

The Judas Horse

by Johnsienoel

In the Backyard:
we played cowboys and Indians
on a late summer day.
I, the squaw, wore hair
braided in pigtails, a single
white and black feather
poking out of my head
like a lemur tail peeking
up from the brush
revealing my position
as I scouted them out
incapable of speaking
the boys' language.
J. C. brought the 'Shootin Shells'
cap guns that left smoking puffs
of smelly burned paper
hanging in the air.
pap pap pap
pap pap pap
ricocheted around the yard as I
hoo hoo hoo hoo
hoo hoo hoo hoo'd
through my hand.
The battle was on.
I was unarmed.

Mark dressed the velvet red Stetson,
too big for his head,
like a dandy.
A six year old savior
with fringe on his pockets
flapping as he, the 'Judas horse'
led me 'round back

where other boys from the block
circled up and corralled me.
The game turned to keep away.
A kiss, ponied up,
bought you freedom.

