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# While Hearing a Case, the Honorable Samuel Delaney, Judge of Gold Creek, Reflects Idly

by Robert Cooperman

“Judge Sam-u-well,” friends greet me,  
mine owners, their whiskey smooth  
as a whore’s thumb on your top button.  
“Sam, you’d better!” my wife screeches,  
if I’m late to dinner, served  
with the scrape of nails down a slate.  
Our daughter’s a second harpy  
when her beak’s not buried in poetry.

This one-eyed claim-jumper whose butt  
I’m going to ship to Salida’s rock-pile  
reminds me of John Sprockett,  
who passed through before the thaw,  
with an English lady, high-bosomed as a statue.  
I had him before my bench once,  
but let him off when he recited  
one of the poems he’s famous for to my daughter,  
greedy as an owlet for culture  
from that grizzly-chewed killer;  
Letitia was especially raven-righteous  
to make me Sprockett’s accomplice.

What I wouldn’t give to be free as an eagle  
mating with a female wild as the wind  
stirred by their love-dives.  
I should just punch Letty’s mouth shut,  
no respect for her husband, a judge,  
appointed by the Governor, by thunder!

Though that Englishwoman sipped tea—  
too lady-gracious to see the horse-shit  
booby-trapping Main Street  
like cannon balls at Antietam—  
if Sprockett’s not stirring her cup,  
I’ve never done the dirty with Mary LaFrance,  
a workhorse to that highbred filly  
unafraid, I’ll wager, of hard riding  
out of range of Letitia’s black wings  
flinging ashes and accusations.

