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Letter from Richard Lovell, Estes Park, Colorado Territory, to His Brother in England, 1873

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*Letter from Richard Lovell, Estes Park, Colorado Territory,
to His Brother in England, 1873*

My Dear Herbert,
I leap towards health like the mountain goats
springing along the summits that surround our cottage.
Who would have thought that just six months ago
London specialists gravely shook their heads.
This air salubrious as Prospero's island.

My only care is for Emily:
the fetus a mustang bucking inside her.
I fear a Heathcliff of the peaks—
like the one who rode in last week,
to turn my boys into worshipful puppies—
will frighten her into a miscarriage.

He was guide for a Miss Starling of Hampshire.
A more mismatched pair I've never beheld:
she, a paragon of English breeding
despite sitting her mount like a man;
he, legs bowed like a bison's horns,
his face savaged by a grizzly bear,
or so he told my boys as he whittled and spat.

When I offered him a glass of ale
after the meal I allowed him to wolf on our porch,
he refused, but glared at the tawny liquid
as if he meant to rip it from my grasp.
He slept in the barn, and I not at all,
expecting my throat to be slashed,
Emily ravaged, the boys torn apart.

After breakfast, he left some silver
with a look that told me how little
he valued our attempts at hospitality.
He flipped the fetish he'd been carving
to my Timmy, who pleaded for a demonstration
of six-guns at the bottles he had placed on a fence.
Six shots shattered the high valley peace,
Emily shrieked, six glasses exploded,
and while vapours drifted up to the snow-caps,
the two riders grew filmy as a distant mirage.

Emily sends all love. How we wish
we could share your jolly Yule board!
Perhaps a demure girl, and no wolf-cub,
will arrive to enliven our December exile.
The boys prattle only of Mr. Sprockett's skills:
vainglorious as Grimm's Little Tailor.

by Robert Cooperman

