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On the Plain of Men

JBMulligan

Skeletal horses cropping the grey stubble,
snapping at each others' necks and eyes
to the accompaniment of humming flies
while heat waves like the memory of wheat.

The tattered rags gather around their fires,
praising the flickering glory of their flame,
how every yellow blade is different and the same,
how the other fires sputter and gutter out.

Above, an impossibly swollen sun
bleaches the blue thin sky, turning the air
to a breathless moan of heat, a curtain sheer
and still around the nodding, bearded skulls.

The children play with dung, and caw like birds:
All praise the fire! Hail the dance of flame!
All sing the different-lettered empty name!,
while dogs rage among an old man's bones.