

# Rodeo

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Leather, wry, and rough,  
Jaw full of chaw, and slits  
For eyes - this guy is tough.  
He climbs the slatted fence,  
Pulls himself atop and sits;  
Tilts back his cowboy hat,  
Stained with sweat below  
The crown, and wipes a dirty  
Sleeve across his brow;  
Then pulls the hat down tight,  
Caresses up its sides,  
And spits into the dust  
A benediction.

Gracelessly, his Brahma bull  
Lunges into the chute  
And swings a baleful  
Eye around, irresolute.

Vision narrower still,  
The man regards the beast.  
There's weight enough to kill,  
Bone and muscle fit at least  
To jar a man apart.  
The cowboy sniffs and hitches at  
His pants. Himself all heart  
And gristle, he watches as  
The hands outside the chute  
Prepare the sacrificial act.  
Standing now, and nerving up,  
He takes his final measure  
Of the creature's awful back.  
Then he moves. Swerving up  
And into place, he pricks  
The Brahma's bullish pride.

The gate swings free, and  
Screams begin to sanctify  
Their pitching, tortured ride.

—Edward Lueder

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