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Ghost Horse: Sanora Babb, 1913

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Iris Jamahl Dunkle

GHOST HORSE: SANORA BABB, 1913

—an erasure of The Grapes of Wrath

Seven days starved, the two girls stirred pepper
into boiled water to make pepper tea,

to try and trick their stomachs full. At night
the stars slurred across the sky like sour milk.

Underneath their small stone house hovered on
the creek's stone jaw, small shelter against all that pushed

in: air thick with the scent of sage, the far-off
storm rolling in fast and their father's rage

that paced behind the locked door. As they slept,
they dreamed they followed the ghost horse, gone mad

from eating too much locoweed, his life
a loop between his last sprint to cliffs

edge and the weightlessness of falling. They'd
wake to find a heap of bleached bones still piled

at cliff's base with the thunder of hooves
against the buffalo grass pulsing in their minds.