

Riding a Nervous Horse

By Vicki Hearne

A dozen false starts:
You're such a fool, I said,
Spooking at shadows when
5 All day you were calm,
Placidly nosing the bushes
That now you pretend are strange,
Are struck with menace.

10 But he shuddered, stubborn
In his horsy posture,
Saying that I brought
Devils with me that he
Could hear gathering in all
15 The places behind him as I
Diverted his coherence
With my chatter and tack.

20 Indeed I have stolen
Something, a careful attention
I claim for my own yearning
Purpose, while he
Is left alone to guard
Us both from horse eaters
25 That merely grin at me
But lust for him, for
The beauty of the haunch
My brush has polished, revealing
Treasures of edible light
30 In the shift of hide and hooves.