

DUSTY TEARS

We watched him standing in the dusty wind.
With burning tears his youthful eyes were red.
Before him, cloaked with all the nearby stones,
A grave. We heard behind him wagons blend
Their noise to muffle in our ears his moans
Of grief for undreamt dreams that now were dead.

Our hearts, especially younger ones, still beat
A rapid rush of fight-flight hormone juice,
Because, just seconds past, we watched the gore
Of Indians tumbling, trampled under horses' feet,
As settlers, bleeding, hit the prairie floor—
Exciting “good parts” gave us apt excuse.

Those dusty tears disclosed a common fear,
Displayed a theme that should have shook the heart,
But didn't. Quickly flashing, other scenes
Assaulted soul's compassion and its mirror,
Until that weeping boy, just in his teens,
Was lost, who in true history played a part.

Those human graves and griefs were multiplied
In real-life tales down woeful, tearful trails.
Old “westerns,” filmed to skim across the pains
Of mournful arms bereft of loves who died,
Still play, amusing soda-sipping brains
Who flip the channel if the story fails.

— *David L. Hatton, 10/25/1998*