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Hometown Festival

by Pat Sturm

The lanky, scruffy artist
sat stoically in his canvas chair,
offering thousand-dollar oils
of cowboys, horses, and
pioneer women with pinched faces.

Patrons admired his work
yet carried small canvases of
flashy flowers, homemade soap
sporting belts of lace, and
ceramic cups with a slight lean.

Lines formed for Methodist chili dogs,
Baptist taco chips with generous cheese,
and Church of Christ cookies dripping
with sugar frosting. Diets were
not invited to these fundraising booths.

Back in the performing area,
ballerinas in jeans and pink ballet shoes
braved the concrete floor to
execute pirouettes and formations
to the delight of faces with

Genetic similarities that beamed
from the stands even while fathers
and grandfathers couldn't push
worries of wheat harvest
from their minds.

At the end of the day,
the scruffy painter loaded his unsold
oils back into his Tahoe, realizing
that he had misjudged this festival,
where art was the excuse,

Not the reason for the gathering
where friends and family supported
and celebrated each other and
their talents in a small town

far from a major city.

