

KELLY R. SAMUELS

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Riding Several Horses

No looms here.

Only a bladder for dried peas

to rattle in.

Lost among small closets and winding stairs.

The absence of windows—

like being blind, while people talk  
of the sky.

To be.

To be a little moon.

A calculable perturbation. Hearing  
the grass grow, the squirrel's heart beat:

Chapter and verse.

Chapter and verse.

Stable earth and the changing day—

gleams on the wet grass.

Bright August lights.

Shadows  
with the tufted grass, the apple-tree boughs.

I don't own you any more  
than if I saw a crow.

How inadequate the words are.

The bitter incessant murmur.  
The medium in which ardent deeds took shape.

## ABOUT THE POEM & AUTHOR

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“Riding Several Horses” was created from George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871-1872). About the poem and the process of composing it, Kelly R. Samuels writes:

I have never loved Eliot’s *Middlemarch*. Upon recently rereading it, I marked parts and phrases I liked. The second were what I took to generate this piece, shuffling them about to make something new—an exercise I have since done with other classic novels I respect but do not necessarily hold a great fondness for. Doing so was immensely pleasurable and offered me a way to creatively engage with novels that haven’t been favorites of mine; it was a form of playing, and, in the end, I came to appreciate the language, if not the narrative.

Kelly R. Samuels is the author of *Zeena/Zenobia Speaks* (Finishing Line Press 2019), *Words Some of Us Rarely Use* (Unsolicited Press 2019), and *All the Time in the World* (Kelsay Books 2021). Her work has appeared in *The Massachusetts Review*, *The Pinch*, *The Carolina Quarterly*, *The Shore*, *Bear Review*, and elsewhere. Kelly lives in the Upper Midwest and can be found online at [krsamuels.com](http://krsamuels.com).

