eclipsing champions,  
all melodrama and muscled movement.

Out there, the anti-gravity of dark matter  
ever expands the unknown vast . . . amazing  
and no more amazing than this shadow universe  
of nightfall, where reading of dark energy  
after dusk, fifty years (or just moments)  
since those winter races,  
I've been pushed back through a narrow tack of time  
until what opens out are the small nebulae  
of my father's frosty breaths  
that rose in a rhythm like my own,  
both of us reddened with excitement and cold,  
the hooves in my heart bearing down too soon  
on the yellow flag of finish.