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## Watching Her Sway and Toss

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# Watching Her Sway and Toss

by Walt McDonald

We leaned on the bar and watched  
while Pattiann played darts. What hearts  
cowboys hung on the wall, hoping she'd hit,  
turn Mrs. She beat us all, kids and old men

watching her body sway and cock and toss.  
She often missed, the saloon's bull's-eye  
too small. She allowed herself a line  
five feet from the wall, and why not.

little fists, pretty lips always puckered,  
whispering somebody's name, but whose?  
Take any bar, dust off the naked lady  
lounging on canvas framed above bottles.

Pattiann was tiny but finer, pink and fresh  
in a vest and leather fringe. No dungarees  
for her, spoiled daughter of the boss.  
Her daddy made the best man pay, and losers, too—

just look. From branding to roundup, old men  
of forty and boys like me got up at dawn  
and broke our backs by the hour, spines jammed,  
beaten down by the pounding of iron hoofs.

One dawn, the boss drove the surrey himself  
to the station, and Pattiann got out,  
bags tagged for Italy and France. That night,  
two cowboys quit, stuffed paychecks down

in their pants, rode off, not looking back.  
Cook told us boys at noon over coffee,  
beans bitter and grounds in the coffee,  
his sourdough biscuits flat.

