When I cannot remember the name of the roses
my grandmother grew, those heavy-headed melon
ones, the ones we would pluck Japanese beetles
from to flick in a glass jar swirling with turpentine,
the ones she would put in a vase on her coffee table,
the ones I would then smell so hard and deep
their outer petals would drop to the varnish.
When I cannot remember the name of the roses
my grandmother grew, and there is no one alive
to ask, I send the horses out, and they go,
a journey to be sure, beyond the reservoir,
over Mount Lamentation, through the traprock
hanging hills of Meriden to Dexter Avenue,
the lights of New Haven maybe still glinting
from the yard, the house empty, maybe for sale
forever, and they go, nosing at an old
root ball of rosebush by the metal clothesline.
I send the horses out and forget them until,
days later and in need of watering, they return
with their flanks shining and nudge the name
of the roses across the blue January sky.