

Seeing (on Susan Rothenberg's *Siena Dos Equis*)

When I was one, you were showing
this painting at your first art
show. With giant canvas and rough form
of horse, you arrived and said to the world
that everything can be one color, this
fleshy, pink, raw color,
like the meaty part of my palm,
that everything can be reduced, one line
remaining, horse unreal,
no tail, no mane, no eye, no breath, unable
my pencil, my paper, immobile,
that everything can be flattened
like your flat grid lines over
the horse; I cannot imagine
riding it or petting it or anything more
than arriving here to see it, this moment
flattened and delicate, all
other art gone, my plans gone,
the guard gone. I can just be
for a moment. To be and to watch

your painting, how there are two
horse heads, the silenced shadow beneath
the one left. Why did you let me see it?
How the line is not black but the color
of what you let show through, stained
by fleshy, bloody, meaty, pink.
Canvas large as the wall, I can't take it all
in at once, so my eyes trace and follow and reach
for more and more at once, to be inside
and see the colors that make
up that fleshy, raw, bloody palm, all
the colors that fight underneath,
the furious brushstroke covering, covering,
showing, allowing mistakes and shadows, to cause
me to rise from this bench, stretch out my arms
and become part of this, be
swallowed by, be flattened by,
this one giant moment.

Jill Williams