

## Weed / Robert Hass

Horse is Lorca's word, fierce as wind  
or melancholy, gorgeous, Andalusian:  
*white horse grazing near the river dust;*  
and parsnip is hopeless,  
second cousin to the rhubarb  
which is already second cousin  
to an apple pie. Marrying the words  
to the coarse white umbels sprouting  
on the first of May is history  
but coveys nothing; it is not the veined  
body of Queen Anne's lace  
I found, bored, in a spring classroom  
from which I walked hands tingling  
for the breasts that are meadows in New Jersey  
in 1933; it is thick, shaggier, and the name  
is absurd. It speaks of durable  
unimaginative pleasures: reading Balzac,  
fixing the window sash, rising  
to a clean kitchen, the fact  
that the car starts & driving to work  
through hills where the roadside thickens  
with the green ungainly stalks,  
the bracts and bright white flowerets  
of horse-parsnips.

## *Like Three Fayre Branches from One Root Deriv'd* / Robert Hass

I am outside a door and inside  
the words do not fumble

as I fumble saying this:  
it is the same in the dream  
where I touch you. Notice  
in these poems the thinning out  
of particulars. The gate  
with the three snakes is burning  
symbolically which doesn't mean  
the flames can't hurt you.  
Now it is the pubic arch instead  
and smells of oils and driftwood,  
of our bodies working very hard  
at pleasure but they are not  
thinking about us. Bless them,  
it is not a small thing to be  
happily occupied, go by them  
on tiptoe. Now the gate is marble  
and the snakes are graces.  
You are the figure in the center.  
On the left you are going away  
from yourself. On the right  
you are coming back. Meanwhile  
we are passing through the gate  
with everything we know. We go  
as fire, as flesh, as marble.  
Sometimes it is good and sometimes  
it is dangerous like the ignorance  
of particulars but our words are clear  
and our movements give off light.

## The Feast / Robert Hass

The lovers loitered on the deck talking,  
the men who were with men and the men who were with new women,  
a little shrill & electric, and the wifely women  
who had repose & beautifully lined faces  
and coppery skin. She had taken the turkey from the oven  
and her friends were talking on the deck  
in the steady sunshine. She imagined them  
drifting toward the food, in small groups, finishing