

#### Category 4, Carleton Drewry Memorial: 1st prize

*Poet's note:*

This poem was inspired by and is loosely modeled on Henry Taylor's poem "The Flying Change" (the title poem of his Pulitzer Prize-winning collection).

### **Barnyard Bard**

*For Henry Taylor*

#### I

*The farrier's art consists of joining the natural foot and the fabricated shoe  
so that the shod horse moves just as it would in its perfect elemental state.*

#### II

Holding a high-strung horse for the blacksmith,  
I watch him suit the living foot with steel.  
Chatting idly, he tries the shoe for fit,  
eyeballs the necessary changes,  
then slips the curve over the anvil  
and with a few deft blows, here adds more width,  
there bends or straightens just a little bit.  
Out of the forge, the softened metal's glow  
begins to fade; swiftly the farrier's hammer  
shapes at the front a clip to grasp the toe  
before the tempering plunge into cold water.  
Two final strokes, with one quick turn between—  
against the sole the shoe fits flat and tight and clean.  
Eight nails are hammered to their hold in hoof,  
then clinched and all sharp edges rasped to smooth.  
It's finished. Foot and shoe now move as one—  
dazzling, the ease with which it seems it's done.

Anne Whitelaw