

The New Criterion

Poems

June 2009

The horse of Achilles

by [Angelos Sikelianos](#)

O Field of Asphodel, two horses
Whinnied and raced along your edge,
Their backs were shining like a wave
As they came surging out of the tide
And tore across the empty sand,
Their necks were arched like breakers, high,
Stallions flecked with white foam . . .
Lightning kindled in the eye.
They dove back in, wave into the waves,
Foam into the foam of the sea,
And then were gone. I knew those steeds,
One had taken on human voice,
And prophecy, a sayer of sooth.
The hero gripped the reins and kicked,
Driving onward his godlike youth . . .

Holy horses, fate has kept you
Indestructible, and set
Upon your foreheads black as night
A charm against the evil eye,
A great and blinding blaze of white!

Angelos Sikelianos's poems emphasized national history, religious symbolism, and universal harmony.

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This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 27 June 2009, on page 29

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