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Two Poems

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ZARZYSKI, NOT EXACTLY WILD BILL HICKOK

Forty-seven times my shotgun thundered,
A downpour of BB's riddles the sloughs.
I wade knee-deep in Winchester hulls,
Red as rose hips and my cheeks.
Smokey the retriever pants
At my cursing and fist-shaking.
Forty-seven gossipy bluebills
Vanish like words into a strong wind,
Spreading tales from Saskatchewan
Down the Mississippi flyway to New Orleans:

That quack Zarzyski
Couldn't pepper a duck
If the son-of-a-bitch was in the oven.

ZARZYSKI AT DEEP CREEK BAR RENDEZVOUS

(Forest Closing, August 19-27, 1973)

Hard hats palavering over boiler makers
Say bear are moving down for chokecherries,
Rattlesnake up for water.
So dry, the creek trickles
Only three days a week,
And a logger's fart is dangerous
As a smouldering match.
Rumors flare faster than fires.
A girl kidnapped at Three Forks
Found split, like a lightning-struck pine,
A grizzly on LSD in Yellowstone
Has shredded three hippies to death.

At the cabin, pack rats stampede
The roof, scattering
Everything shiny to hidden lairs.
No moon, no stars, no fire,
My imagination glitters in the dark.