

## TAKING PART

*Peter Austin*

Muffled, against the wind's malicious lash,  
I watch, with head still sleep-stuffed, as a horse  
Carries some jodhpured clodpoll round the course  
("Take me," its look says, "back to barn and mash!"),  
Wondering—"tie my number on, please, dad!"—  
Why, on a winter Sunday, I'm awake  
Earlier than a heron on its lake,  
And where a cup of coffee might be had.

But, then, she's on the mounting block and up  
And clearing, by an inch, the opening jump,  
And, by the time my heart has ceased to thump,  
It's over, and she hasn't won the cup.  
"Cluck-headed judge!" I grunt, as she dismounts.  
"Daddy," she says, "it's taking part that counts!"

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