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Richard Owens

Four Ballads

Bent Sae Brown

gang and see tween my love & me
bald sons I say gang & let us be
my love long tall—built for speed
he shout & cry my berry-brown steed

entreat win up get up off your feet
be my brand this goddamn town
my sweet baboo—am deeply sworn
aye you're a good man Sally Brown

for a kiss o your lovely mouth
auld sons way darna speak to thee
forbid us rest o north & south
broke your hame sae stole your me

Iroquois Steeplechase

this wicked gallon of rye
when a man loseth
in his commodity for want

take like recompense dear
by providence
where there is scarcity for

for now is the hand of God
upon the commodity
infuriated by the light sum

of man—common coasters
unprofitable fowlers
armigerous families forsooth

more calibrated than colored
beyond yon weari hand
vast forces variously at war

saints deep in their ecstasies
wrassle to extricate
thousands of fencible goods

outward piety & inward purity
subdivided ad infinitum
like some kind of wild scripture

Baba O'Riley

tangled up in foreign hands
disband—this back into our living

unforgiven (loth themself to blame
crepuscular mind for mercy

shiver to hilt the proper way
riven—sway onward cross land

yonder view open plain to gain
unredeemed—stand to be bleed

mount again a stronger steed bare
check the rein—reign in

(apostolic in their own vile faith
beckoning—might well forbear

who thundering comes round
to scathe by brunt—the weight of it

advancing along the rocks
let us flee the face of this trembling

Steel Laying Holler

awright now—bow down
they doin you a hoss

diminished resistance
sleeping on byways

in anny kase a gelding
—full liberty quoth

examine the work flow
observe local custom

polarized patterns of use
—magnetic metals

anything but accidents
manage narrow lanes

& who to lick our sores
this sack full of spurs

tractors bought at cost
—eviscerated colts

measured in horsepower
—graze on nostalgia

trace sweet muzzle & bit
headless trade winds

picking the rodeo clean
buck—gallop & break

traverse the course—see
no deviation from the mean

Author Info

Richard Owens is the author of *Delaware Memoranda* (BlazeVOX 2008) and *Embankments* (Interbirth 2009). He is currently completing a PhD in the Poetics Program at the University at Buffalo where he edits Punch Press and *Damn the Caesars*, a journal of contemporary poetry and poetics.

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