

JUDITH WALLER CARROLL

## **Jackson Hole, Summer 1962**

The Saturday night rodeo was all they could talk about  
as they worked beside us, waiting on tables,  
cleaning motel rooms. On holiday from Vassar,  
Bryn Mawr, Duke, they tried on our lives  
like a turquoise bracelet or a pair of boots.

Week after week in their skin-tight jeans  
they'd play the dusty crowd like a slide guitar.  
They'd sashay past sizzling hamburgers,  
past beer and Nehi, horse tails and flies,  
sidle up to a cluster of cowboys leaning on a fence,  
pull out their long, filtered cigarettes, wait  
for the lighters drawn fast as six shooters.

Tired of cowboys, we scanned the bleachers  
for college boys posing as ranch hands  
or even the dangerous East Coast businessmen  
who came every summer to run the Snake River,  
their perfect white teeth flashing like beacons,  
their pedigrees and old money  
drawing us in like an undertow.