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THE COUNTY JUGGLER

By Aaron A. Baker

The girl at the window
watched me the juggler
toss green cucumbers into the air
as I stood in the courtyard
in front of the old courthouse
at the county fair. She was amused
but didn’t smile just sat there
with her elbows resting on the window sill
so I changed to tossing red
ripe tomatoes then yellow squash
higher and higher into the air even
throwing them under one leg and then
the other. She almost smiled
when I began squatting and did a Russian
dance that should have moved the watermelons
and then stood on my head feeling my
blue britches slipping out of my cowboy boots
and someone stuck a red flower
in my mouth. But she only had a funny
look on her face so I stood right-end up
with the flower still in my teeth showing
off by unbuttoning the front of my new
white silk shirt and started juggling
again purple-top turnips and orange-colored carrots
any old vegetable that was handy then I saw the girl
was joined in the window by a gray-haired
woman who was hugging and smiling and
pointing over my head to where they
were judging lambs and heifers
at the annual county fair and I remained
just a what you may call a metaphor.

Illustration by Trey Wright