

*Last Customer Played
by a Man Called Horse*

(R.H. 1930-2002)

This gold day—done! & these beaten leaves, yellows & dun,
these five-fingered
sweetgum hands, down, & these blood-red tupelos, tear-dropped

& down; & I'm finished too with *This Sporting Life* & the man
called horse has left
his red face at the bar & will now have nothing not the Dickel
not the Beam

—but tea with lemon & a sugared spoon, & the *Times* of London
& the *New York Times*, spread on the floor, the flags, the
quarry-cold, the riven

slates & at his elbow, cold cuts if his hunger comes to that—
Thrift, thrift,
Horatio! The funeral bake-meats did coldly furnish forth the
marriage tables...

That's Richard Harris complaining that he would have made a
good Hamlet.
The year—done! & the hour of his idling hearse ends in its yard.
In that bistro,

twenty years ago, the red leaves skittered in. His bill, unsettled;
his, the last
table; me, his waiter in the wicket of traffic passing in two
directions; rain

freckling the papers I'd gone to fetch for him. Last night, the
folio scent,
the Avon pulp of that paperback Storey book pressed to my face.

His wishes are the same: a good obituary, a cigarette, the sun on
his bare feet.