

## Wilderness House Literary Review 8/2

*Thomas Lyman*

### **A Love Called Conscience**

Yes, these eyes have been on him –  
canvas  
tent on prickly earth  
emptying the whiskey not  
over his hurt, but pouring into the dirt.  
Even the best of us need time to ruminate  
and wait when screwing up.

This wrangler would do well to take  
a listening ear like the winter place where he made the mistake.  
Two days on Wind over trail  
brought him to long, flat plains from hell;  
he dreamt of that pit Gahenna well,  
knowing his spot at the pastor's service  
had been nervously  
gaping for years.

Thoughts of her under a Stetson,  
*should'a listen*  
*should'a listen*  
*I'd know jus' what ta do.*  
While bandit hands make demands with lead  
and steel.

*Why not you?!*

Two moons later, a flight unlike before  
back toward the hills –  
the blue pool he gallops for  
not on horseback but his haunches  
as kicked-up dirt enters one  
grand parade  
to rendezvous anew  
with Conscience at the lake.

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### Motto

Drops feign deference  
as balsam clouds yawn  
a gray in the upper over radio waves long.  
Have you gone? Relented and moved forward  
to your per-ordained dawn? It's what I wonder as my life  
pulls me on down the highway through town. Friends and brothers  
at universities now, while my books are fourteeners that bow to the Great Seal  
of our state: "*Nil Sine Numine.*"  
Nothing without Providence. But oracular seasons allow changes scrawled  
deeply upon their variable storms and their journeys well-drawn.  
Us youths whooping in throng feed the magnetic pulse  
as we defy thick eons over boulders and lights.  
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### I'm Sleeping

In one dream,  
caught up above the County,  
many rural axioms  
touching the back of my skull.

They named me 'Iohwan'  
which they chant in the Buffalo Song.  
Called a song by my own name:  
twin.

A shootist, champion with blue  
ribbons at the fair, among cactus flowers  
on the same night

fires a bullet into the Milky Way.  
Showers spewing stars  
as I watch the bullet go farther  
curdling the blood of Mars orbiting high.

A vision of Exodus -  
planets part with the Red Sea.

The bullet was my twin.  
No, the bullet was me.