

Hopalong Suit

The collector tells me
that I can get \$3,000
for the Hoppy suit
that Wesley Johnson
is wearing in the photograph.

The suit belongs to me.
Wesley wears it because
Dad wants him to.
The least I can do
considering his family life.

Wesley is an only child,
his parents argue a lot.
They drink old fashions
like my parents, only more.

When I spend the night,
sometimes I hear his mother crying,
sometimes his father cursing,
sometimes his bichon barking
to get out.

They hate each other.
Even the dog knows it.

In the photograph Wesley and I
are sitting on Dad's knee.
Wesley is grinning at the camera,
his eyes squinting.
He is wearing the Hoppy suit,
black with white fringes,
the Black Hoppy vest
with Hoppy rearing up on Topper
throwing a Lasso
that spells out Cassidy.

Wesley Johnson is radiating joy.
Hopalong Cassidy would be proud.

I am radiating doubt
sitting on my Dad's other knee
staring away from the camera
at the toy gun my Dad holds in his hand.

I'm in a brown vest,
a squashed down black hat,
maybe Topper stepped on it,
black pants,
and Buster Brown laced up shoes.

I don't know if Hopalong Cassidy had a sidekick,
but if he did, I would be him.