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tarantinoesque

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"Immature poets imitate;  
mature poets steal."

--T.S. Eliot

Johnny and I needed a poem;  
we were literary desperadoes  
driving with the top down  
along forsaken highways  
in Death Valley

shotguns in the back seat;  
suits still stained with blood,  
mud from a dirty limerick  
and the job we pulled  
in Bristol

The fella there didn’t have it;  
But we beat the name of a bank  
From him: First Third National,  
the first line of an unwritten haiku,  
in Barstow

We pulled up at noon;  
tasting the gray dust  
that rose up around us  
like death shrouds,  
mist that cloaked Odysseus and Aeneas

It was a teetering fortress;  
bars across the windows  
the door squeaked with fear  
when we drifted in  
an onomatopoetic scream
A muse of blood sang in me;
from the fold of my coat I pulled death
Which embraced me like a winter rose
and shot the guard in the back
Crack of a shattered spine

Like a puppet without strings
he collapsed against the corner
streaked the wood crimson
Lips locked in a death-kiss
With the splintered wall

Johnny’s face
was flecked in blood
from the girl behind the desk
A few blasts took the bars off the windows
Like the teeth of the poet we shot back in Bristol

By luck
the safe was open
the poem flapped in the wind
Vergil would have been proud
As we drove away with the top down

Chased by the sound of a thousand Sirens

\[ \text{Joshua Graham Buursma} \]