

In the red brick school, a buzzer sounds,  
signaling the start or stop  
of something else. A brown cloud brushes past the sun.  
My father's up again, finishing his mile.  
And I run too. We run together, side by side,  
cheering each other on.

## DODGE CITY SALOON

This is where it all  
comes together: gamblers, cattlemen,  
rustlers, whores. Good guys and bad guys.  
The sheriff tries to keep the peace  
but can't. Bullets fly.  
The kid with big ideas, the one  
who wants to be a famous gun,  
goes down. They drag him out by the heels.  
The fat one in a sweaty shirt  
spits a heavy glob toward the spittoon.  
The cardsharp from the East deals poker.  
The barber, drunk at a corner table, snores.  
The tart who waits on table  
lifts her skirt and adjusts a stocking.  
Come hell or high water, it will all end in a  
free-for-all: mean tempers, fists flying,  
chairs hoisted and hurled, cracked skulls,  
smashed mirrors. They will kill and be killed  
because broken bones and ruined desire  
are part of the script, the way it was written.  
The undertaker leans against the bar,  
a dark gaze baking in his eyes. Sooner or later,  
he gets them all.