

Wilderness House Literary Review 11/3

Jake Tringali

For The Sons and Daughters of Kitty Leroy

HERE LIES

KITTY LEROY

1850-1877

QUEEN OF

THE HOOFERS

Is a gun male or female? Kitty Leroy pondering, adjusting
dusty leather boots, black stockings, Sunday gown.

She prized those old boots, from Londontown, the land of
Queen Elizabeth and mock kings, or so she was told.

The story of The Virgin Queen: a bold girl empowered,
a religion flowered around her, a royal rumored to be
male and female. Like worms and snails.

Neither nor either. Kitty knew these things.

Kitty knew the sideway glances from the saloon
from the women who couldn't understand her limericks,
from the menfolk who couldn't stand her ballyhoo,
in her own goddamn tavern inside her own goddamn gambling parlor.
Once again, she had come in off the Texas trail,
wildcatting amid bluebonnets and pecan trees
housing her horse carriage, quenching a thirst
the evening before her fifth marriage.

Whiskey, whiskey, ace ace, bets are placed,
Kitty drank and watched the faro shuffle
where kings and queens equally read the tarot
determining daily dreams of profits and debts.
A gun is blind of gender, atween life and death
Kitty Leroy ventured, on this moonbright night,
danced asplendor, and pushed that hellfired frontier
further, step by step, for her unknown sons and daughters.