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Oklahoma Land Run—

April 22, 1889

By Wayne L. Vincent

The prelude to statehood:

it was the low booming thunder
of a thousand pounding hooves;
it was the moaning-groaning whining
of all those wagon wheels a-turning
tossing clods of earth into the sky
like red-clay rockets

darting through the choking clouds
of man-made dust devils,
playing hopscotch in the midst of all of us
It was the pain

as a clenched tight rein
chewed into bare flesh.

It was a race to claim a dream.

It was the pounding of a thousand hearts
beating in anguished anticipation

It was a tidal wave of humanity—horses hurrying,
hastening helter-skelter,
hurdling pell-mell through the buffalo grass
while the whole prairie shook.

It was the dying whimper of a crushed prairie dog
and violets—their petals pressed into the prairie.

It was the foam-flecked fog of sweating horses
mingling with the human mist of unfulfilled dreams.

It was the cries of joy
as settlers drove stakes into new-claimed ground,
seeds of destiny sown in the home of the red man.

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WAYNE L. VINCENT, a sixty-year resident of Oklahoma, is a member of the Oklahoma City Writers, Inc. and the Poetry Society of Oklahoma. He is a frequent winner in prose/poetry contests, and his publication credits include several articles as well as many poems. Wayne enjoys humor, and in 1988 he won the First Place in a national light-verse competition with his poem "A Freshman's Plea." He is a Korean War veteran and is retired from Tinker Air Force Base.

