

Peter Fallon

**THE COMPANY  
OF HORSES**



Gallery Books

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## *A Holy Show*

An early bird. Fighting  
cock. Cock of the walk.  
His strut. His stop.  
His stare declares

he'd tread the whole day  
and all the week to come.  
He yells at darkness,  
'Go to hell' —

a blaze of glory  
howling like a heretic  
in the bonfire of his infidel  
and ruffled feathers.

## *Fair Game*

As if he'd hit  
a wall in air,  
or slipped on ice,

or simply tripped mid-  
flight,  
a pheasant stumbles —

*then* we hear the shot.  
All this beside  
that stretch of land

in which a farmhand's  
fencing.  
We see before we hear

the thud.  
He's straining wire  
as if he's tuning strings

of a long guitar.  
And then we come  
across the body — a fluster

in the mud,  
a final flare  
before the fire falters.

## *Proprietary*

Who owns, he wonders,  
as he passes,  
these holdings, sites  
and old demesnes?

And hears the verdict  
of the wind —  
trees and brambles,  
weeds and grasses.

## *Pennies and Pounds*

He was spreading seed  
on a tear in the field,  
reprising an ancient refrain  
at the thought of the yield:

*One for the pigeon,  
one for the crow,  
one to rot  
and one to grow.*

His father's fathers  
broadcast acres of grain  
that was stitched to the ground  
by the needles of rain.

Good hays and harvests —  
but their true beatitudes were trees,  
hope of the ages,  
the crop of histories,

as they heard the holy orders  
and mastered persistence,  
holding their own  
like that oak in the distance.

Like a word to the wise  
their revenant chant:  
a hundred times more  
for the planting than plant.