

THE  
SPOON  
RIVER Poetry Review

*Anna Marie Craighead-Kintis*

Dominar

Anything she could, my sister made gallop—  
a piece of chicken, drumstick to dinner plate,

scissor-thighed Barbie, my mother's two Portuguese  
calling birds cast in ceramic.

Anything with legs really, her own body cantering  
down the hallway, to the bathroom, to the car,

when dinner was called. At bedtime,  
tick tick against the shared wall of our bedroom,

she'd tap the plastic hooves of her Palominos.  
I'd wait to hear the neighs and whinnies, until I was sure

she had gathered the whole troop, their finely  
painted muscles, to plant my fist against the wall,

a series of bangs—one, two, again and again: "Be quiet."  
My sister,

three years now in Madrid  
mounting the bridled horses, scarred *camparas*

to the tops of her calves, caramel-colored leather  
she rubs with grease. I have come to visit her,

to see a dance, *doma*, from their word *dominar*.  
She yells to me, her olive skin

and black hair so unlike mine, "Watch."  
Clicks and snaps escape from her mouth, her small frame

sits perfectly straight, the horse's mane tied with ribbon,  
and I know what she has wanted to show me.

High up, near the haunches, she kicks with metal *espuelas*  
and, at once, the horse moves into heavy prance

around the wooden barrels. He slows, the smallest shift  
of her legs, visible strain in her face—

the giant body beneath begins an awkward march sideways,  
his long head still and bowed against the reins.