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William Eagle Feather Fails to Divulge How Reverend Burden Died

by Robert Cooperman

I'd never tell that fat
white slug of a sheriff—
him tossing me a coin
for my tracking jobs
like I'm a gold-tramp begging
free drinks in his saloon—

But from the faint boot marks,
it was John Sprockett flung
Preacher down the shaft.
Only thing I can't figure:
why that rhyme-crazy killer did it;
maybe he thought Preacher
wanted him run out of town.
Or it had to do with Preacher's wife.

I can read ground like Scripture:
Preacher was taken unsuspecting,
like a cougar had pounced on his bed.

The time I met his sweet widow
rambling on the mountain,
my heart did a courtship dance
so wild I could hardly speak.
Now, just let me find
some pretty words to say to her.

Sprockett owes me,
but I'm too frightened of him
to ask for a poem or two.

