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# John Sprockett Recalls a Horrifying Incident from His Years with Raiders in Bloody Kansas

by Robert Cooperman

The farmhouse and barn burned  
yellow as Hell-flames.  
The farmer and his sons lay dead,  
their women staked spread-eagle,  
like we was marauding Apaches  
and not proud Rebel raiders.

Colonel let the men take turns  
on the mother and daughter;  
their shrieks for mercy  
cut me like broken whiskey bottles.

“Sprockett!” Quantrill spoke sharp  
as a flywheel honing swords,  
“you gonna try your luck,  
or afraid even these two’ll object  
to your grizzly-ripped face ?”

“Mister,” the older one begged,  
both their legs blood-smear’d,  
“if you ever loved your mama,  
kill us quick.” The other sobbed,  
young enough to hope we’d let her live.

A bullet apiece,  
and they were in Heaven  
with Mama, praying for me,  
I hope. That was the end  
of my raiding days,  
though I had to ride hard  
to put miles between me  
and the Colonel’s balked pleasure.

