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St. James Hotel, Cimarron

Stephen Kreil

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**ST. JAMES HOTEL,
CIMARRON**

Stephen Kreil

The evening wind rustles through the cottonwood trees;
a solitary tumbleweed rolls down the main street.
To my right, the saloon door swings;
I turn back to my whiskey sitting on the old oak bar.
Through the mirror, I glimpse the prize antelope head—
the black eyes leer over my shoulder.
I ask Jim to fill my glass,
savoring the last of its contents.
The Winchester rifle on the wall gleams, like a polished rodeo belt buckle,
the quiet bar reflecting in the metal.
Above my head, I count the holes,
those left from gunfights of years past,
6, 7, 8, 9 . . .
many more,
but the whiskey distracts me.
Pulling the glass from my lips,
I taste dust on the air, dry and bitter.
The floor rumbles as though a steam engine were approaching,
but it's the boiler kicking in, beyond the wooden planks below.
In Cimarron,
the wild town,
the St. James Hotel rests,
left lonely amongst the sage.