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Queen Of The Rodeo

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Queen Of The Rodeo

Laurie Cerny

I

In 1974 she was crowned a rodeo queen.

On a cotton candy pink colored straw hat perched a brand
spanking new rhinestone tiara.

Taking her solo ride, a victory lap, around a dirt filled arena
outside of Kaycee

she flashed a Pepsodent smile while fuzzy pompons on a the back
of a hot pink saddle blanket cadenced in rhythm to a rocking
horse canter

strided by her big mare. A Palomino. The color of a new
copper penny.

The same untired shade as her youthful golden locks . . .

In less than sixteen seconds she had beat the game and reigned;
Queen of the Rodeo.

II

Round three barrels she turned fifteen years of highs and lows.

A bad divorce, cancer that left its ugly signature
scrawled in cursive across her chest, and a son who keeps
walkin' on the other side of the law have all slowed her time.

So has a life that's ridden her hard and put her up
wet on many sleepless nights spent on a coffee stained
bench seat

of a '79 Chevy that has cradled her broken heart from Laramie to
Colorado Springs, and from to Sheridan to Oklahoma City....

She has paid her lifetime dues but now barely makes the day's
entry fee.

III

In a watering hole on Main Street she tastes middle age
wearing a trophy silver belt buckle and tight Wranglers
to keep what needs keeping together while she makes the rounds.

A rusted out pickup truck's parked out front.

It houses what's left of her world; a world champion saddle
from 1982

hand-tooled flowers crusted with yellowed saddle soap,
an old wooden tack trunk filled with faded show bills,
dirty currycombs, manure stained leg wraps, and a tarnished
rhinestone crown.

On the other side of town, a broken down barrel horse stands
forever idle . . .

And her two-horse Rustler trailer lost its bearings long ago.

IV

In between tepid glasses of beer
she reminds anyone who might still give a damn;

"I was the Queen of the Rodeo in 1974."