

Turning In Our Six-shooters To The Policeman At The Smithsonian

When we visited the Smithsonian
in our cowboy suits,
Wesley Johnson and I
turned in our six-shooters to the policeman
at the front entrance.

The policeman leaned forward, smirking,
and took the guns by the barrel.
Big Mistake, mine was cocked.
Something bad could happen.

Wesley and I wore grave expressions
as if we were real cowboys
worried that the bad thing
that could happen
would happen to us.

Wesley is the handsomer of the two.
He is like Wild Bill.
I am like Jingles, yelling at him,
as he gallops off,
“Hey, Wild Bill, wait for me.”

Wesley didn't wait.
He galloped towards the sunset.

I saw him again when he was 17,
making muscles in front of a mirror.
“Aren't I handsome,” he said,
his parents recently divorced.

The second time
I saw him
at Bethesda Health Club
playing racketball,
his marriage in a shambles,
ex-wife in custody of the children.

So maybe Wesley Johnson
is handsomer than me but,
it doesn't matter.
The bad things that happened to him
didn't happen to me.