



Image from North Carolina Haunted Places.

Deborah H. Doolittle

On the Shackleford Banks

More wild ponies than horses,
the herd munched the salt-stiff turf,
browsed the sheltered curves of the dunes
for wild oats, took turns grazing
and casually gazing in all directions
at once. Noon, they huddled on
the dark puddles of their shadows,
hides rippling and tails switching
at gnats and flies that droned
and dropped all around them.
When shadows grew long and lean
like the grass, these distant kin
to the race horse, pricked up
their ears and kicked out at last

across the wide strand;
no gate, no rail, no finish line,
and only the two of us
to cheer them on to victory.

Deborah H. Doolittle's poems have appeared in *The Aurean*, *Poets Espresso Review*, *I-70*, *Slant*, *Mochilla Review* and elsewhere. Her chapbooks *No Crazy Notions* and *That Echo* won the Mary Belle Campbell and Longleaf Press awards, respectively.