

QUARTER HORSE CURSE

Imagine eating a banana and dying
on the spot. Well, they can, thanks

to a defective gene so they can't
metabolize potassium readily, a pity

says the rancher hosting me at his
spread. Of all I learn, this fact alone

knives the heart, but at least unlike
another guest I did not unknowingly

hold out a banana to an unsuspecting
animal, which collapsed as only horses

can, its legs shooting way past akimbo,
breaking its neck as if cracking a whip.

I'm thinking of leaving early, but take
some hesitating steps toward Lone Star,

an apple in my trembling fingers. This'll
be okay to nibble, I whisper in his muscled

ear. Down comes his holy head, lips parted,
great buck teeth wielded as if the tiniest of

vises. I watch eagerly for a long time as
his jaws do their work, filling the air with

loud chatter, infinitely superior to me, never
mind the possibility of serious comparison.