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Red Solomon / that spring

Grady J. Walker
Lu Spurlock

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Red Solomon

—a view of Sayre’s town character—

—by Dr. Grady J. Walker

They called his dusty town
“Queen of the West” and
Sometimes “Gateway to the West.”
Under his greasy-gold bushel
of hair and under his
sweat-stained, aged, once-white
Stetson, banded with velvet
Brown dust, he walked—
Rather swung, like the
King of his namesake.
He “owned” the town, and he
Held captive the notice of
everyone on the Saturday afternoon
Street.
He never said much; but when
He did, the more superstitious
of us half suspected divine
wisdom flashed through those
blue-stained soul-windows.
He was an enigma, a clown,
a soothsayer, but never a problem—
That is, until one day when he
Decided he really did own the
Town and with his plastic 45
Demanded all the cash and valuables
from the Beckham County National
Bank.
“Don’t be silly,” said Miss Simmons.
“I don’t have time to play games, Red.”
“Neither do I,” he screamed and roared.
And he didn’t (have time to
play games, that is)—and with that
he blew a hole through the ceiling
and into Dr. Gum’s desk upstairs,
a hole in the desk of a thousand memories
and ten trillion particles of Beckham
County red dirt.
Everybody said it was some kind
of a miracle, but they put Red in
the county jail anyway and
took away his fantasy.
The last time I saw him, he
was sitting on a bench in front
of the American Hotel, whittling
a six-shooter out of shinnery wood.

that spring — by Lu Spurlock

when Western Oklahoma wind
blew fierce
lightning jagged across night skies
and thunder roared close enough
for us to go to the dirt-floored cellar
it was scary fun
we sat on a canvas cot
near shelves of fruit filled jars
and hangings of spider lace
Dad played his French harp
or spun stories of other days
while lantern, light glowed
on the axe he’d use
to chop out
if we had a real tornado
wriggling with excitement
I wished it would happen
until it did