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Max Longstreet, Gambler, Speculates on the Death of Reverend Burden

by Robert Cooperman

I've turned
his unfortunate demise
to profit, taking bets
on whose hand shoved him
from this world.

My pick?
Sheriff Dennehy,
though it makes
no difference to me
who Our Law kills
so long as I run
my honest faro table.

Whenever Widow Burden's
within pissing distance,
he tips his hat, smiles
greasy as a bear
about to make a meal
of a prime doe.

Even that colored
boarding house owner
laid a bet.
"Accident!" she chimed
simple enough to believe
Burden slipped.

Preacher would've burned
her out, for sure,
if not for her partner,
John Sprockett.

He recites poetry
to her of an evening,
though I doubt
she understands
a word
of his nonsense.

