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## Linda and the Cowboy

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## LINDA AND THE COWBOY

Your old green cap is on the table. The sun  
is finally breaking through. Good old  
Cowboy Billy, solid as a phone pole  
and half as tall, through the screen door  
just a dark shape with a white grin  
standing in the front yard, says the weather  
is good for something and you'd better  
come on out and collect what he owes you.  
I tell him you're usually under that green cap  
this time of the day but he doesn't laugh  
just grins, just grins, and says he'd hate  
to hurt a woman on such a nice day  
but I know he's all talk, and the wind  
blows through and picks up your cap  
and sets it on the chair. I figure you're  
down at the creek for a swim or walked  
into town for a beer and you sure  
picked a fine time because old Bill's leaning  
on the screen like a bear in heat and  
grinning twice as big and says he's done  
run you out of town, put you in the trunk  
of an old Cadillac bound for Texas, and I say  
sure, sure, and his hand hits the screen  
big as a hat, a black hat, and I tell him  
how hard we've worked to save this place  
to keep it alive and his hand comes through  
and hangs in the air, it seems, like some  
fleshy thing in an old horror show  
that sucks all the air out of my space  
and I can't breathe and I've worked so hard  
Just look at the blood in these walls  
I tell him  
just look at these hands just look at them

He sits down in your old chair, props his  
feet in the flowers, lays his gun on the table,  
and sails his big white hat, the wide brim  
tipping like wings, across the room.