

6 Nov 78

Dear Tom —

Here's my most recent — actually reprinted from Northwest Review: — I read at the art museum in Boise last week, and they had printed this "Western" of mine —

I'm glad to get the Xc. calendar & to have evidence of your continued activity.

Please relay my greetings to our circle there — very much in my good recollections.

— Bill Stafford

The Daily Shoot-Out for Tourists on the Square in Jackson, Wyoming

It is more serious now, the encounter
on Main Street and the pretended shoot-out.
It means more today, the pink-gartered women
riding the stage past admiring children who
wait the mock hanging and the sprawled
gunman slid to the roof edge playing dead.

What got away?

Was it something the women once
glimpsed? — not courage, not standing
behind their men, but what put curtains
by the front window? And whatever it is
that sends back deep for supplies more
precious than food, before winter?

Now there's a little flaw in the wagons,
the music, the whisky.

Now it is the birdcall every evening saying
"Why?" It is the coyotes ignoring what people
are doing in town. It is the brief, silent
glow in the clouds found for a moment then
lost when the crowd looks down, surging
into their history, rejoicing in the dust.

It is more serious now.

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