**Tombstone Library** (by Richard Hill)

In Tombstone there was, it seems,

a public library

between the marshall's office

and the Silver Lode Saloon

On (adjective), (adjective) afternoons

the (verb)-ing of the faro wheel

the (adjective) piano's (adjective) tinkle

(verb)-ing the library's (adjective) walls

I like to think of them

the (noun)-s and the gamblers

the faro dealers and the mining men

(adjective) in the library's (adjective) shade

(verb)-ing their way through 'Romance'

and 'Ancient History'

soft spurs (verb)-ing past the rows of (noun)-s

the half-breed (verb)-ing gently over 'War and Peace'

And at the issue desk

a (adjective) figure in a bowler hat

'I'm sorry Mr. Earp, this book is (adjective)'

He (verb)-s and (verb)-s

(verb)-s out a coin, (verb)-s

(his teeth are not yet (adjective) white)

(adjective) and (adjective) as a (noun)

He (verb)-s and (verb)-s towards 'Mythology'

**Tombstone Library**

In Tombstone there was, it seems,

a public library

between the marshall's office

and the Silver Lode Saloon

On endless, silent afternoons

the clicking of the faro wheel

the tired piano's nervous tinkle

scratching the library's wooden walls

I like to think of them

the whores and the gamblers

the faro dealers and the mining men

cool in the library's silent shade

whispering their way through 'Romance'

and 'Ancient History'

soft spurs jingling past the rows of books

the half-breed coughing gently over 'War and Peace'

And at the issue desk

a stocky figure in a bowler hat

'I'm sorry Mr. Earp, this book is overdue'

He bends and fumbles

flicks out a coin, smiles

(his teeth are not yet film-star white)

dark and nervous as a cat

He turns and moves towards 'Mythology'

*Richard Hill*

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