

Wilderness House Literary Review 8/3

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DANGEROUS PLACE

Dangerous
this place...
imagine—
risking one's
life over...
someone else's
parking space.

SUBURBAN COWBOY

Was it possible that it started—the whole cowboy thing—right after the last child left home for college?... Resurfacing, perhaps, following an especially long absence of conversation with his wife at the dining table one night; a seemingly endless wait in rush-hour traffic during a middle-of-the-week commute—or was it something at work: office politics or a disappointing quarter?... He himself can think of no satisfying explanation for it, he just knows that, whatever the source, it seems to happen earlier and earlier now....

This evening—after the family dog, a shepherd-Border collie, pulls him out the door—before they reach the park or the playground, before they reach the woods at the end of the street, before they even reach the end of the driveway—no Stetson yet, no bandanna, no boots, no spurs, no gun ... but, with the sound of her paws on the blacktop, already he can hear a different sound—the patter of her paws, like hoofbeats, beginning to clatter.